Below are several expository sermons taken from the Book of Ephesians from Dr. John Oakes

**Ephesians I**

**God Creates Family**

**God Welcomes us Home**

Open: Tonight we will be talking about our unity as a family of God’s people. This is an appropriate lesson on the day that a new president is sworn in. One who promises to do much to create unity in our country. Let us pray for his success in this effort, whether you voted for him or not.

Paul to the Ephesians: A letter to those nearest and dearest to his heart.

1. Spent 3 years there, including a little riot.

2. Stopped at Troas on way to Jerusalem for arrest, trial and death to say hello to the elders. Acts 20 his most emotional sermon. (but don’t worry, I will not preach all night).

3. Sent his right hand man, Timothy, to take care of the church.

4. John was a shepherd there from the 70s on.

5. John was buried there.

Eph 1:3 Every spiritual blessing IN CHRIST.

The point: We are one IN HIM. Outside of him we were not one, to say the least!

Our oneness is IN HIM!

So, what do we have IN HIM?

v.4 holy and blameless

v. 5 We have adoption into his family!!! God took us in. He chose us!!! In Roman tradition, adopted sons had full inheritance.

Illustration: Ezekiel 16:1-7, 9-13. That is what God did for us. This was us spiritually….

The way Paul puts it: Eph 2:1-7!!! This is what we have in Christ. What did we have outside of Christ? This is not a pretty picture.

Adoption is a big theme in the Bible. God tells us/foreshadows for us our relationship with him by adoption:

1. Ruth was adopted by Naomi (and therefore married Boas, the father of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David. A hint about our adoption.

2. Moses was adopted by Pharaoh. Pharaoh (king, symbol of God here) adopts a slave into his household. Moses a prefigure of Jesus.

3. Esther was adopted by Mordecai. Esther saved Israel, becoming a prefigure of Jesus.

4. Oh, and guess who else got adopted in the Bible: Jesus!

Romans 9:4 Israel itself was also adopted (which explains Ezekiel 16),

Romans 8:23 In another sense, we have not yet been adopted but will be [fully] adopted when we reach heaven.

Illustration: the movie *Instant Family*. Mark Wahlberg.

More on adoption:

Eph 2:11-18. Here he is talking to Gentiles.

The audience of Ephesians is GENTILES (unlike Hebrews and Romans)

Where were we at? Spiritually, you were an orphan.

a. v. 11 Uncircumcized (I can live with that)

b. v. 12 Separate from Christ

c. v. 12 Excluded from citizenship

d. v. 12 Without hope

e. v. 12 Without God Talk about being on the outside looking in.

v. 14-18

a. He has made the two (Jew and Gentile) one

b. He has destroyed the barrier

Look at what we have in the Bakersfield Church of Christ! Black, white, Hispanic Asian, country music fan, rocker and hip-hop, old and young and yes, even Republican and Democrat!!!!

We are one. Q: How are we one? IN CHRIST!!!

v. 17 In context: Who was “near” the Jews. Who was “far away” Us!

Good news! It does not matter how far away you are.

v. 17 Q: is there a separate Holy Spirit for the black and the white?

 For the old and the young?

 For the rich and the poor?

 For the male and the female?

Q: Do we still have dividing lines in the church, and hostilities?

Yeah!

He is our peace!!! v. 14

You want to get close to your brother or sister: come close to Jesus.

Q: What else do we have IN CHRIST?

Eph 1:7-14

a. Redemption.

b. Forgiveness

v. 8 I love this word lavish…. Lavish

Pour so much on that you can hardly even hold it. (but v. 8 he did it with wisdom and understanding so as to not totally spoil it….)

v. 9 He let us in on the mysteries hidden for ages.

Q: What is this mystery?

v. 11 chosen

v. 13 included

Ephesians 3:3-6 A church of Jew and Gentile, progressive and conservative, rich and poor, black and white,

Fellowship questions:

1. How does it feel to you personally to be adopted into God’s family?

2. What can you do personally to make this church feel more like a home?

**Ephesians: One In Him II**

**Coming Home**

Last January: We talked about our unity as a family of God’s people from Ephesians Ch 1-2.

