**Devotionals from Ephesians**

**Coming Home**

Mon 1/18 Ephesians 1:1-6

What are some of the spiritual blessings that God has given you?

What does it mean to you that you were personally chosen by God before the creation of the world?

How does that make you feel about your fellow disciples—about the family of God that we call the Bakersfield Church of Christ?

What has God predestined you personally to be and to become?

How might that predestination work within the church family?

Tues 1/19 Ephesians 1:7-10

How would you define redemption?

Look up the word in a dictionary. How is the dictionary definition similar to and how is it different from your personal Christian definition of the word?

Describe in your own words what are “the riches of his grace.” How does the word lavish affect your thoughts on this (lavish def: to expend or bestow profusely)?

A fun question: What do you think the “mystery of his will” is? Maybe you could share you answer with another member of the church. Maybe the answer is in v. 10.

What is God’s desire according to v. 10? How does this apply to his church?

Wed 1/20 Ephesians 1:11-14

God chose you. We already saw that in 1:4. Here Paul adds that it happened according to a plan. Can you think of any aspects of his plan to choose you? How did God do this in your case?

God also chose your brothers and sisters. Would you have chosen them? Why or why not? How does it affect you to know that God chose them?

You were “included in Christ.” That is a strange statement. What does it mean to you?

Best of all, when you were baptized into Christ, you received the Holy Spirit. What are some signs in your life that you can point to that confirm that you received the Holy Spirit when you were saved?

Your salvation is guaranteed, as long as the Holy Spirit is in you. What does that mean to you? What does it allow you to do?

Th 1/21 Ephesians 1:15-18

What are some things about God’s people, either here in Bakersfield or elsewhere that cause you to give thanks?

Have you been praying about those people?

Can you think of some areas that God has increased your wisdom in? Can you think of some areas you need to still grow in your wisdom? What is the solution according to this Scripture?

What is our hope according to this Scripture?

You will be receiving an inheritance from God eventually, true? What do you think you will be inheriting?

Apparently, our heart has eyes. What does that mean?

Fri 1/22 Ephesians 1:19-23

God has power for us who believe. What can you see that power doing in our local church this year?

The power we have from God in us is the same that raised Jesus from the dead. How much power is that? How does it compare to the power of a Saturn rocket taking off?

Where is Christ Jesus right now? What do you think he is doing there?

According to 1:23-24, apparently, part of what Christ is doing has to do with the church. What do you think he is doing with and for the church—for our local family here in Bakersfield?

If we are his body and Christ is the head, how ought that to affect what we do individually and as a church?

Sat 1/23 Ephesians 2:1-3

Today we talk about bad news. Tomorrow we will talk about good news. Why is it important to know the bad news before we know the good news?

This passage tells you that you were dead in your sins. First, do you REALLY believe that? In what sense were you dead?

Who do you think this “ruler of the kingdom of the air” is? He is working right now. What is he working to do?

At one time, you lived among those people, “gratifying the cravings of your sinful nature,” but you came home to live with God’s people. How has that changed your life?

In 2:3 we have one of the most intense and in some ways most difficult statements in the Bible to accept. At one time you were by nature an object of wrath. What thoughts does that provoke in you? How do you feel about the fact that most people you know are even now the object of God’s wrath? What does that motivate you to do?

Sun 1/24 Ephesians 2:4-10

Today we have the good news. What do you think about that word “but” in v. 4?

What is the bottom line for why you went from object of wrath to being alive with Christ according to v. 4. What does that mean to you?

According to this passage, how much has the good things you have done earned in terms of the favor of God?

Have you, at times, boasted in your good works? Why is this a problem?

As a body of believers, collectively, we are all saved only by the grace of God. How does that affect how you see your brothers and sisters?

You are not saved by your good works. True, but God did save you with specific good works he has in mind for you to do. What do you believe that those good work he has for you to do are? (Hint: it probably is determined, in part, by the gifts he has given you)

Mon 1/25 Ephesians 2:11-13

In the context of Ephesians, we are Gentiles (as opposed to Jews, “the circumcision”). What is the point that Paul is making about us in reminding us that we were formerly Gentiles?

You and I were separate and excluded from God’s people at one time. What was life like under these circumstances?

Not only were we excluded, we were outright foreigners. Paul is using an interesting metaphor here. How is being a spiritual foreigner different from being excluded spiritually?

