

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians

**SIT
WALK
STAND**

WEEK ONE – OUR REDEMPTION THROUGH CHRIST JESUS

Background to this Epistle:

The Apostle Paul wrote this letter from prison probably AD61-63. Many scholars believe it was not intended for one congregation but to be passed around several churches in the area surrounding Ephesus. Paul paid a short visit towards the end of his second missionary journey (Acts 18:18-19). Ephesus was one of the great cities in that part of the world, a Roman capital, and a wealthy commercial centre.

He made a further visit on his third missionary journey and stayed for three years. You may remember from our study on Acts (chapter 19) that because the goddess Diana was worshipped there, many citizens of the city objected to Paul's teachings of Jesus, and his preaching finally precipitated a riot in the city.

It is the most formal of all Paul's letters in that he does not include the personal details of other Epistles.

(Information from a variety of sources).

I remember a very long time ago, hearing this simple and yet profound, outline.

SIT: EPHESIANS 1-3: **YOU HAVE BEEN SEATED WITH CHRIST: YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST**

WALK: EPHESIANS 4-6:14: **WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING – LIVE OUT THE GOSPEL**

STAND: EPHESIANS 6: **STAND FIRM IN THE FACE OF ANY SPIRITUAL OPPOSITION**

Read Ephesians 1

Verses 3-14 explain our redemption in Jesus, so let us see what this means:

- What do we understand by the word *redemption*?

Now, let us look at a detailed definition according to one dictionary:

REDEEM – a verb (as we learned at school: a doing word)

1. To win back
2. To free from captivity, especially by paying a ransom; to free from the penalties of sin
3. To change for the better: **REFORM**
4. To remove the obligation of payment: i.e. the government redeems savings bonds (Jesus redeems sinners from the bondage of sin)
5. To make good: **FULFIL** – redeem a promise

REPURCHASE

1. To purchase by right and not on the open market – redeem preferred shares
2. To free from a lien or pledge usually by payment of the amount secured – redeem collateral
3. To exercise a right of redemption
4. Remove the obligation by payment - redeem a bond – to present and have redeemed – to exchange for something of value

The redemption that Jesus secured for us on the cross encompasses all these things.

There is an old hymn of which the first verse says: *REDEEMED, HOW I LOVE TO PROCLAIM IT, REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB, REDEEMED BY HIS INFINITE MERCY, HIS CHILD AND FOREVER, I AM!*

You may recall from our study of the book of Ruth, how she was redeemed by Boaz, her kinsman redeemer. *Ruth 3 – the heading for this chapter in my Bible says: RUTH'S REDEMPTION ASSURED.* Jesus is our kinsman redeemer, and our redemption is guaranteed.

Because Jesus knows the end from the beginning, he knew those who would choose to commit themselves to him and he laid out a plan for the lives of every one of us. Those plans (Jeremiah 29:11) *are to give us a future and hope.*

“To sit in heavenly places is more than a figure of speech. It is a spiritual reality for the believer. Because of our union with Christ, we reap the benefit of His position of divine authority (see Psalm 110:1; cf. Acts 2:34-35). He is our Head and our Representative. Peter taught, “Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honour next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority” (1 Peter 3:22, NLT; see also Philippians 2:9-11). The gates of hell will not overcome the church (Matthew 16:18; see also 1 John 2:13) because we are more than conquerors through Christ (Romans 8:37; see also 1 John 5:4-5) who gives us the victory (1 Corinthians 15:57).”

(Got Questions website)

Read verses 7-14 of chapter 1

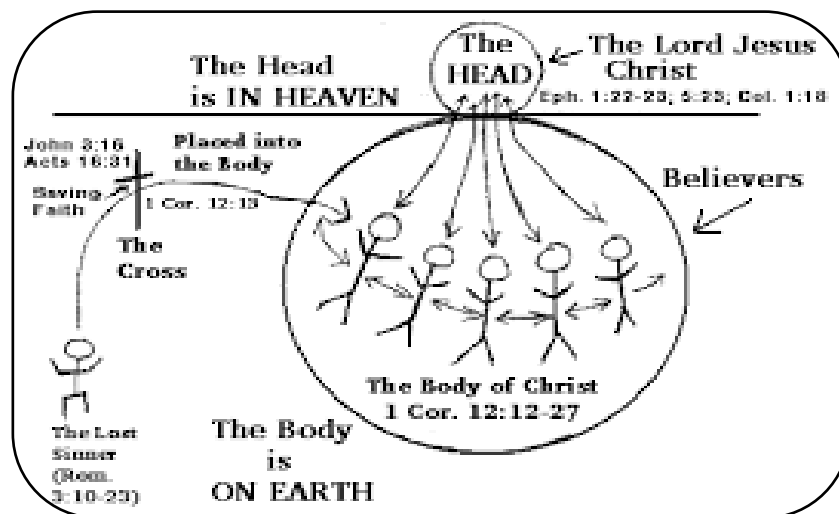
- From birth, we are identified with our family and that is important. However, to have our identity in Christ means we are now part of God’s family. What does that mean for us?
- What is God’s plan for us?
- Does this give us confidence?
- What does Paul pray for the people of that region?

Read verses 15-23

In these verses, Paul addresses the need for spiritual wisdom and understanding so that we might grow in our knowledge of God.

- Why is this so important?
- Look at verses 18-23. What crucial point is Paul making here?
- What is our understanding of: “the body of Christ”?
- Why is it important to know where we fit in?
- Do we understand our importance to the body of Christ?

During this coming week, take time to pray about what you have learned. Pray that the reality of this will direct your thoughts and actions.



PRAYER:

Father God, thank you for the wonderful promises you have given us. Help us today and always, to remember who we are in Christ Jesus. Amen