**EPHESIANS**

**The Secret God Couldn’t Keep**

**Ch. 6 “Armor, All”**

P

aul’s writings, like this letter to believers in today’s Turkey, shaped Western civilization’s values, laws, education, literature and our accountability to God. Ephesians depicts life when Jews and Gentiles are united in “the Church, the Body of Christ.”

Imprisoned in Rome, Paul writes to Gentiles and Jews to explain the “Mystery” (the “Gospel of the Grace of God”) which God had kept secret until Paul revealed that *all* believers are now one “in Christ” (Ephesians 3:9-11).

In chs. 1-3 we see that God has equipped us with *all* we need to live (Colossians 2:10). In chs. 4-6 Paul shows how our blessings determine our behavior, unlike religion which says our behavior determines our blessings! Let’s read Ephesians 6:1-24. (p. 1177 NIV)

**“Teach Your Children Well”**

**6:1-4**

God says, “Kids, obey your folks. It brings peaceful, lifetime rewards” (Proverbs 10:27; Colossians 3:20). And parents must not drive their heirs to resentful rebellion, but teach them about the Lord, pray for, discipline and encourage them (Hebrews 12:7-11).

DISCUSS: How do we *not* provoke them when expectations are unmet?

**Slave Drivers**

**6:5-9**

First century masters could treat slaves as they saw fit, yet to God all were equal in the Body of Christ. A slave was to have his master’s best interest as his goal, even if abused (1 Corinthians 7:17-24). God’s antidote for conflict is “Be subject to each other out of respect to Christ” (1 Peter 2:17). Employers should treat workers fairly since both labor and management answer to God (Galatians 2:6).

We should reflect Jesus’ gentle humility to our leaders, not flaunting our allegiance to Christ as an excuse to disobey them, except if being pressured to sin. We are to be salt and light in our workplace for we are actually employed by the Lord (Colossians 3:22-24).

DISCUSS: What would change if you focused on Jesus as your boss?

**Man Up**

**6:10-17**

Life is a struggle, not with people, but with Satan who, as the mutinous angel Lucifer, was ejected from heaven along with one-third of all the angels (Ezekiel 28:11-19)! He delights in deceiving, destroying, causing death and all the evil that’s ever occurred. This answers the question, “If there’s a God, why’s there so much bad stuff?” Above all, the devil is bent on keeping us from hearing, believing and living out the Gospel of Grace (Revelation 12:9).

The Bible calls Satan the prince of this world, the god of this age, the power of the air, and an angel of light, having “authority over all the kingdoms of the world” (2 Corinthians 4:3,4). That’s obvious since today’s political and religious leaders are clueless to solve the human condition. Satan may have temporary clout over this earth but NOT over the universe and eternity (Colossians 1:16, 2:13-15).

Knowing our weakness, God *is* our strength! His combat gear is all we need (Romans 8:18-39; 2 Corinthians 10:1-6; Colossians 2:10).

1. The Belt of Truth keeps you from tripping over untruths (2 Corinthians 1:12; 1 Timothy 1:5, 18; 3:9). In this age of relativism and tolerance, truth is compromised, even in the pulpit (Jude 3,4).

2. The Breastplate of Righteousness guards your heart (1 John 3:7).

3. Sandals of Peace. Roman soldiers wore spikes to traverse tough terrain and get a foothold. We need to be anchored in God’s Word.

4. The Shield of Faith. Your trust in God grows by hearing His Word (Romans 10:17).

5. The Helmet of Salvation defends your mind, your #1 battlefield.

6. The Sword of the Spirit is God’s Word, our only *offensive* weapon.

Wearing God’s armor, you’ll resist the devil as Christ did when He faced the evil one in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11).

DISCUSS: How do we handle difficult people if they are *not* our enemy?

**Prayer Chain**

**6:18-24**

Paul encourages us to keep praying based on his key points:

*2:1-4 “You were once dead because of your sins. You followed the ways of this present world and its spiritual ruler (Satan)… we deserved God’s anger just like everyone else. BUT GOD is rich in mercy because of His great love for us.”*

2:8,9 “*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

3:16-21 “*I ask God from the wealth of His glory to give you power through His Spirit to be strong in your inner selves (with) your roots and foundation in … Christ's love … completely filled with the very nature of God. To Him who by His power in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for or think of … “*

4:1 “*… live the kind of life which proves that God has called you.”*

Paul desires that we have the unshakeable peace that comes from receiving God’s unlimited grace and pardon for sin through faith in His Son. Have you settled your relationship with God by placing all of your trust in Jesus? If so, then you have peace *WITH* God. Are you experiencing the peace *OF* God? If not, we’re here to help you resolve these life-or-death questions. Shall we talk?

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