**Eph 1:3-5** Every spiritual blessing IN CHRIST.

Our oneness is IN HIM! We are coming home. The home we come home to his His Home. His Church. Our unity is IN HIM!

So, what do we have IN HIM?

v.4 chosen, holy and blameless

v. 5 We have adoption into his family!!! God took us in. He chose us!!!

Eph 2:1-7 What we have outside of Christ. You were dead in your sins. Gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature. Objects of wrath.

But God adopted us. Eph 2:11-18. Here he is talking to Gentiles.

Where were we at? Spiritually, we were an orphans.

a. v. 11 Uncircumcized (I can live with that)

b. v. 12 Separate from Christ

c. v. 12 Excluded from citizenship

d. v. 12 Without hope

e. v. 12 Without God Talk about being on the outside looking in.

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Look at what we have in the Bakersfield Church of Christ! Black, white, Hispanic Asian, country music fan, rocker and hip-hop, old and young and yes, even Republican and Democrat!!!!

We are one. Q: How are we one? IN CHRIST!!!

Ephesians 2:17 Peace to those who were near and those who were far. Who was “near” the Jews. Who was “far away” Us!

Good news! It does not matter how far away you are. Where you started does not matter. All that matters is where you are going.

Q: What else do we have IN CHRIST?

Eph 1:7-9

a. v. 7 Redemption.

b. v. 7 Forgiveness

v. 8 He lavished these things on us.

v. 9 He let us in on the mysteries hidden for ages.

Lesson #2 The Mystery Revealed.

Ephesians 2:19-22.

We are not strangers around here.

v. 19 We say “hello brother, hello sister.” What about “Hello, fellow-citizen.”

v. 19 Members of the same household. Welcome home. This is your family. (not just this is your spiritual family) (undo the power point briefly on zoom so people can see each other)

v. 20 Our unity is based on where we stand.

Our foundation is Jesus Christ, but with the Bible as our standard (the apostles and prophets). Our family covenant is in place. We do not need to negotiate terms.

v. 21 We are a building. We are a temple.

This is SO important. We rise and we fall together. Our society is so individualistic. We are a dwelling for God TOGETHER

In the religious world you go to the church that “meets your needs.”

I do not join the family that “meets my needs.” You are my family. I ain’t going nowhere else!!!!!

God put me in this family!!! I think he knew what he was doing!

Ephesians 3:2-13

Q: What is this mystery?

v. 6 The mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel: members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

v. 8-10 I was nothing, but for some reason God gave the mystery to me.

I love Eph 3:10!!!!! His intent (plan) was that now, **through the church** the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.

I don’t even know what that means!!!! But it is awesome.

In Him and through faith in him, we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

Eph 3:14-21.

What do we have in Christ? What do we have in the household of Christ? What do we have in this crazy, somewhat disfunctional thing we call church or family—our home?

We have love that is high, wide, long and deep!!! That is four dimensions, folks!!!

v. 19 If only we knew this love! What is it like? How can I describe it?

It “surpasses knowledge.”

If we knew this love, then we would be “filled to the brim (measure) with the fullness of God.

What can God do for us? What will he do for our family? What can he accomplish through us through our families, our teens, our singles, our campus group?

“Immeasurable more than all we can ask or even imagine” by his power.

Brothers and sisters, if we REALLY got this, then everything in the Christian life would make sense, and the Church would become what Jesus wants it to be.

Let us pray.

Ephesians Ch 1-3 Theology.

Ephesians Ch 4-6 Application.

Which is it?

1. Paul is giving some cool theology, but the theology is there to support his real purpose, which is to admonish them in Christian living.

Or

2. Paul is giving a deep treatise on the theology of Christ, and throws in a few useful applications at the end to illustrate what he just taught.

My answer: Neither. Paul states his theology of Christ and then illustrates his theology of Christ with many practical examples, specifically about life in the Church. They are both examples of and applications of….

A couple of examples:

Eph 4:17-24 You cannot live that way. Why not? V. 20-21a because it is not consistent with what you know about Christ.

