

Ephesians

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[0 : 0 0] If you will recall, we completed Ephesians chapter 3 last week, and we were prepared to move on into chapter 4, which gets into some additional really weighty material that we're looking forward to.

But in connection with, I guess we could kind of call this a bridge between 3 and 4, a question came up last week that we thought was a very provocative question and deserves some investigation.

So we decided we would take just a little bit of time off of Ephesians and allow ourselves to be sidetracked with the question that was raised from John's Gospel chapter 14.

And if you will recall, I gave you an assignment. I'm just wondering how many of you even remember that you had an assignment. And you probably didn't bring a note from home.

And don't give me this, your dog ate your homework. Anybody remember the assignment, Dan? The cat ate mine. Yeah. Don't you?

[1 : 0 6] Yeah. And the assignment was from John's Gospel chapter 14. And you'll recall that this was the very night that our Lord was betrayed.

And from the time He made this statement, it would be merely a matter of hours until He would be on that cross. And in John 14, our Lord Jesus said, in verse 10, we'll just have to jump in here because I don't want to deprive you of all the context.

But, well, this is in connection with His telling them that He's going away. They are saddened and perplexed by this because they had no idea He was going to be departing.

And yet, that was part of the plan all along. And now He is letting them in on it that He is going to be leaving. And that provided the basis for His saying, Let not your heart be troubled, and you believe in God, believe also in Me.

And in My Father's house are many mansions. If I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again and receive you unto Myself. And they're really perplexed about all of this. And they are saddened.

[2 : 2 5] And they want to go with Him right away. And He is explaining to them what's taken... Well, let's just read the context. Okay. Verse 3. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

And you know the way where I am going. Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How do we know the way?

Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.

From now on you know Him and have seen Him. Philip said to Him... There are just all kinds of confusion here in the minds of these apostles. Philip said to Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.

Jesus said to him, Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father.

[3 : 38] How do you say, Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?

In other words, He's saying, they're inseparable. The words that I say to you, I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me. Otherwise, believe on account of the works themselves.

What do you think Jesus meant by the works? Most likely, miracles, wouldn't you think? And He, of course, performed all kinds of miracles before all kinds of audiences, and I think we can legitimately say that these are the works that He is talking about.

Alright, let's continue. Truly I say to you, He who believes in Me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father.

[5 : 04] And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

If you love Me, keep My commandments. And specifically, we are zeroing in on verse 12, which, on the surface, sounds like an impossibility.

How could it be? How is it even thinkable that the apostles, who are going to be left behind here, could actually do greater works than what Christ did?

what in the world is He talking about here? What does He mean? And I would appreciate any input or feedback that you have regarding this.

And we'll just have this kind of like an open discussion this morning where everybody feels free to put in their two cents worth. And anybody like to begin?

[6 : 08] Feel free. Dave? They're going to spread the gospel worldwide. Okay. They'll be spreading the gospel worldwide as opposed to what Christ did.

Geographically, you're saying our Lord was confined to a relatively small area. Scarcely got outside the environs of Israel. I mean, He got over to Decapolis and that was about it.

But He really never ventured out of the land of Israel to speak of except when He was taken there as a baby and His parents took Him to Egypt but they were not there very long and that was during His childhood.

So, you're suggesting that the spread of the gospel that will be available later? Okay. I'm sure that comes into play.

That's got to at least be part of it. Anybody else have a thought? Okay. So, Christ was the seed and then the apostles then were the beginning growth of the Christian movement.

[7 : 21] Okay. And the seeds can wither and die or they can bloom and blossom and they were making it blossom. Okay. The only thing that bothers me with that is is he held in Jerusalem and held them to the distant Jews.

Yeah. So, Paul comes along. That's very true. That's very true. You read even in late chapters. In fact, you recall that in Galatians chapter 1 and 2, years after Paul's conversion, he went to Jerusalem and he met with the apostles.

And this is a good well, look at it this way. Paul never took his first missionary journey until about 15 years after his conversion.

on the Damascus road. Now, immediately following his conversion, while he was still there in Damascus, he went to the synagogue in Damascus and there he no doubt found a lot of Jewish people that he had originally come there to arrest and take back to Jerusalem.

And there in Damascus, just days after his conversion, he preached Jesus was the Messiah and that Israel was responsible for crucifying him.

[9 : 02] But his missionary journeys did not begin for quite some time. It was a full 15, maybe 14 years after his Damascus road conversion that he took that first missionary journey.