All of us were without hope. Probably all of us experience that hopelessness in different ways. What form did it take for you? Can you think of any members of the church for whom it may have been significantly different?

The good news is in 2:13 We were brought near to each other by the blood of Christ. What is it like for you to be brought near to your sisters and brothers? Do you want to be brought even nearer? How might that look?

Tues 1/26 Ephesians 2:14-17

Normally, we think of the peace of God being peace WITH God. In this passage the peace is not with God but with others in the church. Who in the church would you likely not have been completely at peace with but you now are?

What are some of the barriers that we put up between one another? How has Christ helped to remove those barriers?

One of means for him doing this, according to 2:15 is by setting aside “the law with its commands.” Probably he is referring to specific Jewish laws, but he may also mean obligations more broadly. What are some laws and rules that have separated you from other people?

We normally think of reconciliation in the Bible as reconciliation to God, but in 2:16 the reconciliation is with other people. Who have you been reconciled with since becoming a Christian? Is there someone else you still need to be reconciled with?

The thing that produces the reconciliation is the cross. Yes? How does the cross cause or allow reconciliation between people?

Wed 1/27 Ephesians 2:18-22

In 2:18 we are told that the reconciliation with one another is mediated through access to the Holy Spirit. This is a hard question, but… How does access to the Holy Spirit cause reconciliation with other people?

Think about some of the people who you are now fellow citizens with in God’s kingdom. How or in what way do you value your comrades?

2:19 is a key verse for this entire devotional series, “Coming Home.” What does it mean to you to be part of God’s household? (We do not usually use the word household. That is more a thing of the ancient world. We just call it family)

Being part of God’s family has its benefits and its obligations. What are some of the benefits?

What are some of the obligations of being part of God’s family in Bakersfield?

We are a temple of God. What a thought!!! We are a dwelling of God collectively. Again, an odd thought for we rugged individualistic Americans. How does it affect you to think of yourself, not individually, but as part of a house/temple?

Th 1/28 Ephesians 3:1-6

This time around, unlike in Ephesians 1:9 Paul makes it clear what “the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the people in other generations” is. What is this mystery?

It is not immediately what the coming together of Jew and Gentile has to do with us, but it is about a mystical union between opposites. What is the importance to you of unity in our church?

We are “members together of one body.” What are the practical implications that we in the Bakersfield Church of Christ form one body?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. What does the one body mean to you?

If we share our salvation together (Ephesians 3:6) in Christ, then how ought we to treat one another?

Fri 1/29 Ephesians 3:7-13

Paul is obviously pretty amazing. Why, then, does he say that he is “less than the least of all the Lord’s people.”? How might you imitate Paul’s attitude here?

What are some of the things that are contained in the “boundless riches of Christ”? (3:8)

God makes his will known to everyone, including the “rulers and authorities” through the church. How does that work? (this is a hard question!)

Do you feel confident as you approach God? (3:12) Why or why not?

Paul makes an odd statement here. “My sufferings for you are your glory.” Why is that?

Sat 1/30 Ephesians 3:14-19

Clearly, Paul had a deep and abiding prayer life. What was he praying for in this case? (3:15)

Where does our strength as disciples come from? Have you been seeking and finding strength through the Holy Spirit?

What ought we, as Christians be rooted and established in? How do we approach doing that?

I am a physics professor and as far as I know there are only three dimensions, yet Paul wants you and me to understand how wide and long and high and deep the love of God is. That sounds like four dimensions! How great is the love of God for all of us?

According to 3:19, what will be the result for each of us if we can grasp this love? What does this mean?

Sun 1/31 Ephesians 3:20-4:6

God’s glory is found and seen in the church. How is God glorified in the church? How might we in the Bakersfield Church of Christ glorify God?

This series of daily devotionals is intended for us to understand the idea of coming home. What important aspect of this is stressed in 4:1-6?

According to 4:2, what is the key to us having unity as a family of believers? How are you doing in this quality? How might you need to change to grow in this area?

What is required for us to have this kind of unity according to 4:3? What kinds of effort have you made to achieve and maintain unity? How unified are we as a family now? What will need to happen for us to be even more unified than we are?

There are a lot of “ones” in 4:4-5. How do you think Paul chose the items in the list? Is there any significance to the order of the words he chose? (this is a hard question with no clear answer, but try to let your imagination run with this)

Mon 2/1 Ephesians 4:7-13

God has given each of us “grace,” which in context here, means spiritual gifts useful to the family of God. What grace/spiritual gifts has God given to you? How might he intend you to use them?