Eph 4:29 No unwholesome talk. Why? v. 30 Because it will grieve the Holy Spirit which is in you as a deposit (Eph 1:13-14)

Eph 4:32 Be kind and compassionate. Why? because God in Christ forgave you (Eph 1:7, 2:8-10)

Eph 5:1 Love one another. Why? Because he loved you. (Eph 3:14-19)

Eph 5:3-7 Avoid sexual sin. Why? Because God brought you out of darkness. (Eph 2:1-8)

Eph 5:18 Do not get drunk. Why? Because the HS lives in you (Eph 2:22)

But we will see that next time.

Tonight’s groups: Let’s pray Paul said, “I pray.”

1. That we can know and understand this love.

2. That we can ask and/or imagine what God can do through us by his power.

**Ephesians: One In Him III**

**Practical Christianity in the Home**

Two devotionals: one in January and one in mid-May from Ephesians. Review.

**Eph 1:3-5** Every spiritual blessing IN CHRIST.

Our oneness is IN HIM! We are coming home. The home we come home to his His Home. His Church.

In Him we are:

v.4 chosen, holy and blameless

v. 5 We have adoption into his family!!! God took us in. He chose us!!!

Eph 2:1-7 Outside of Christ you were dead in your sins. Gratifying the cravings of your sinful nature. You were objects of wrath.

But God adopted us. Eph 2:11-18. Us Gentiles.

We were orphans:

a. v. 12 Separate from Christ

b. v. 12 Excluded from citizenship

c. v. 12 Without hope

d. v. 12 Without God

 but… v. 14-18

a. He has made the two (Jew and Gentile) He created family where there was none.

Look at what we have in the Bakersfield Church of Christ! Black, white, Hispanic Asian, country music fan, rocker and hip-hop, old and young and yes, even Republican and Democrat!!!!

We are one. How are we one? IN CHRIST!!!

Eph 1:7-9 What else do we have IN CHRIST?

a. v. 7 Redemption.

b. v. 7 Forgiveness lavished on us.

Lesson #2 The mystery of family and coming home revealed.

Ephesians 2:19-22.

v. 19 Members of the same household. Welcome home. This is your family.

v. 20 Our unity is based on where we stand.

Our foundation is Jesus Christ, but with the Bible as our standard (the apostles and prophets). Our family covenant is in place. We do not need to negotiate terms.

v. 21 We are a building. We are a temple. We rise and we fall together.

I do not join the family that “meets my needs.” You are my family. I ain’t going nowhere else!!!!!

Ephesians 3:2-13

Q: What is this mystery?

v. 6 The mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel: members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

I love Eph 3:10!!!!! His intent (plan) was that now, **through the church—through us corporately, as a church—**the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.

Eph 3:14-21.

What do we have in the household of Christ? What do we have in this crazy, somewhat disfunctional thing we call church or family—our home?

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Eph 4:32 Be kind and compassionate. Why? because God in Christ forgave you (Eph 1:7, 2:8-10)

**Ephesians 4:1-6** Paul the prisoner, whose spiritual resume is second to none, literally says:

“Live a life worthy of the calling.” Live a life worthy of Ephesians Ch 1-3. Worthy of the grace you were given. Worthy of having been adopted as a son or daughter. Worthy of the love that is high and wide and long and deep—the love that surpasses understanding.

Are you living a life worthy of what God has done for you?

So, now let’s get down to a family meeting:

We need unity here. Without unity of heart and mind, we cannot do anything significant for God.

Q: Do you want to see God do great things through this church?

v. 2 Then you need to be completely humble, gentle and patient.

Last Sunday with Ed and Leo. Leo: was I perfectly humble and patient there?

v. 3 Make every effort to maintain unity. Q: How much effort? Every effort. That is why I so strongly and publicly warn against posting provocative things on line.

That is why, when you have a problem with someone, you go and talk to them. Period. End of story.

But I don’t like what the worship team is doing! OK, if you can do something that “makes every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit” then go for it.

But I do not agree with their politics or their perspective on Covid-19.

Example in SD.

