

Ephesians 1:1-23

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction.

A. Text: Ephesians 1:1-23.

B. Ephesians is one of the great epistles of the Bible.

C. Structure of Ephesians.

1. Theme: Faith.

2. The structure of faith: facts and feelings. (Ephesians 1)

3. The possibility of faith: from death to life, from hostility to faith, from loneliness to love. (Ephesians 2)

4. The function of faith: the mystery explained, the mystery described, the mystery demonstrated. (Ephesians 3)

5. The practical section: the community of faith described, seen in action and applied. (Ephesians 4)

6. The walk of faith: in a sex-mad world, in a Spirit-filled church, in a Christ-honoring home. (Ephesians 5)

7. The fight of faith: the armor of God, the activity of battle, and the undefeatable posture. (Ephesians 6)

II. The salutation of the letter and background.

A. It was written in Rome in 61 AD.

B. It was written to the Ephesians but likely was a circular letter only starting with the city.

C. Paul's authority was confirmed by the Apostles based upon his gospel.

D. Saints are those marked as different and faithful in Christ—not those who are austere.

E. God's grace and peace make us charming and lovely people—the Christian ought to be constantly characterized by these.

III. Paul starts with what God has already done for us—the strength of the Christian faith.

IV. Seven facts upon which the Christian faith rests.

A. Background.

1. The enrichments are for blessing. The church was changed from a wicked background. (I Corinthians 6)

2. We find these blessings in the inner spiritual life.

B. We were chosen by the Father before time and destined by the Father to be His sons.

C. We were reborn in the Father.

D. We have been redeemed by the process of forgiveness in Christ.

1. God is in the process of continually giving us forgiveness.

2. The Christian starts from a place of God's love—it is from this that we get a sense of worth.

E. In the Son, we have the mystery of God's will.

F. In the Son, you have been destined and appointed to live for the glory of God.

G. In the Spirit, we receive truth.

H. We have the seal of the Holy Spirit assuring our salvation and showing that we are believers. (Romans 8)

V. Our feelings about the facts of faith.

A. Background.

1. Our feelings are okay.

2. We need to learn to distrust our feelings until they can be substantiated by God.

3. Feeling must follow from fact.

4. Teaching must be accompanied by prayer that the mind grasped will also move the heart—emotions will be stirred by the truth.

5. God wants no dull and unresponsive Christians.

6. Decisions cannot be made by the mind or the heart by itself.

B. The feelings Paul wants to arouse.

1. Hope of what is to come

2. Hope of the inheritance, which is God Himself.

3. Hope in the knowledge of the resurrection power of Jesus Christ—God uses the very power of the opposition and uses it against the opposition. (Ephesians 6)

Application questions:

1. What blessing gives the believer a sense of worth even when he or she struggles with sin? How does this work?

2. Why is it important that feelings are a part of our faith? How are they to be a part of it?

3. Which fact of faith encourages you the most? Explain.
