

THE DESIGN AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

2025 QUARTER 1 WEDNESDAY NIGHT ADULT CLASS

WEEK 7: *MEMBERSHIP: THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST (L.A. STAUFFER)*

FEBRUARY 12, 2025

Intro

God's revealed gospel unveils His "eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus," unfolding the church as "the fullness of Christ."

(Eph. 3:8-11)

Mankind seems to always have a need to uncover mysteries, including the mysteries of the mind of God. From the smallest atom to the vastness of the universe, humans seek to understand the wisdom of the mind of God. As Christians, we know that God has revealed to us all of the mysteries in His mind that we need to know. *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things."* (Romans 11:33-36)

Paul outlined for the Ephesians the glorious scheme of human redemption, formerly hidden in the mind of God, now manifested at the fullness of the times in Christ. The church is a divinely crafted body of believers who can know peace with God.

Fullness of Christ

'And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.'

(Eph. 1:22-23)

Ephesians 1: Paul opens his letter with praise to God and Father of Jesus, "who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing". He has chosen us "before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love". (Eph. 1:3-4) God certainly deserves our praise for devising His plan for us.

This plan centered around Christ (and not us): His coming, His death and resurrection, and His calling to us to be faithful disciples. Through this calling, we can also receive forgiveness of sins through baptism, "according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. 1:6-7, Rom. 6:3, Gal. 3:26-27)

This plan of man's redemption is ultimately manifested in the church, where Christ is ruler and seated at God's right hand as its head.

Ephesians 1:7-14 *As God's children, list the blessings that the church enjoys?*

Ephesians 1:4 *How has God "chosen" Christians? Also note some modern misconceptions surrounding this idea.*

Workmanship of God

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

(Ephesians 2:8-10)

Habitation of The Spirit

VERSE

Ephesians 2:1-10 Paul discusses in this chapter of God's transformation of man from "dead through trespasses and sin" (vss. 1,5) to "alive and raised up with Christ" (vss. 5,6). What a testimony to God's workmanship! Where man was once separated by enmity between he and his God (Isa. 59:1-2, Jas. 4:4), doomed to God's eternal vengeance, we are now transformed through obedience into instruments of good works in Christ's kingdom.

This transformed person has "put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." (Eph. 4:24). As Christians, we know that this transformation has an initial and overall ongoing process: hearing the word, belief in the word and in Christ as the Son of God, our confession of that faith, our repentance from our sins, and our baptism as our obedience to the gospel.

Ephesians 2:1-3 *What is man's condition by nature? Discuss God's grace.*

Discuss the well-known "Steps to Salvation" and its importance to the spiritual development of the Christian. Are these steps a checklist, or an ongoing growth?

Ephesians 2 :11-22 Paul reminds his readers of the separation which once existed between Jew and Greek, in addition to their separation from God because of their iniquities. As Christ's death bridged the gap between God and man, it also brought hostile races of people together as "one new man" (vs. 15). The church would be where all people of the earth could come and enjoy peace, between each other and with God.

He goes on to write about this church as a "dwelling of God in the Spirit" (vs. 22). Christians now have access in one Spirit to The Father (vs. 18), our faith being built upon the Spirit's revelation, the "foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone". (vs. 20) The building built on this corner stone would be made up of "fellow citizens with the saints in God's household" (vs. 19), and a "holy temple in the Lord." (vs. 21) What a true blessing it is to be redeemed and in God's household!

Acts 17 :24 *Where does God not dwell?*

Col. 3:5, 9-10, 12, Eph. 4:22-24 *As a habitation of the Spirit, what must men put away?*