Otherwise, keep your opinion to yourself.

v. 4-6 Why? Because there is exactly one body… And there are a few things we agree on.

One hope: heaven

One Lord: Jesus

One baptism. (the one by immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins) (Aileen)

Ephesians 4:7-13 In our family, different people have different roles.

v. 8 They are based on the gifts God has given them.

CHRIST gave us evangelists, elders (I am NOT a pastor!!!!!), teachers, Bible-group leaders, HOPE coordinators, faith-sharers, tech, sound and music ministry people,

BTW, we have too few people around here doing too many jobs. I ALWAYS ask Mike and Yessie. I ALWAYS ask Cecilia. What is your gift, what is your role and what are you doing here?

What is the job of the leaders? To go to the hospital? To organize prayer nights? To find locations for church retreats?

v. 12 My job is to equip you!!!

Equip you with Bible knowledge, encouragement, vision, goals, spiritual training.

v. 12 The Goal. The goal tonight!!!!

1. The body built up. (not individuals, the body)

2. Create unity.

I want to help you to be mature. I REALLY want this. I cannot explain how badly I want this. Please help me! Come to meetings, do the devotionals I gave you last January. Come to the prayer nights! Come share in Tehachapi. Come to the HOPE events.

v. 13 Read this!!! Get this picture!!!

Eph 4:14-16

No longer infants. Imagine if your kids remained infants. It was an exciting time. But I am glad Ben no longer wears diapers. Our young Christians are an absolute delight!!!

v. 14 But we still have some who are weak in their doctrine. We still have a few who are not even sure that we need to have a deep repentance, a real, vibrant discipleship to Jesus, and then immersion into Christ for salvation.

There are some who embrace parts of premillennialism and pray-Jesus-into-your-heart.

Amen. We have some work to do.

Eph 4:16 Again. Get the picture. The body builds itself up. Not me doing it. Y’all doing it together.

Heidi calls Sarah. Tony calls Paul. Andrew calls Joe. Ed calls Monroe. Pulling in the weakest links. And we have some…

We gotta get out there in the spiritual gym and get some exercises going, and do not wait for me. Please!!!!!

You are a ligament. You are a tendon. You are creating unity. You are helping to pull together. Muscles are useless without tendons and ligaments.

Ephesians 4:17-25 Oh, and we need to deal with sin in our lives and in the lives of others.

4:25 Let’s get real here. Your neighbors, co-workers, and family are messed up!

Many of us are way too cozy with sin.

Your father, brother, aunt, fellow student, shopping buddy, golfing partner is:

Darkened

Separated

Ignorant

Lost sensitivity

Indulging in all kinds of impurity.

4:22 Put off the old self. Remember Ephesians 2:1-8 You were dead. Eph 2:12 You were separate and excluded from God’s people.

v. 13 But now you have been brought near.

Implication. You have been brought far from the world!!!! Are you acting that way.

Eph 4:26-5:2 Live like this!!!

Put off lies.

Put off anger that leads to sin.

Put off stealing (and your friends who still steal)

Put off unwholesome talk.

Q: What is the definition: Talk that does not build up.

Did that build up? No? Then don’t say it.

What you said to your wife, son, co-worker, teacher, fellow student. Did that build them up?

Put off bitterness

Put off malice (hoping bad to come on others)

5:2 How? Walk in love.

**Ephesians: One In Him IV**

**Coming Home**

**Eph 1:3-5** Every spiritual blessing IN CHRIST.

In Him we are:

v.4 chosen, holy and blameless

v. 5 We have adoption into his family!!! God took us in. He chose us!!!

Eph 2:1-7 Outside of Christ you were dead in your sins. Gratifying the cravings of your sinful nature. You were objects of wrath.

Eph 2:11-18.

We were:

a. v. 12 Separate from Christ

b. v. 12 Excluded from citizenship

c. v. 12 Without hope

d. v. 12 Without God

 but… v. 14-18 God adopted us into his family.

He has made the two (Jew and Gentile) He created family where there was none.

Ephesians 2:19-22.

v. 19 Members of the same household. Welcome home. This is your family.

v. 21 We are a building. We are a temple. We rise and we fall together.

