

The “Many-Splendored”
Wisdom of God.
Studies in Ephesians 1-6
By Gareth Lee Cockerill



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The “Many-Splendored” Wisdom of God. Studies in Ephesians 1-6

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Unit One: Greeting, Thanksgiving, and Opening Prayer.

1. Thanksgiving for “Every Spiritual Blessing.” Ephesians 1:1-14 (NASB)

Friday, July 27, 2018

The Greeting. Eph 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Author:

Recipients:

Greeting:

The Prayer of Thanksgiving. Eph 1:3-14

I. Declaration of Praise: Eph 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

II. The Grand Description of Spiritual Blessings: Eph 1:4-6

⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love, ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He lavished on us in the Beloved.

III. Redemption in the Beloved. Eph 1:7-10

*⁷ In whom we have redemption through His blood, the removal of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace **8** which He lavished on us in all wisdom and understanding, **9** making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He set forth in Him **10** as a plan for the fullness of the times, to bring all things together in in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.*

Unit One: Greeting, Thanksgiving, and Opening Prayer.

2. Prayer for Necessary Spiritual Insight. Ephesians 1:15-23 (NASB)

Saturday, July 28, 2018

Introduction:

Spiritual Insight! Paul has hinted at the Great Mystery, God's Great Plan of Salvation for the world, and he has enumerated "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" that are the privilege of the believer. Before he can go further, however, he must pray that God will give his hearers the spiritual insight necessary if they are to fully participate in God's glorious provision of salvation for the world.

I. For Whom Does Paul Pray? Eph 1:15-16

¹⁵ For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;

II. To Whom Does Paul Pray? Eph 1:17

¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,

III. For What Does Paul Pray? Eph 1:17b-23

may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know

(1) what is the hope of His calling,

(2) what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹

(3) and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

²⁰ which He brought about in Christ,

when He raised Him from the dead and

seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet,

and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Unit Two: The Ephesians Story of Grace and Peace.

1. From Death to Life—GRACE. Ephesians 2:1-10 (NASB)

Sunday, July 28, 2018

Introduction:

In Eph 1:15-23 Paul prayed that they might comprehend “the exceeding greatness of his power in us who believe.” The power God exercised when He raised Jesus from the dead. Now he is going to remind them what God, by that resurrection power, has already done for them.

I. Our Past: “Dead in trespasses and sins.” Eph 2:1-10

A. Your Past. Eph 2:1-2

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

B. Our Common Past. Eph 2:3a

Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind,

C. Our Natural Destiny. Eph 2:3b

and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

II. “But God”: “Made us alive in Christ.” Eph 2:4-7

A. God’s Character and Our Need. Eph 2:4-5a

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions,

B. God’s Deliverance. Eph 2:5b-7

made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

III. Our Present: “Created in Christ Jesus for good works.” Eph 2:8-10

A. Saved by Grace. Eph 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

B. For Holy Living. Eph 2:10

¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Conclusion: “so that we would walk in them.”

Unit Two: The Ephesians Story of Grace and Peace.

2. From Aliens to Family—PEACE. Ephesians 2:11-22 (ESV)

Monday, July 30, 2018

I. The Past: You were Aliens from God and His People. Eph 2:11-12

¹¹ Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

A. Separated

¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ,

B. Alienated

*alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and
strangers to the covenants of promise,*

C. Hopeless

having no hope and without God in the world.

II. “But now in Christ Jesus,” Eph 2:13-17

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

A. The Work of Christ.

*¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances,
that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,*

B. The Benefits of Christ

¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

III. The Present: You Are Fellow Citizens and Members of God’s Household. Eph 2:18-22

¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

A. God’s Household

¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

B. God’s Temple

²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Unit Three: The Glory of God's "Many-Splendored"¹ Wisdom.

1. Paul Discloses the "Many-Splendored" Wisdom of God in Christ. Ephesians 3:1-13 (NASB) Wednesday, August 1, 2018

I. Paul's Key Role in God's "Many-Splendored" Wisdom. Eph 3:1-4

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—² if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; ³ that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. ⁴ By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

II. The Content of God's "Many-Splendored" Wisdom. Eph 3:5-7

⁵ which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; ⁶ to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, ⁷ of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

III. The Magnificent Scope of God's "Many-Splendored" Wisdom. Eph 3:8-11

⁸ To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; ¹⁰ so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,

IV. Our Participation in God's "Many-Splendored" Wisdom. Eph 3:12-13.

¹² in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. ¹³ Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.

