

# “...flooded with light.”

Ephesians 1:7-23

by Pastor Tim Dodson  
at Believers City Church  
in Menomonie, Wis  
on October 30, 2022

*Ephesians 1 - 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,*

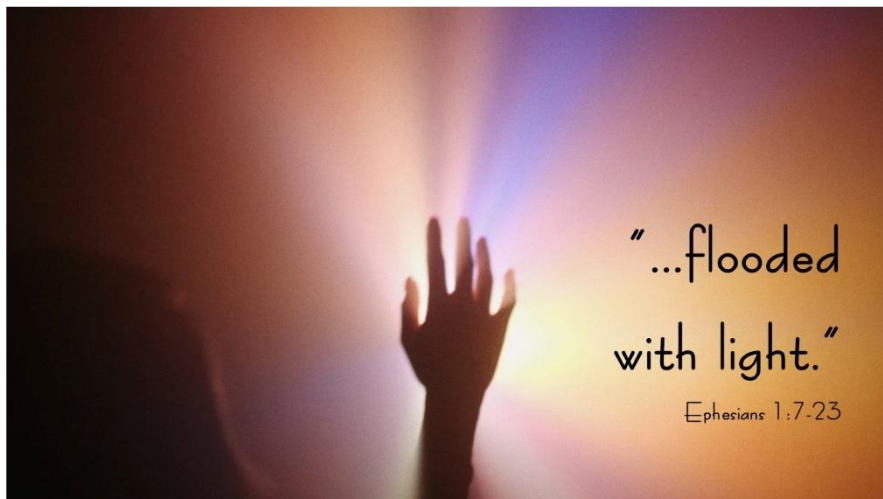
*10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. 11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. 13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. 15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

## Chapter 1:7

This passage begins with those crucial words to our understanding and reception of this letter: “*IN HIM.*” All that he is going to talk about now revolves around those two words. “Redemption” is one of those church words that we accept as Christian ease, but often we don’t really understand it’s impact. Paul says “we” have this redemption. While the “we” herein can be seen to encompass all of mankind, Paul is particularly addressing believers, especially those that are in Ephesus. For ‘redemption’ only has meaning and power to us that have accepted Christ. The “we” then, is addressed to the faithful community. To those that are residing “in Him.”

I wonder how many of us tacitly understand the concept that Jesus ‘saves us’ but we really have no grasp as to how that happens! Such an understanding begins with the fact that upon our entrance into this world, we are an immediate possession of sin and Satan. It is the default standing throughout our life if we do nothing concerning our status with our Creator. Paul tells us in chapter 2, that before redemption, we all are “dead in trespasses and sins.”

One crucial understanding, is that Jehovah is a God of justice...Isaiah 45:21 tells us “...*there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me.*” We may not like that fact, but if there is to be true justice, there has to be penalty to sin. That is a difficult sell today because man wants justice when they are wrongly dealt with, but not so much when they are the one that did the wrong. So our usual stance is that we haven’t done anything wrong even though we know it to be true.



If we are left without a rescue, we each will have to pay for our sins and the ‘penalty’ of sin is death. It is “capital punishment” for us! Without Christ, we are choosing to make that payment ourselves because there is no other payment. We are truly “dead men walking!” Furthermore, not only is there a final judgement penalty, but until we pay, there is a bondage. The bible often speaks in such terms when speaking of one being a slave. The fact is, we are “owned” by that which controls us! And for sure...despite any and all denial, that ownership is never us despite a lifetime of trying.

This concept might be somewhat ambiguous to us, but in Paul’s day it would be well understood! Often in that day...when a person could not pay his debt, he was “sold” into slavery to pay the debt in work and servitude. And until we surrender to Christ, that ‘owner’ is sin and Satan. Christ came to pay our debt himself, and to “buy us back.”

Verse 6 of this chapter said that Christ “made us accepted in the beloved.” He paid for our debt and bought us out of bondage and made us free. He did this not by force and weapons, but by paying for our debt Himself.

Previously a lamb would be offered as an atoning stand in “payment” for our sin. But that sacrifice had to occur again and again...repeatedly for our repeated sins, and that lamb had to be flawless and perfect. Jesus...a sinless God and man, became our flawless and perfect lamb. And he was sacrificed in our place, and did so with one difference: *His sacrifice was once, forever, and for everyone.* To do that, He had to be *extremely* perfect! The word “have” in this verse is in the present tense...expressing a present and continual action. We **have** redemption, and we will have redemption *forever*.