Ephesians 3:2-13 The mystery

v. 6 The mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel: members together of one body.

Eph 3:10 His intent (plan) was that now, **through the church—through us corporately, as a church—**the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.

Eph 3:14-21. In Christ’s household, we have love that is high, wide, long and deep!!! It “surpasses knowledge.”

Eph Ch 1-3 Theology Ephesians Ch 4-6 Practical Application.

**Ephesians 4:1-6**

So, now let’s get down to a family meeting:

We need unity here.

Q: Do you want to see God do great things through this church?

v. 2 Then you need to be completely humble, gentle and patient.

v. 3 Make every effort to maintain unity. Q: How much effort? Every effort.

Ephesians 4:7-13 In our family, different people have different roles.

v. 8 They are based on the gifts God has given them.

v. 12 My job is to equip you!!!

v. 12 The Goal.

1. The body built up and made mature.

2. Create unity.

**Ephesians 4:17-24**  Oh, and we need to deal with sin in our lives and in the lives of others.

V 17-19. Do not live like the Gentiles do. We are different!

We had futile thinking,

We were darkened,

We were ignorant.

We had hardened hearts

We had lost sensitivity—we were unaware of many of our sins.

We gave ourselves over to sensuality and greed

Do not be deceived about the reality of the world!

This is your neighbor, your co-worker, your fellow student, your family member!!!

You can put lipstick on a pig, but they are still a pig.

v. 20-23 But that is not what you were taught around here.

v. 23 We need to put off these old things. How is it going???

v. 24 Put on the new self.

Romans 13:14 Clothe yourself with Christ.

When you step out the door, you put on a shirt, shoes, pants (hopefully)

Put on Christ!!!

Let Christ be the first thing people see when they see you!

**Eph 4:25-5:2** And there are some old clothes you definitely need to take off.

“Put off”

v. 25 lies

v. 26 sin that comes from anger

v. 29 unwholesome talk. What is that? Talk that does not build up/edify those you talk to. Put off filthy language, questionable jokes, unhelpful criticism, gossip. Put them off!

What have your conversations been like lately?

v.31 bitterness, rage, anger, arguing and down-putting (slander)

These are sins that cause disunity, division.

These are sins that make it hard for us to “Come Home.” To be family.

4:32-5:2 Put off these things.

When you go out of the house, when you walk into work, when you show up at church, when you enter the classroom…

Put on Christ (Eph 4:24 the new self, Romans 13:14). In other words.. Eph 5:2 Put on love as a garment.

Now, our last lesson from Ephesians (because Josh did Ephesians 6)

**Eph 5:3-13**

More sins to put off. Q: Are you OK with me talking about specific sins?

v. 3 Not even a hint of sexual immorality or impurity.

Do not do anything that could even be (falsely) interpreted as impure.

Single brother—do not hang out in a single sister’s bedroom, do not spend long time alone with a sister. Do not spend time in dark places. Make sure there are other people around.

Married brother—do not have lunch with another woman, even if it is innocent.

Or if you do so, be super open about it.

4 years ago I was with a well-known brother and we were turning around the car, and ended up in the parking lot of a sex shop. We got out of there like a bat out of hell.

Do not go alone to certain movies, bars, casinos. Do not go to a place where, if another disciple saw you, they would be tempted to think “Why is he/she in there?”

Two years ago I needed ice for a campus event. I walked into a liquor store. Mistake?

Let us avoid even the possible appearance of immorality, impurity

v. 3 And greed. Do not throw money around. Don’t buy super expensive cars, clothing, vacations. Why are you buying $120 shoes? Again, not even a hint of greed. “I like nice things.” Is there a hint of greed there?

What does a “hint” of greed look like?

v. 4 Obscenity (obviously!!!), but also foolish talk and coarse joking.

If these start at work, in class, at a family gathering, get out of there. Say something. Do not just blend in!!!

Why? v. 5 These kind of people go to hell. This is not kingdom of God stuff.

You are a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Let us live like that!!!!

v. 7 When people in the world live this way, distance yourself from them.

v. 8-13 We are children of light. Light exposes darkness.