What might be the specific roles of “prophets,” evangelists, pastors and teachers? In a small church which does not have appointed versions of these roles, how should they be met?

What is the overall purpose of each of these listed and unlisted gifts? (v. 12) What are you doing, personally, to achieve this goal? What additional might you imagine doing?

What is the connection between each of us using our gifts and unity in the body?

How mature a disciple of Jesus are you? Why do you think this? Given how long you have been a Christian, would you say your level of maturity is more or less appropriate?

Tues 2/2 Ephesians 4:14-16

Are you one who tends to be “tossed back and forth” concerning some of the doctrines of Christianity? Would your friends describe you as gullible?

Do you like it when people speak the truth to you about weaknesses in your life? Why or why not? How might we “speak the truth” in love, and how to do this not in love?

This is the second time Paul speaks about maturity in the body (also v. 13). Why is maturity so important for the unity of the body?

What are those “supporting ligaments” in the church? What do ligaments do (use a dictionary?)?

Do you feel that you are doing the work that God intends to make all this work together well? What do you mean by that?

Wed 2/3 Ephesians 4:17-28

How do the Gentiles (as opposed to disciples of Jesus) live? Why is their thinking futile?

We were taught to put off our old self, and to be made new. Are there any of the ways of the old self you have been struggling with lately? How might you, instead be made new?

Would people who know you say that you have good control of anger? What steps do you take when you experience anger to “not let the sun go down on your anger”?

Are there any areas in your life in which you have given the devil a foothold? If so, decide now to be open with someone.

Th 2/4 Ephesians 4:29-5:7

What are some examples of “unwholesome talk”? Do you have issues there?

Are you a person who is known more for building people up rather than being critical or one to complain? What are some ways you can build up your brothers and sisters this week, based on their needs?

Is there anyone toward whom you have shown or harbored bitterness, rage or anger? Will you instead find ways this week to show compassion, kindness and forgiveness?

Has there been a hint of immorality, impurity, greed or coarse talk in your life lately?

What is the motivation for doing (or not doing) the things listed above in the most recent four questions? (5:2)

Fri 2/5 Ephesians 5:8-20

What does it mean to you to live as a child of the light? (hint: 5:9)

How strongly are you motivated to please the Lord?

Ephesians 5:11 has a command that not only should we not sin, we should be willing, at least at times, to expose the deeds of darkness in others. This is a challenging commandment. When do you think it might be appropriate to call someone else out on their deeds of darkness? Who ought this to be done?

Ephesians 5:13 suggests doing this by shining light onto a situation—by illuminating the darkness around us. Can you think of a situation the past several weeks that you have either done this or ought to have? How would you shine the light in this case?

Paul makes a surprising shift in v. 19-20 to elements of worship. Why is he doing this and how might this help in the issues raised in the preceding verses?

Sat 2/6 Ephesians 5:21-24

What are some practical ways that disciples of Jesus ought to submit to one another? Who should we submit to, why and how?

If you are a father or mother, how ought you to submit to your children? If you are an adult child, how ought you to submit to your parents?

Should leaders submit to those they lead? What would that look like? Should members in the church submit to their leaders? What should that look like? What about one member of the church to another member?

Paul mentions wives submitting to their husbands after telling all of us to submit to all of us. Why this order? What is Paul’s point there? In what ways ought a wife submit to her husband?

Are there limits past which, despite what this passage says, that a wife ought not to submit to her husband (or a husband to his wife, for that matter)?

Sun 2/7 Ephesians 5:22-33

Clearly, husbands are to submit to their wives (5:21). Why, then, does God command husbands, in particular, to love their wives? Wives are clearly to love their husbands. Why, then, does God particularly command them to submit to their husbands?

What advice can you give to the husbands out there for presenting their wives as radiant?

In Ephesians 5:28 Paul says something quite profound. “He who lives his wife loves himself.” Why is this true?

Ephesians 5:31 is also quite profound. It tells us that Christian marriage is something mystical, in which “the two become one flesh.” What do you think that God means when he tells us this?

How much do you think Christ loves the church? How do you know this? What does this say about a Christian marriage?

Mon 2/8 Ephesians 6:1-9

Tues 2/9 Ephesians 6:10-17

Wed 2/10 Ephesians 6:18-24