

**Read Ephesians 1:15-23**

**1. Last study, we considered the two-fold nature of God's power. How has this truth been of encouragement to you?**

- The power with which God works in the lives of believers, is the same might by which he raised Christ. How can God not be for us as he works all things for our good?

*Eph 1:22-23 - And he put all things 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.*

**2. What does it mean when the verse says in regards to Christ...**

**a. Put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church (c.f. 1 Cor 15:27)**

- Recall from the previous study that the church is God's glorious inheritance, it is made up of the redeemed people of God.

1 Cor 15:27

- All things are under Christ's subjection, his rule, his authority
- He is the head, the ruler of the church
  - Sets the direction of his kingdom, and holds the peace and unity among his kingdom
- King sits on a throne above everyone.
  - Subjects are at his feet
  - Enemies are ruled over
- We are united to Christ, we have a derived authority

**b. ... the church, which is his body (c.f. Col 1:18, Eph 4:15-16)**

Col 1:18

- Christ, the head directs the body, he rules it
- He empowers us by association

Eph 4:15-16

- He is the head, we are the body (the church)
- We are to grow in him, he nourishes us (he is the source, the fountain, the head that controls the body)
- We all have a part and are joined together, empowered by Christ to carry out his desire and will

**c. The fullness of him who fills all in all (c.f. Col 1:17, Col 2:9-10)**

Col 1:17

- Christ continually holds all things together, he sustains the world

Col 2:9-10

- Christ possesses the fullness of the divine nature. The visible expression of God in flesh
- We have been filled in Christ. Christ fills us.
  - Share in Christ's power and authority
- The church is the visible fullness of Christ to the world. The light in the darkness, revealing the big picture
- Union with Christ
  - What Christ is, we are. What we are is in Christ.

Christ fills all in all

- Idea of sustaining, fueling, filling the entire world
  - Prevents it from falling into utter chaos
- Christ fills all, but the fullness of Christ is found in the church
  - The church is the fullness of Christ made known
  - What are the ramifications for each one of us?

**3. If the church is where the fullness of Christ is manifested, what are the implications for us (1 Cor 12:27)? In light of this, how should we view the church? How should we view one another?**

- Christ fills the universe, but the fullness of Christ is expressed in the church
  - This is the manifold wisdom of God is manifested and on display for the world to see
- The church is made up of believers, me and you
- We are filled with Christ, our identity is found in him by our union with him

How should we view the church?

- Hold the church in a high view, it is the fullness of Christ
- Hold scripture in high regards, it is the very word of God
- You cannot walk away from the Church (capital C), walking away is turning your back on Christ

How should we view one another?

- Remember the church is made up of sinners who are being progressively sanctified
  - Ongoing process, have the end goal in mind
  - The momentarily struggles and sufferings at the hands of a brother or sister in Christ are shaping you into becoming more like Jesus
- God is far more concerned with how your present life is shaping your future life. God has the end goal, the long term goal in mind
- Treat each other as Christ treated the sinners who gathered to him. He loved them ultimately gave his life up for them
- We must serve one another, fulfilling the roles that God prepared us for
- United to one another, working towards a common purpose

**Read Ephesians 2:1-10**

**4. Contrast life “before” (v1-3) and life “after” (v4-10) being made alive in Christ, what do you see from the passage?**

Before

- Dead
- Children of wrath
- Lived for the desires of the flesh

After

- Alive
- Objects of love, mercy and grace
- Set our minds on the above with Christ

*Eph 2:1-3 - And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

**5. In what ways were we “dead” in our trespasses and sins? Consider Gen 2:16-17, Ezek 37:1-6, 11-14 and Col 1:21.**

Dead to the things of God. Spiritually dead.

- Idea of being foreign
  - “You are dead to me”
  - Alienated or being an outcast
  - Satisfied with the desires of the flesh

Gen 2:16-17

- Separated from God post fall
- Physical death was not immediate
- Spiritual death was immediate, cast out of the garden, no longer enjoyed God and his presence

Ezek 37:1-6, 11-14

- Bones are very dry, very dead without any hope
- V11 – the bones are cut off from knowing God (v13)
- They depend entirely on God to be raised and resurrected (100%)

Col 1:21

- Alienated, hostile, doing evil deeds

Just some examples on how to understand what it means to be dead.

- Cut off from God
- Hostile, an alien, depraved

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Addressing the church, Paul paints a picture of humanity before God’s intervention. Mankind was:

- Following the course of this world
- Following the prince of the power of the air (Satan and demonic forces)
  - This spirit is marked by disobedience, living a life and having an allegiance that is contrary to God

## **6. Reflection: Paul is speaking about you, do you agree with his assessment here? Why or why not?**

Point of the question is for individuals to realize that this passage is speaking about themselves.

- Most of us can see ourselves in the passage
- Understand that you are fighting daily against your flesh and sinful desires

## **7. What does it mean to be “by nature children of wrath” (c.f. Col 3:5-6)?**

NIV = objects of wrath

- Nature, “let it run its course”
- It is our destiny, our natural progression

Col 3:5-6

- Wrath of God is the logical conclusion to living a sinful lifestyle
  - We see the fruits of the sin nature
- God’s wrath remains without his direct intervention

We were once objects of God's wrath, opposing him in our rebellion and were dead to him. What a hopeless state we were in! However, the story doesn't end there, recall the contrast from question #4, that God being rich in his mercy raised us from the dead and made us alive in Christ. For the Christian, recalling our sinful and helpless stateserves as a reminder of God's transforming work in our lives(v4-10). This is should cause us to praise him all the more!

Paul continues by reminding the readers that what God has done for us in Christ is a present reality, however it is only in the coming ages that it will it be fully seen for what it is. In the light of God's gracious saving work, we as believers, the church which is filled by Christ are called to be ambassadors in the world, proclaiming this message of salvation to all.