If your co-workers gossip (or, heaven forbid if fellow disciples gossip), point it out.

If they joke about lusting after women—looking at their bodies, expose that!!!

(example in the copy shop when I did that).

Rosa Santiago is like this. She tells it like it is (but she does so in love)

Q: Who do you know that is bold in exposing darkness, both in the church and outside? Imitate that person.

v. 11 Have you been exposing darkness? Are you willing to call out racism, greed, sexual immorality, lust, drunkenness, profanity.

v. 13. Everything exposed by the light…. Who does this exposing? You!!!

**Eph 5:15-20** Summary.

Be careful. Be wise. Think about your life, what you say, where you go, what you do.

v. 16 In your daily life, consider every situation as an opportunity.

In the store, at work, at family gatherings.

What is my opportunity here to expose darkness, show Christ.

v. 18 Be aware of what the Holy Spirit is telling you to do or to say.

**Eph 5:21-6:9** Coming Home. Roles in the Body.

Eph 5:21. Here is the bottom line:

Our family only works if we submit ourselves to one another.

Paul is going to talk about specific roles and specific relationships, but this is the bottom line.

We are so quick to express our agenda, to voice our opinion, to make our need known.

How will this family operate smoothly?

Eph 5:21 Let us submit to one another. Let us consider the needs of our brothers and sisters before our own.

Eph 5:22-6:4 (read the whole thing). It all starts in the home, does it not?

Wives, let your husbands take the lead. That is in the Bible. (but I prefer to let the women talk to the women about that, so I am moving on…)

Husbands, lead!!!! How? By loving your wives.

Would your wife say with great confidence: My husband really loves me and cares for me!!!!

v. 27 How do you know if you are doing a good job? Is your wife radiant?

(Well, my wife is always criticizing and nagging me. She has no time to be radiant as she is always criticizing)

Well, that is her role, but what are you doing to make her radiant?

v. 28 He who loves his wife, loves himself.

Men: you want your wife to be more loving? Love her!!!! Serve her!!! Listen to her!!! Take her burdens!!! Do the dishes, clean the bathroom, ask her opinion, take her on a date.

v. 29 You take a shower, you work out, right?

Make sure her needs are met first!

Eph 6:1-3 Children obey (but they are not here in this class, so I won’t cover that)

Eph 6:4 Parents: Do not try to overly control your children. If you correct them, do it in love. Do not ever yell at them!!! If you do “control” them, always remember it is so that you can let them go! Start letting them go as early and as soon as you responsibly can.

Eph 6:5-9 Workers—be the best worker you can. Give your heart, not just your body to your work. Do your best to submit to your boss, even if he/she is not a reasonable person. Who knows? You might convert your boss by your behavior.

v. 9 Bosses, use the Golden Rule of being a boss. Remember who the ultimate boss is.

Discussion Questions:

1. What part of the old self do you want to put off?

2. What part of the new self do you want to put on?

3. What does “exposing the darkness” around us mean to you, practically? What might it involve you doing?

**Ephesians 6**

Eph 6:10-17

Be strong IN THE LORD

Q: Where do you find your strength? Really??????

Where does our strength come from?

v. 12 We are in a struggle, but what are you struggling against?

-your spouse is not the enemy

-your boss is not the enemy

-the government is not the enemy

-your Bible group leader is not the enemy

-your kids are not the enemy.

-your circumstances are not the enemy.

-even your enemy is not your enemy.

Our battle is a spiritual one.

The weapons you use depend on the battle you are fighting.

You do not bring a sword into a courtroom.

You do not bring a gun to a football game.

You do not bring a philosophy book to war.

For a spiritual war, here are the weapons you need:

1. The belt of truth.

2. The breastplate of righteousness.

3. Readiness of having the gospel message.

4. Shield of faith.

5. Helmet of salvation.

6. Sword of God—the Scriptures.

How strong are we as human beings? What makes you strong in human terms?

Nick Plum is pretty strong. Nick: are you prepared to take on Satan?

Jan Oakes is quite beautiful.

Rick Norris has a really great job.