And they departed, Paul and Barnabas departed from Asia Minor and they had a very short journey.

And then we're told in Galatians 1 that years later Paul went to Jerusalem to confer with the twelve apostles and explain what God had been doing with him through the Gentiles and what he had been preaching to the Gentiles or what he had been preaching to the uncircumcised.

And here are the twelve with whom he's consulting 14 years after Paul's conversion and they're still in Jerusalem. What's going on there?

Why are they still there? And I think the only answer that is acceptable is not that and I just don't buy this at all and I've read some commentators said well they were just flat out disobedient.

[10 : 23] They just wanted to stay home. I can't buy that at all. Nor do I buy the idea that well several theories have been proposed but my simplest solution is the reason they were still in Jerusalem is simply because they had not succeeded succeeded in preaching Jesus was the Messiah and getting Jerusalem and Israel on board.

They had not succeeded. Israel remained stiff-necked and blinded and would not come to Jesus as their Messiah. And I think that's very, very telling.

So they are still confining their ministry to the Jews and they are still preaching the availability of this kingdom of heaven that Israel had never signed off on.

And that's why they were still there. When Christ said you will be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth.

But I take it that it had to be in that order. And they were not successful in Jerusalem. In fact, the powers that be in Jerusalem, the religious establishment, began their persecution of the twelve as early as Acts four and five.

[11 : 47] And James or John, no, it wasn't John, it was James, one of the twelve, was put to death by Herod, and that's in Acts chapter 12.

So the persecution is really heating up against the Jews. So any other thoughts? Yeah, Larry. When I read it, I originally thought, well, any believer, anyone who believes in me will do the same.

But then I, as I thought more in things that you've said, I believe it was just for the apostles, for them to be able to do these signs, these miracles that Christ did.

Okay. Okay. Also, other people, I think, things in his name, cast out demons and so forth, using Christ's name.

So the signs, the miracles stopped at some point. correct? Yeah. And so we don't see them anymore.

[13 : 04] We don't have people being risen from the dead and we don't have people's sight being brought back.

we don't see the miracles that Christ formed. Okay. During the ministry of Christ and of the apostles, miracles were almost commonplace.

They were the modus operandi. And never lose sight of the fact that Christ performed his miracles primarily, and I use that word primarily, to authenticate his personhood, to establish the fact that he was who he claimed to be.

In fact, at least one of the Pharisees, who was well positioned in authority, made the statement quite clearly, we know that thou art come from God, for no man, Nicodemus said in John 3, no man can do the miracles that you do unless God be with him.

So he was convinced as one of the leading authorities that Christ was of God. And the miracles that he did were Christ's calling card.

[14 : 24] And wherever he went, he brought with him in his person the miniature personalized form of the kingdom of heaven coming to earth. Because Jesus brought kingdom conditions with him.

And we won't belabor that point or go into that, but that's very important to note. And when he called these apostles, and they are listed in other places, but probably the most definitive is in Matthew 10, where it says that he called these twelve, and the text says that he gave them authority.

That simply means that they had none of their own. The authority that they had was derived from Christ who delegated it to them. and he said, you are to go out and replicate my ministry and he sent them out in teams of two and he said, preach the gospel, heal the sick, and you two would perform miracles.

And they did. So they, in fact, were an extension of Christ and his call and they had tremendous success and they were able to perform miracles just as Christ did because he gave them that authority.

Now, when we come over, let's come over just a little bit to John 16. And I'm a firm believer that Scripture is its own interpreter.

[15 : 53] Scripture interprets Scripture. I've long since become convinced that no mere man, certainly including myself, has the capability of really interpreting the Word of God.

The only solid interpreter of the Word of God is the Word itself, and it is self-interpreting. And in John 16, we'll just jump in here if we may.

Look at verse 12. And this is all tied together, by the way, guys. John 14, well, actually, John, part of John 12, John 13, John 14, John 15, John 16, John 17, an extensive passage of Scripture.

All of those chapters are going to occur within a few hours. And that's very important to note, because John is the only one like that. The others give a lot shorter period of time to this.

All of these things are happening the night our Lord was betrayed. And it started way back in chapter 12, 12. So you've got to keep in mind chronologically that 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 of John's gospel all took place within a spate of about 12 hours.

[17 : 19] Something like that. And here he continues meeting with the 12. And in verse 12 he says, I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

And actually what he's saying is, fellas, if I told you everything is going to transpire, you wouldn't be able to process it.