### **1:8**

Paul says in verse 8 that this grace “abounds.” That grace is the “free and unearned favor and love of God.” *Free and unearned.* AND IT ABOUNDS!

The text says that this grace comes “in all wisdom and prudence.” That’s nice...*but what does that* mean?

Wisdom is the knowledge that sees into the heart of things. It is the ability to see the great ultimate truths of eternity. We could use the word “insight.” Prudence is defined as “the understanding which leads to right action,” “the ability to solve the problems of each moment of time,” and “wise conduct.”

Neither wisdom nor prudence is merely a matter of an IQ. True wisdom and prudence are revealed from God through His Word. Jeremiah 10:23 *O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.* In other words, without God, we don’t know where we going. Our daily news is proof of that.

### **1:9-10**

The “mystery of His will?” What is this mystery? That Jesus Christ would come and sew everything up with a bow. He would be the missing piece... the answer to this problem within mankind. Man has been trying for hundreds of years to make it work under his own will and power. He tried to be righteous through his works, the temple sacrifices, all the effort we could muster...but everything has failed. The hearts of men were and are worse than ever, and that is just what God was trying to show us.

John 8:34 says, “Men are slaves to sin.” Romans 6:17 says, “Men are servants to sin.” Romans 7:14; “Sold under sin.” Romans 8:21; “In bondage to corruption.” Who then or what is the captor of men? *Sin.*

Without a redeemer, we are lost. We can never make things right ourselves.

Through Christ, God has taken us into the secret councils of the almighty. Our natural state is that we are enemies and hostile toward God, and yet He provided a way to find peace with Him. He stepped in to make things right with us. We are the guilty ones, and yet *He* made the peace! Jesus on the cross spoke those words... "*it is finished.*" The purpose of the ages is accomplished in Christ.

So how is your heart today? Are you at peace? Is there an innate joy in your life? Do you know where you are going? Where you came from? How you got here? What your purpose is? If you know these things, you understand the "mystery" Paul is speaking of. If you don't, then you do not yet understand this mystery.

### **1:11**

The phrase "*in Him also we have obtained an inheritance*" speaks to our inclusion in Abraham's promise to the nation of Israel. Our inclusion is not due to national lineage but solely upon our union with Christ. This is not a new plan. Nor does it exclude or end Israel's special place in the scope of God's plan. But it does tell us that God always planned our inclusion...that we were "predestined" to join in the inheritance as children of God.

### **1:12**

We are the "trophy of the grace of God." All that we are and all that we do, is to be to the praise of His glory. We have been *chosen by God*, for the purpose of bringing Him glory and the furthering of His kingdom. We are to "seek *first* the kingdom of God." Before all other considerations and priorities.

The great minister Vance Havner once wrote:

*"Now, Christ is the Great Gatherer, and if we do not gather with Him He makes it plain that we scatter, we work against Him. The only way we can help Him gather is by winning souls and fishing for men. Mind you, if we are not engaged in some form of this great gathering we are not merely indifferent; we are not neutral. He made it plain that we are instruments of division and discord, that if we are not active with Him we are active against Him. No matter how much you may wave a Bible, if you are not gathering with Christ you are not merely wasting time, you are working against the only unifying force in all existence."*

### **1:13-14**

Paul walks us through the steps of our own salvation, and the path we are to use to direct all those who follow. Nothing here about "seeker sensitive" or modern ever evolving church theology...or any new hip methodology for people to find God. Just the same old blessed gospel that has led us home from the beginning: we hear the 'word of truth' and we trust in it. We believe, surrender, and are rescued.

The Holy Spirit is the guarantee...the "down payment" ...the proof of our true redemption. The Greek word for *guarantee* can also be used to indicate an engagement ring. As Christ is the Bridegroom and the church is the bride, so the Holy Spirit is the down payment, the earnest money, *our "engagement ring"* in the long-awaited marriage of the bride of Christ ...the church and our Messiah...

### **1:15-16**

Paul begins here with the word "therefore." Or, *because of all that I just said for the last 14 verses.*

Paul had waxed on for 14 verses in personal praise and He now adds prayer to His praise. It is clear that the reputation of the believers there in Ephesus had reached his ears. He had heard of their faith, and such faith

naturally leads to genuine love of others...so he had heard about that too. Because faith is more than just belief. It is the expression of, the act of, the believer's trust in God. And that is manifest in love...

