

The Theme Throughout Ephesians – Part 1

If the life of a Christian is to be pleasing to God it must be properly adjusted to Him in all things. Often we fail to appreciate the extent of the adjustment called for.

Ephesians 1:9-11 [New King James] *“having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,”*

Jesus Christ is the example that we are to use as the end goal of our adjustment.

Romans 6:3-8 [New King James] *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, **that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,**”*

The adjustment is likened to our old way of life being crucified to allow us to live with Jesus Christ, the change is total and permanent.

Our future is dependent on this dramatic change, [**Ephesians 1:11**].

Like so many of the apostolic letters, this epistle falls naturally into two parts, a doctrinal section and a practical section.

The doctrinal section, [chapters 1-3] is concerned mainly with the great facts of the redemption which God has wrought for us through Jesus Christ.

The practical section, [chapters 4-6] then presents us with the demands, in terms of our Christian conduct and zeal, that God is making upon us in the light of that redemption.

In this practical section there are two main sections, our life as a Christian in this world and its society and customs, and our attitude towards our enemy, Satan.

The key attitude of mind in the doctrinal section is summed up in Ephesians 2:6 and the word “sit” and this is the secret to true Christian experience.

We have a true life example of this in the story of Martha and Mary, [Luke 10:38-41]. Jesus Christ mentioned that Mary had chosen “the good part” by sitting and listening to the words of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:17-21 [New King James] *“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.”*

After His resurrection Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man, sat at the right hand of God the Father, a position of trust and power.

Ephesians 2:5-9 [New King James] *“even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, **and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus**, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*

At the moment of the grace of God being applied to cleanse us of the penalty of our sins we are to sit together with Jesus Christ.

Individual Christian life begins with a person being “in Christ” that is to say, when by faith we see ourselves seated together with Jesus Christ being taught how we should live our future life, that He has saved from eternal death, [Romans 6:23].

Christianity begins **not** with a big “do” but with a big “done,” thus Ephesians opens with the statement “has blessed us” [verse 3] we are invited to sit down with Jesus Christ and enjoy what He has done for us, [Ephesians 2:8].

We accept this fact by faith, we do not set out to try and attain it ourselves.

We begin our Christian life by depending not upon our own actions but faith in what God the Father has done for us through the life, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ.

Until a person has accepted this fact they are not a true Christian.

The true Christian life from start to finish is based upon this principle of utter dependence upon Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord.

Jesus Christ confirmed this fact with His own words to His disciples, [John 15:1-5].

There is no limit to the grace that God will bestow on us, but we can only receive it when we rest in Him, “sitting” is an attitude of rest.

Paradoxical but true, we only advance in the Christian life as we learn first of all to sit down and listen as Mary did.

This was God’s principle from the beginning. In the physical creation God worked from the first to the sixth day then rested on the seventh.

The physical task that God had set Himself was completed, the seventh day became the Sabbath of God.

What about Adam, the first human being! Where did he stand in relation to the rest of God on the seventh day?

Adam, we are told, was created on the sixth day. Clearly Adam had no part in those first six days of work, for he came into being at their end.

God’s seventh day was, in fact, Adam’s first.

Whereas God worked six days and then enjoyed what He had done by resting with the pinnacle of His creation, Adam.

Adam’s life began when he sat down with his Creator Jesus Christ on the first Sabbath [seventh] day, [Mark 2:27-28].

The gospel message, the good news, is that God has completed the work of redemption, so that all humanity may enter into His rest.

John 5:16-17 [New King James] *“For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.’”*

The work being done by both God the Father and Jesus Christ related to the spiritual work depicted by the Sabbath.

John 17:1-5 [New King James] *“Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.’”*

Jesus Christ was about to complete His work on earth, that of teaching His disciples, then the final act of redemption, the sacrifice of His perfect life, [**John 19:28-30**].

Because of this triumphant cry from Jesus Christ, means that God has done all that is necessary for our salvation through Jesus Christ, and that we simply accept this fact in faith, and sit down and listen and respond to the words of Jesus Christ.

John 6:51, 63, 66-68 [New King James] *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” ... “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” ... “From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’”*

Only the sacrificed life of Jesus Christ and the words of His teaching lead us to receive the gift of eternal life, [Romans 6:23**].**

Galatians 2:20 [New King James] *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

We were not born with Jesus Christ but we were crucified with Him, our union with Him began therefore with His death.

God the Father included us with Jesus Christ in His death, therefore we are *“with Him”* because we were *“in Him.”*

Scripture affirms that this is so, for it was God the Father that did it, [**1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 1:21**]. It is something accomplished by God the Father in His sovereign wisdom to be seen, believed, accepted and rejoiced in by eventually every human being.

God is the great giver.

James 1:16-18 [New King James] *“Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.”*

How can we respond to this in a way that will please God?

Of all the parables in the gospels, that of the prodigal son affords, I think, the supreme illustration of the way to please God the Father.

Luke 15:32 [New King James] *“It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.”*

In these words Jesus Christ reveals it is in the sphere of redemption that the Father rejoices.

It is **not** the elder brother who toils incessantly for the Father, but the younger brother who lets the father do everything for him. It is **not** the elder brother who always wants to be the giver, but the younger brother who is willing to be the receiver.

The father did not sorrow over all that had been spent unwisely, he only rejoiced over the repentant son’s return giving him the opportunity to spend more on his child.

God is so wealthy that His chief delight is to give, He wants to be the giver eternally.

Our part is to be eternally thankful for all that God has done, is doing and will do in the future as He fulfils His greatest desire to give all that is good to His children. All who sit with Him and learn to live the way He does can join Him in the future reflecting the love and mercy that the Eternal God has for all humanity.

Matthew 20:25-28 [New King James] *“But Jesus called them to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’”*

All who are true Christians, having accepted all that God has done for us through Jesus Christ, will at His Second Coming be able to serve all who have never know the love of the Eternal Creator God, as priests [teachers] and rulers, [Revelation 5:9-10].

Revelation 20:11-13 [New King James] *“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.”*

Revealing to these people, resurrected back to physical life, the love their Eternal Creator God has for each of them, and introduce them to Jesus Christ their Saviour and Lord.