You would be on overload. Emotionally and psychologically you wouldn't be able to handle it. So, you cannot bear them now, but when he, the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

For he, the spirit of God, will not speak on his own initiative, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will disclose to you what is to come.

He, the spirit of God, shall glorify me, Christ, for he shall take of mine and shall disclose it to you.

[18 : 28] All things that the Father has are mine, therefore I said, that he takes of mine and will disclose it to you. Little while and you will no longer behold me.

Of course, he's talking about going to the cross and dying. You will no longer behold me, and again, a little while, and you will see me. Now, this just sounds like puzzling, double talk.

They can't figure this out. What he's talking about is, you're going to miss me. I'm going to be gone, because I'm going to be dead. But, a little while later, you're going to see me again.

And he's talking about the resurrection. And he says, a little while, and you will not behold me, and then again a little while, and you will see me, and because I go to the Father.

And so, they were saying, what is this that he says? A little while. We do not know what he is talking about. You've got to keep in mind that there are twelve people here.

[19 : 32] Well, not twelve, actually, Judas is already gone. But there are eleven here, and they're holding little conversations among themselves, and one turns to another and shrugs his shoulders and says, did you get that?

What did he say? What's he talking about? And of course, there's a lot of confusion there. And Jesus knew that they wished to question him, verse 19, and he said to them, So, are you deliberating together about this, that I said a little while and you will not behold me, and again a little while and you will behold me?

Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, and of course, we know what he's talking about here, but the world will rejoice.

You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy. And of course, he's talking about death and resurrection here. And whenever a woman is in travail, she has sorrow, because her hour has come.

But when she gives birth to the child, she remembers the anguish no more, for joy that a child has been born into the world. Therefore, you too, now have sorrow, that I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you.

[20 : 48] Now, all of this is leading up to his death, burial, and resurrection. And this is still just like a foreign language to them, because they are already persuaded that Christ is not going to die.

Now he's talking about leaving. And they are all befuddled about this. They just can't put two and two together, cannot connect these dots. And what Christ is telling them is that he is going to be available to them in a new and different way that they can't understand now, but you will understand it later.

And the Spirit of God that is going to come is going to empower these twelve to do what they need to do, and he, the Spirit of truth, will bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said to you.

And how is it, and why is it they're going to need that? They're going to need that for the recording of Scripture. Matthew is going to need a supernatural ability to be able to recall the very words that Christ said when he writes Matthew's Gospel.

And the Spirit of God who is going to inspire him will enable him to do that. And the same way with John. Now, Luke and Mark, that's different because they were not apostles.

[22 : 11] But the Spirit of God is going to supernaturally enable these men to write the word of God that they're going to and to be able to recall these things.

Now, let's get back to our original text because all of this is against the backdrop of Christ's death, which, by the way, is going to change everything.

I have often said that this death of Christ on the cross is the focal point for all of human history, all of humanity of all time.

This is the center point of the universe. It is Christ being made sin for us. It is that transaction that took place there.

That is the game changer. That's everything. And that's what he's building up to here. I want you to know, now let's go back to that text in chapter 14 where we're dealing with the problem verse.

[23 : 16] I think the key is in the last expression of that verse. The works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do because.

Because. Here is the basis for the greater works. Because I go to the father. Now, here is this question.

How is he going to the father? He is talking about leaving. At the beginning of the chapter. Going away to prepare a place for you. But how is he going to leave?

He is going to leave by way of the cross. He is not going to leave by direct ascension. He is not going to bypass the cross. The ascension is going to come via the cross.

He will be going to the father, but he will be going by way of Calvary. That is going to change everything.

[24 : 19] Let me ask you a question. Was Jesus Christ, son of God though he was, was he morally, judicially, officially capable of saving anyone and giving anyone the presence of eternal life on the other side of the cross?

No. No. No. What made it possible for anyone to receive eternal life through Christ?

the fact that Christ died for them in their place. Until that time, eternal life was not a reality for anyone.

It was simply a promise. And the promise would be based on the payment that Jesus Christ would make that would allow God to judicially and righteously retain his holiness forgiveness while extending forgiveness to the sinner on the basis that his debt had been paid by Christ.

But Christ never paid that debt until he died on that cross. Up until that time, it was just an anticipation. But you've got to remember, guys, it was for this very purpose that Christ came into the world.