¹ C. Leslie Mitton, *Ephesians* (NCB, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 128.

Unit Three: The Glory of God's "Many-Splendored" Wisdom.

2. Paul Prays that His Hearers Will Participate in God's "Many-Splendored" Wisdom. Ephesians 3:14-21 (NASB)

Thursday, August 2, 2018

I. The God to Whom Paul Prays. Eph 3:14-15

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every father's house in heaven and on earth derives its name,

II. The Concerns for Which Paul Prays Eph 3:16-19.

A. The Empowering Spirit.

¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,

B. The Indwelling Christ.

¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge,

C. The Fullness of God.

that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

III. The Confidence with which Paul Prays. Eph 3:20-21

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹ to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Unit Four: Life in Accord with the “Many-Splendored” Wisdom of God.

1. Walk Worthy of Your Calling in Harmony. Ephesians 4:1-16 (NASB)

Friday, August 3, 2018

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

I. One Body—“the Bond of Peace.” Eph 4:2-6

A. The Character of Our Unity.

2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

B. The Source of Our Unity

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

II. Diverse Ministries—“the Gift of Christ.” Eph 4:7-12

A. The Giver of the Gifts.

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore it says,

“When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men.”

9 (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)

B. The Purpose of the Gifts.

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

III. One Goal—“the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ.” Eph 4:13-16

A. The Character of the Goal.

13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

B. The Manifestation of the Goal.

14 In order that we might no longer be immature, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

C. The Attainment of the Goal.

16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Unit Four: Life in Accord with the “Many-Splendored” Wisdom of God.

2. Stop Walking as Unbelievers in Futility. Ephesians 4:17-32 (NASB)

Saturday, August 4, 2018

Introduction. Eph 4:17

17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Nations also walk,

I. A New Person. Eph 4:18-24

A. A Description of the “Old Person.”

in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

B. Transformation to the “New Person.”

20 But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

II. A New “Walk.” Eph 4:25-32

A. Replace Falsehood with Truth.

25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

B. Don’t Let Anger Give the Devil an Opportunity.

26 Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.

C. Replace Theft with Generosity.

28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.

D. Replace Unwholesome Speech with Helpful Words.

29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

E. Replace Malice with Gracious Forgiveness.

31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, graciously forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Unit Four: Life in Accord with the “Many-Splendored” Wisdom of God.

3. Be Imitators of God by Walking in the Light. Ephesians 5:1-20 (NASB)

Sunday, August 5, 2018

I. “Be Imitators of God.” Eph 5:1-2

5 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

II. Avoid All That is Unfit for God’s Holy People. Eph 5:3-6

A. A Description of Conduct Unbefitting Saints.

3 But fornication or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; 4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

B. The Consequences of Conduct Unbefitting Saints.

5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

III. “Walk as Children of Light.” Eph 5:7-14

A. Walk as Children of Light.

7 Therefore do not be partakers with them; 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light 9 (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

B. Expose the “Unfruitful Deeds of Darkness.”

11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. 14 For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you.”

IV. Walk Carefully in the Fullness of the Spirit. Eph 5:15-20

A. Practice Discernment.

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

B. Be Filled with the Spirit.

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

Unit Four: Life in Accord with the “Many-Splendored” Wisdom of God.

4. Live Out Life’s Relationships in “the Fear of the Lord.” Ephesians 5:21—6:9 (NASB)

²¹ and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

I. Husbands and Wives. Eph 5:22-33

A. Wives Reverence Your Husband.

²² Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. ²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

B. Husbands Love Your Wives.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body. ³¹ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ³² This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

II. Parents and Children. Eph 6:1-4

A. Children Obey Your Parents..

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³ so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

B. Fathers Nurture Your Children in the Lord.

⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

III. Masters and Servants. Eph 6:5-9

A. Servants Obey Your Masters.

⁵ Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. ⁷ With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

B. Masters “Do the Same to Them.”

⁹ And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Unit Four: Life in Accord with the “Many-Splendored” Wisdom of God.

5. “Be Strong in the Lord and in the Strength of His Might.” Ephesians 6:10-24 (NASB)

Put on “The Full Armor of God.” Eph 6:10-11

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

I. The Need for the “Full Armor of God.” Eph 6:12-13

¹² For our struggle is not against ^[e]flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

II. A Description of the “Full Armor of God.” Eph 6:14-17

¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

III. Using the “Full Armor of God.” Eph 6:18-20

¹⁸ With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, ¹⁹ and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Benediction:

²¹ But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. ²² I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

²³ Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love.