Gus Longacre is really smart.

If we were all as smart an Nick, all as beautiful or handsome as Jan, all had as good a job and successful career as Rick Norris and all as smart as Gus Longacre, could we take the world for Christ and could we beat back Satan?

No!!!!!! So, why do we try to do exactly that.

Sammy Silipo

Now, let’s give Sammy the full armor of God and who is going to win the battle?

Let’s get a picture of how formidable a warrior each of us truly is.

If we wear the full armor of God, then he can use our intelligence, our money, our physical strength, our good looks can actually be used by God.

Truth: Do you have any idea what strength we gain from having the truth? We do not live in doubt. We have great confidence. Even if we lose a debate we are still right!

Righteousness: I think of Lot in 2 Peter 2:7 Lot, a righteous man. If you are in Christ, then you are a righteous person. No-one can level any charges against you. We cannot be blackmailed. We are truly and in fact innocent. What strength this gives us. A lot more than a million bucks.

The Gospel. The good news of salvation. We have the one thing every single person truly needs and wants. We are selling the winning super lotto ticket. This should make us VERY confident, even if people around us do not believe we have the winning ticket.

Our faith. This is the most awesome weapon ever devised. It can defeat armies,… Hebrews 11:32-38 Will you rely on your faith in God rather than on your own amazingness, which is really not all that amazing?

Faith can move mountains. Luke 17:6

Faith allowed Noah to build an ark, Abraham to walk out of Ur, Moses to walk out of Pharaoh’s palace, Joshua to march around Jericho.

Salvation. How much courage can we gain from the fact of our salvation. What can the world take from us? Illustration: From the play/movie Upside Down. “Don’t you dare even give a thought of saving me today. I am already saved and for that gift, there’s no price I won’t pay.”is

What is our salvation worth? Luke 9:25 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet to lost his soul? Your salvation is worth more than every single thing in the entire world. What do you suppose that the entire world would sell for?

Hebrews 13:5-6 “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you. So we say with confidence, The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

The sword: the Word of God. This is our “offensive” weapon.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ.

(holding up my Bible) Do you have any concept of the power you hold in your hands right here? Folks, let’s start using our sword. Let’s learn how to wield it. Let us hone our skills in using our sword.

Brothers and Sisters and friends, let us stand firm!!!!!!!

Let us wear the armor of God!!!!!

Ephesians 6:18-20 Interesting. This is one more gift, but he leaves it for last. Prayer.

Do you have ANY CONCEPT of the power we hold in our hands. The power of prayer.

Paul: I want you to have a vision of what the gospel can and will do here in San Diego. If we will only pray and declare the gospel fearlessly, what can God do? How many doors can God open? How many can be saved?

Will you do me and God a favor? Will you pray for the harvest of souls?

If we wear the full armor and if we pray, I believe we will declare the truth fearlessly, and imagine what can happen.

Ephesians 6:21-24

As we finish Ephesians, let us think of all the amazing things we have in Christ.

We have every spiritual blessing 1:4

We have the Holy Spirit—a guarantee of our salvation 1:13-14

We have grace which frees us from obligation 2:8-10

We have an inheritance—We have been adopted

**Reconnect II**

**Reconnecting With One Another**

**God Creates Family**

Open: This weekend we spent some time thinking about becoming reconnected with God and with one another. In this lesson, I will spend some time looking at how, in Christ, we are connected both to God and to one another.

Eph 1:3 Every spiritual blessing IN CHRIST.

The point: We are one IN HIM. Outside of him we were not one, to say the least!

Our oneness is IN HIM!

v.4 We are holy and blameless in Him

v. 5 We have adoption into his family!!! God took us in. He chose us!!! In Roman tradition, adopted sons had full inheritance.

Think about the implications for us. We are connected in the most intimate possible way with the God who created the universe.

We are also family.

Adoption is a big theme in the Bible. God tells us/foreshadows for us our relationship with him by adoption:

1. Ruth was adopted by Naomi (and therefore married Boas, the father of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David. A hint about our adoption.

2. Moses was adopted by Pharaoh. Pharaoh (king, symbol of God here) adopts a slave into his household. Moses a prefigure of Jesus.