[25 : 48] Remember when he said, what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. How can I pray that? That's the very reason that I came here. The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

God so loved the world that he gave. That's what this is all about. The cross is everything. This is why Paul said, I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

That's my whole message. That's the whole nine yards. Everything centers upon that. For I delivered unto you that which I first of all received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried and rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

That's everything. That's everything. On the other side of the cross, Jesus was not the Savior. He did not become the Savior until he paid the price for our sins.

Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Christ. Now, this makes an important distinction between the Jesus before the cross as opposed to the Jesus after the cross.

[27 : 08] And let's go to 2 Corinthians for a moment. 2 Corinthians 5. This is really important stuff and it's all connected.

and I just get excited sometimes when I see how the Bible sheds light on the Bible like nothing else does. And this is just great stuff.

2 Corinthians 5. For time's sake, I'll just have to jump in here. Let's start with verse 14. 2 Corinthians 5. 14. For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died.

And he died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Therefore, from now on, and he's talking about Christ's death in verse 14.

[28 : 16] That's establishing the stage here. He's saying, from now on, that is, from this point on, we recognize no man according to the flesh.

Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet, now we know him thus no longer.

What is he saying here? He's making a careful distinction between knowing Christ before the cross, before his death, and knowing him after his death.

What is to be our basis of operation when we speak of this Christ now? Is it a pre-cross Christ, or is it a post-cross Christ?

Christ? Now, let me be very clear here. Most of Christendom is hung up, and I don't know a better word to use.

[29 : 21] They are fixated, hung up, stuck on a pre-cross Christ. And that's the wrong Christ. That's the wrong Christ.

We need an update from the pre-cross Christ. And the update is the post-cross Christ. This is why our preaching should consist mainly of who Jesus Christ is, and what he has done, and where he is now in his ascended glory.

And that brings us to the emphasis of the Pauline epistles, not the four gospels. Because the four gospels portray primarily a pre-cross Jesus, and fellas, that's where most Christians take their pattern from, and we ought not to do that.

We ought not to do that. But we see the four gospels as principally where Christ is. Even though it's reflecting only three years of his ministry, or three and a half years of his ministry, yet that's the Jesus that we have the most to do with, with the miracles, the teachings, the parables, and everything.

That's where we see him mostly in his humanity, don't we? But, we've got to get beyond that and see the exalted, risen Christ in his glorified state.

[30 : 57] Because that's where the truth is now. Not a pre-cross Christ, but a post-cross Christ. And this is exactly what Paul is saying here.

Not only that, but it is a contrast and a comparison between things physical and things spiritual. When Christ talked about the works that he did, I'm satisfied, and I think most of you are too, that he's talking in the context of his miracles.

And these were really, these were outstanding. I mean, to calm the wind and the waves, to raise the dead, give sight to the blind, open the ears of the deaf, those are not small things.

I mean, that is front page news, you know? And that's what he's talking about, I think, when he says greater works than these shall you do. And I think what he is talking about is that there is going, what he's talking about at least in part, there is going to be with my movement from the other side of the cross to the post side of the cross, there is also going to be a transfer and a movement from things physical, which is what I dealt with.

The healing of a physical body, the stilling of physical wind and waves, all of those things were physical and they were great.

[32 : 29] But fellas, the spiritual is greater than the physical. And you are going to have a message to preach that is not simply going to heal the bodies of men, it's going to heal their spirit.

It's going to rejuvenate and regenerate them on the inside where the real person is. that is a greater work than giving sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf.

These are going to be greater things. And I think that at least in part, this is what our Lord is referring to. Kevin? Yeah. As far as the assignment about the greater works, I read something from the book of Ephesians.

Yeah. This is from Ephesians 4th chapter and the 8th to the 13th verse.

Okay. It says, Wherefore he said, when he ascended up on high, he laid captivity captive and gave gifts, gifts unto men.

[33 : 49] Now, people had gifts of healing, gifts of miracles, gifts of discerning spirits, gifts of calling without repentance. It says, Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

He that descended is the same also that ascended up from above all heavens that he might, this is his word, fill all things.

And he gave some, he didn't say he just gave one person, he gave some apostles, he gave some prophets, he gave some evangelists, and some pastors, and some teachers, for the perfecting.

Maturing. Maturing. Maturing. Come on, Mark. Maturing and developing. For maturing and developing, he said, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work, the work of the ministry, which he's talking about, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Now listen to this, till we all come in the unity where we're all in one of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect people, perfect man, perfect, Lord Jesus, unto the measure, listen to this, of the stature of the fullness.

