

**What Does the Bible Reveal about your Life Mission?
Where Did I Come from and Where am I Going?
Ephesians Series #1**

Message Notes, September 4, 2022

◆ **Reflecting on Life in Light of Our Mortality**

Psalm 90:12 NLT Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom.

◆ **Unique Characteristics of the Epistle to the Ephesians**

- a. Paul's pastoral letter, written for the purpose of instructing the believers in various churches while he was imprisoned in Rome, which was sent first to the church in Ephesus, thus named the "Epistle to the Church in Ephesus."
- b. It is not addressed to a specific church, but it is written as a general book of faith for Christian growth. The first three of the six chapters are doctrinal and the remaining three are practical, touching on specific issues of the Christian life.
- c. It is said to be the most beloved book of the religious reformer Calvin. The truth of the unfathomable gospel of the Kingdom of God is condensed in this short letter
- d. Central verse: **Ephesians 1:23 NLT** "And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself."
 - The "church" is people, and the mission God has entrusted to Christians, who have been made God's own, is significant. Through this series, we will explore the meaning of this mission: how we are as individuals and as the community called the church.
 - If we do not work on our mission as a community (attaining the Kingdom of God) and not just on personal achievement (finding a career and securing financial stability), we will surely come to a standstill. This was precisely the case during the time of the Judges.
Proverbs 29:18 ESV "Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law."

Christian Self-Introduction

Ephesians 1:1 NLT "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 Christ Jesus."

1. Paul's Self-Awareness

- Note the order: "Paul," "apostle," "of Jesus Christ," and "by the will of God"
- Regarding the Roman name "Paul:" originally, known by the Hebrew "Saul" (meaning one who diligently seeks the truth), but changed to Paul on the island of Cyprus, the first stop on the first missionary trip. Why?
- "Apostle:" a person directly appointed by Christ for a specific mission.
- "By God's will:" surprise and gratitude that someone like himself was allowed to be a part of such an important turning point in God's far-reaching plan and work (→ Ephesians 3:2-13).
- The difference between God's will and our plans: When we know the gifts that God provides, success in this life and recognition by others seem like "dust" by comparison (→ Philippians 3:4-11).
 - This kind of excitement is not exclusive to Paul. Have you ever been moved by the fact that you have been included in God's plan?

2. To Establish Our Correct Self-Awareness

- The term "saints" means those who have been sanctified from the world and made God's own, and "sanctification" means to be set apart or dedicated for the work of God.

The term “saints” does not mean morally exalted saints, but rather those who can be used for God’s work.

- To be made saints is a grace of God’s unilateral election, in which there are no exceptions.

Ephesians 4:7 NLT “However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.”

- How should we think of the injustices in this world? Who is born with a “handicap?”
- “Faithful:” Faithfulness is required of those who are in time for the great work of God. The term “faithful saints” *pistoi* means “those who believe” from *pistos* (faith), meaning those who have put their whole trust in Christ, emphasizing the point that belief continues on.
- “In Christ Jesus:” a peculiar Pauline expression, which also occurs 37 times in this letter, including twice in 1:1. Here “in...” means “to be one with...” indicating that by being one with and connected to Jesus as Savior (Christ), we receive the rich blessings of forgiveness, life, love, and hope. It is to be able to live a powerful life like Jesus.
 - “The Lord is the vine, and we are its branches.” As long as the branches are connected to the trunk, they will surely bear fruit one day. What can we do to stay connected to Him?

◆ Conclusion

- In thinking about your life mission, have you every considered its positioning in relations to the church (organically, not systematically)?
- To what extent do you believe that you have been given a special mission from God?
- Are you connected to God’s Word daily? Are you setting aside the time and place to do so?