The Ephesians believers' faith was in the Lord Jesus. 'Lord' means master, owner or the one who has absolute ownership power. We are so quick to call Him Lord, but is He *really*? The truth of the matter is, few of us truly know that kind of connection.

This 'love' spoken of here is 'agape'...the unconditional, sacrificial love; the love God Himself is. Not sentimental or emotional but obedient in our seeking of another's highest good. Sometimes that is sweet and pleasant. Sometimes it can even be painful.

Paul was obviously very connected to these believers. They were a part of his constant prayer life and the thoughts of them caused him to give God praise. It all elicited an awe and wonder in Paul which he brought to the Creator in prayer; "...*you did good God!*" Paul says he does not stop praying for them. How we need to learn from Paul as to what it means to participate in a real and frontline prayer life. We are called to *offensive* prayer, not a weak apologetic defense that seeks only for God to forgive us for being idiots and protect us from all the boogiemens that are waiting for us.

The Ephesian believers had firmly established their faith...but not a false faith in their pastor or even in their church. These things will sometimes fail, but their faith was placed in GOD and He would never fail them!

### **1:17**

Paul knew that the Christian life never sat still. A person has to keep growing...keep marching forward or else he slips backward. Therefore, Paul wanted the Ephesian believers to grow in their knowledge and power of God.

He had just shared the great blessings of God which was theirs when they first came to know God. Now he wanted them to grow in these blessings, the blessings of knowing God and experiencing the power of God. Therefore, he told them that he prayed for them... that they might grow in the knowledge and power of God.

We read in 2 Peter 1:3 that God has already delivered "all we need that pertains to life and godliness." Now Paul's heart desires that they truly grasp that fact. It matters little how much truth and blessings that God has given us, if we do not understand it. You can go to church every Sunday of your life and still fail to embrace the "mysteries" that Christ desires for us to know. Our lifeline is the living and abiding in His presence...the coming to know Him in an intimate way. So if that is not your relationship with Christ, it all remains just a bunch of religion. You only identify with our Creator from afar.

### **1:18**

**"...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened."** Paul says "I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light..." Such speaks of the whole man being engulfed in his light. The answer lies not in the intellect but in the heart!

Paul desired that the believers in Ephesus not only were born again, but that they both grow up and embrace their calling. There are a lot churches out there that embrace His salvation, but are unwilling to pursue Lordship disciples. Because teaching discipleship and calling for maturity and the answering of God's personal call is risky business for any Christian community. Its real combat ministry.

There are lots of people who like the idea of salvation and eternal life, but ahhh.... discipleship is expensive, not to mention that whole “fulfilling our calling” business! It’s just a lot easier for a church not to push that envelope. And it would have been a lot more politically advantageous for Paul not to push it either. But he did, and so do we. Essentially, this issue has cost us more ‘attendees’ here in our community than any other issue by leaps and bounds.

Sadly, these folks will never know what Paul is speaking of here...the “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” Because this glory...this ‘inheritance’ that Paul speaks of here in this letter, does not come from salvation. It comes from being “attached to vine”...living in Him in discipleship!

### **1:19-20**

What does this tell us as far as what is available to us “in Him?” Paul reminds us of just what we have backing us: a power that is “exceedingly great.” Just to give us some perspective, we are reminded that literally the same power that brought Jesus back from the dead is available to us. Whoa. Can you imagine the forces that were brought online that day to resurrect Christ from the dead? Such a fact should make us stagger in awe, and humbled to our knees.

So never can we say or even think that we are bound to our pet sin or that we simply can’t overcome the things that we face on a daily basis. That’s just us lying to ourselves. “Little power” is an indisputable evidence of little fellowship with Christ!

### **1:21**

How much power? “Greater is he that is in me, than he that is in the world.” (1 Jn 4:4)

### **1:22-23**

Now, if you want to know who really is in charge in this church, it’s not me. Christ is the head, and if we are ever tempted to forget that fact, He is quick to remind us!

He is the head, and we are the body. Me included. He trusts us to walk, and serve, and move in unison to see His plan and purposes come to pass. But we aren’t calling the shots. We are to do just what the ‘head’ says for us to do. The church...we, are to be the living expression of Christ. “The church” is not a building or an organization...but “EKKLESIA” (gr) meaning “a company or an assembly of believers”

The Father has put “all things” under Jesus’ feet. What things? *Everything*. All the stuff you and I think are insurmountable and impossible to overcome. If they are “under His feet”...and we are His body, then they are under our feet too. As long as we are still attached to the head...