[35 : 17] If it's full, that means you can't pour no more into nothing. The glass is full, it's full. When we come to this fullness in Christ, to where everybody, the teachers doing his study, we're all together, because he said if two or more are together, he will be in the presence.

So if you're all by yourself, you're all by yourself, you're not doing what God told you to do. So if it's more than just two, you got your power, and everybody's using their gifts together as one, for the unity, the perfecting, and the fullness.

This is when them greater works come about. This is when you get to seeing these healings, because everybody's using their gifts, everybody's walking in the spirit, everybody has died to themselves, and took themselves, and threw it on the back burner.

It's all about Jesus Christ, because to live is Christ, and to die is gain. You got that mentality going on. This is when them healings and stuff start to break. Then you get to see those greater works, because you're working in the fullness of Christ.

Now you have a five-fold ministry. There you go. That's when the greater works take place, when that five-fold ministry gets to work, and everybody's on the same face.

[36 : 30] Ain't nobody being jealous as one number, because you need to bury me, everybody is on line of cord with Christ. That's when you can touch that man's foot broke.

Heal! Heal! Heal! That's when people, like with cancer, or something like that. And maybe one that doesn't have the spirit, when you start working with different people, I've seen this.

I'm going to share a little spirit, because I'm going to continue for just a second. There's one woman I knew that had cancer, and there was another man that had cancer. They lived, you know, catacormed for one another, just a long time ago, and I didn't understand it because I was immature in Christ, but as I got older, I understood.

The lady across the street received Christ and the spirit, and she believed. The cancer didn't go nowhere, the cancer didn't go nowhere, but she was just as happy and joyful and complete, didn't nothing work, and the other lady hadn't received Christ, but she was wondering like, how, how is this, the man was like, how is this woman so happy and joyful when I know what she's going through, which is a miracle right there.

That's a great work right there, anymore. Amen. That's a great work. And I'm sitting here all in anguish, disoriented, wondering when I'm going to die, I'm scared, I'm getting all the kind of information that I don't want to hear, but why is this lady so happy and joyful, and I know what she's going through, and that's an example of greater work for the believers, which makes their faith grow even more.

[38 : 16] Amen. Amen. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate that. The greater works covers a lot of territory, really.

It covers a lot of territory, and we haven't scratched the scratch on the surface. Dan? I'm sorry, I missed something. The old Jesus, the new Jesus. Post-resurrection, you know, can you explain what that is?

Well, I'm simply saying that Christ, after his death, burial, and resurrection, has a new base of operation.

And this new base of operation is related to what he accomplished on that cross and in his resurrection. And this resurrection power is what he makes available to us.

And principally, I think, as Kevin was talking about here, the reaction that this woman had when she had no physical basis for feeling that way, or for thinking that way, God had done a work on the inside of her that was greater than what the implications of her physical body portrayed.

[39 : 32] And that was her spirit, her inner attitude, her disposition, all of that was radically changed because Christ came in. That's the effect that he's supposed to have in the lives of all who will allow it to happen.

And it's an amazing thing. Wonderful thing. Other thoughts about this? And if you're not satisfied with what has been said by myself and Kevin, we'll pursue it further. But I'd rather go on to, in fact, what he was reading in Ephesians 4 is where we're going next.

So we'll be there probably next week. I'm sorry? Later on in that first verse says, greater things he shall do.

Is that the Holy Spirit through people? Well, he's talking about the people. He's talking about the apostles. They're going to be doing greater things.

And the reason they're going to be doing greater things is they're going to have more to work with after Christ's death and resurrection than what they had before.

[40 : 39] And that's going to make all the difference in the world. And by the way, that's still the difference today. And this is, I think, why we ought to place our emphasis upon the spiritual rather than the physical.

It doesn't mean that the physical doesn't matter. No, no. God is committed to both. But, fellas, it is the spiritual part of your being that drives the physical part.

It is the spirit that is in control of the body. And the body takes its orders from that human spirit. heart. And this is an important distinction, but it's one that is often lost because we put so much emphasis on these physical bodies.

I've often said if people care just half as much for their spirit and the needs of their inner person as they do their outer person, we could revolutionize things overnight.

But we tend to put the emphasis in the wrong place. Okay. Well, enjoy your breakfast and the rest of the day. And thank you all. We'll pick up Ephesians next.

[41 : 43] Thank you.