3. Esther was adopted by Mordecai. Esther saved Israel, becoming a prefigure of Jesus.

4. Oh, and guess who else got adopted in the Bible: Jesus!

Romans 9:4 Israel itself was also adopted

Romans 8:23 In another sense, we have not yet been adopted but will be [fully] adopted when we reach heaven.

Illustration: the movie *Instant Family*. Mark Wahlberg.

It was not always this way!

The way Paul puts it: Eph 2:1-7!!! What did we have outside of Christ? This is not a pretty picture.

v. 1 Dead in your sins.

v. 3 Gratifying the cravings of your sinful nature.

v. 4 Objects of wrath.

v. 5 But… Praise God for the but here

Skip down to Eph 2:11-12

Where were we at? Spiritually, you were an orphan.

a. v. 11 Uncircumcized (I can live with that)

b. v. 12 Separate from Christ

c. v. 12 Excluded from citizenship

d. v. 12 Without hope

e. v. 12 Without God Talk about being on the outside looking in.

But… v. 13

v. 14-18

a. He has made the two (Jew and Gentile) one

b. He has destroyed the barrier

Look at what we have in our singles ministries! Black, white, Hispanic Asian, country music fan, rocker and hip-hop, old and young and yes, even Republican and Democrat!!!!

We are one. Q: How are we one? IN CHRIST!!!

v. 17 In context: Who was “near” the Jews. Who was “far away” Us!

Good news! It does not matter how far away you are.

We can be and we are reconnected In Christ!!!

v. 17 Q: is there a separate Holy Spirit for the black and the white?

 For the old and the young?

 For the rich and the poor?

 For the male and the female?

Q: Do we still have dividing lines in the church, and hostilities?

Yeah!

He is our peace!!! v. 14

You want to get close to your brother or sister: come close to Jesus.

Q: What else do we have IN CHRIST?

Eph 1:7-14

a. Redemption.

b. Forgiveness

v. 8 I love this word lavish…. Lavish

Pour so much on that you can hardly even hold it. (but v. 8 he did it with wisdom and understanding so as to not totally spoil it….)

v. 9 He let us in on the mysteries hidden for ages.

Q: What is this mystery?

v. 11 chosen

v. 13 included

Ephesians 2:19-22.

We are not strangers around here.

v. 19 We say “hello brother, hello sister.” What about “Hello, fellow-citizen.”

v. 19 Members of the same household. Welcome home. This is your family. (not just this is your spiritual family) (undo the power point briefly on zoom so people can see each other)

v. 20 Our unity is based on where we stand.

Our foundation is Jesus Christ, but with the Bible as our standard (the apostles and prophets). Our family covenant is in place. We do not need to negotiate terms.

v. 21 We are a building. We are a temple.

This is SO important. We rise and we fall together. Our society is so individualistic. We are a dwelling for God TOGETHER

In the religious world you go to the church that “meets your needs.”

I do not join the family that “meets my needs.” You are my family. I ain’t going nowhere else!!!!!

God put me in this family!!! I think he knew what he was doing!

Ephesians 3:2-13

Q: What is this mystery?

v. 6 The mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel: members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

God makes connections.

v. 8-10 I was nothing, but for some reason God gave the mystery to me.

I love Eph 3:10!!!!! His intent (plan) was that now, **through the church** the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.

Connection, if it comes at all, comes through the Church!

In Him and through faith in him, we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

Eph 3:14-21.

What do we have in Christ? What do we have in the household of Christ? What do we have in this crazy, somewhat disfunctional thing we call church or family—our home?

We have love that is high, wide, long and deep!!! That is four dimensions, folks!!!

v. 19 If only we knew this love! What is it like? How can I describe it?

It “surpasses knowledge.”

If we knew this love, then we would be “filled to the brim (measure) with the fullness of God.

What can God do to and through us to create community?

“Immeasurable more than all we can ask or even imagine” by his power.

Brothers and sisters, if we REALLY got this, then everything in the Christian life would make sense, and the Church would become what Jesus wants it to be.