

Ephesians for Everyman: *Identity Crisis*

Background on Ephesians:

- Paul wrote this book to the church, while imprisoned for being a follower of Jesus
- Just like the US today, Ephesus was a center for thought & ideas. People flocked there to share ideas and worship....to worship something, because the truth is that everyone is a worshipper...the question is what are they worshipping?
- Ephesus was somewhat of a pagan regional center, with the temple of Artemis standing tall in its center, and the temple to Diana was prominent as well....
- It sat on major trade routes and so it was wealthy, had marble streets, public libraries and bath houses and even a large entertainment venue....life in Ephesus was good.
- But.....not everything was as it should be.

You see one of the most commonly asked questions you and I receive, and one of the most seemingly easy questions to answer....is in reality one of the most profound and life shaping questions and responses we face.... And it's the simple question....._____?

Because if we are unclear, or unable....or if we answer this question with anything but God's truth our lives will be off kilter, built like a table where one leg is faulty...and everything will eventually fall.

Because _____.

Paul starts off with a greeting and by telling the Ephesians who HE is, and to begin to remind them of who THEY are. Identity statements open the chapter, and the book of Ephesians...

"This letter is from Paul, CHOSEN BY THE WILL OF GOD to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God's HOLY PEOPLE in Ephesus, who are FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS of Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 1:1)

But nothing could be further from the truth. Paul is reminding the reader and HIMSELF that HE deserves no glory, no praise. Why? Because God chose Him, God changed Him, God SAVED him....it's a humble reminder that you will see repeated in this book often. _____.

"To God's holy people"my guess is, if you're anything like me, you don't often feel "holy". But, for God's Man the truth remains _____, Because _____.

1 Corinthians 6:11 says that *"But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."*

Ephesians 5:25-27 *"He gave up His life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish."*

"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ." - Ephesians 1:3. According to this passage, what has God given us? _____ . Amen! And what was the reasoning? _____.

"Even before He made the world, God LOVED us and CHOSE us in Christ..." Ephesians 1:4. This raises some challenging questions about who is chosen and why? Why isn't everyone chosen? English theologian John Stott puts us in the right mindset by reminding us that *"Election is not a human speculation, but a divine revelation."* But look at what scripture says about God choosing us:

- John 15:16 - *You didn't choose me, I chose you.*
- 1 Thes. 1:4 - *As for us, we can't help but thank God for you, dear brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are always thankful that God chose you to be among the first to experience salvation...*
- 1 Peter 1:2 - *God the Father knew you and CHOSE you long ago....*

"He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins. He has showered us with his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding." - Ephesians 1:7 Based on this passage, our primary identity is _____, _____, _____.

"...And when you believed in Christ, he IDENTIFIED you as his own, by giving you the Holy Spirit (some transcripts say by SEALING you with the Holy Spirit). The Spirit is God's GUARANTEE that he will give us the inheritance he promised us..." Ephesians 1:13b

What is proven by a "seal"?

1. Seals prove _____.
2. Seals provide _____ and _____.
3. Seals pinpoint _____.

As he closes out the chapter, of all the things Paul could ask for on behalf of the church he asks for _____ and _____.

*"Asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you SPIRITUAL WISDOM and insight so that you might grow in knowledge."
Ephesians 1:17*