

**LOVING AND LIVING  
THE GOSPEL IN  
EPHESIANS**

**A unique, verse-by-verse,  
life-application commentary  
by Terran Williams,  
assisted by  
Michael Eaton's  
commentary.**

## Do you know how to apply the Bible to your life?

Did you know that God put every verse in the Bible so that your mind could be totally renewed, so that your life could be deeply changed, and so that your calling could be fully fulfilled? (See 2 Timothy 3:16-17 if you're not persuaded.) That's why reading the whole Bible again and again is one of the most important things we can do.

Sometimes, however, the Bible is hard to understand. That's why commentaries are so useful. Most commentaries help you understand the *technical* meaning of each verse. These commentaries do a little of that too, but rather, they focus on the meaning of each verse *for our lives now*.

### Using these commentaries in your daily Bible reading.

- Make time every day. Allocate as much time as you need to really hear from God for your life. Read until you are full - don't just *snack* on the Bible rather enjoy a *solid meal*.
- Read one book of the Bible at a time. Alternate between a New Testament one (27 in total) and then an Old Testament one (39 in total). Perhaps start with the books that have commentaries available on this website ([www.friends-first.com](http://www.friends-first.com) and click on 'free resources'). It doesn't matter if you do the whole Bible in a year, or in four years, just as long as you're *steadily* moving through it.
- Trust God to speak to you every time you read the Bible. Expect to hear from God and expect to receive just what you need for each day. Invite the Holy Spirit to be your primary teacher as you read.
- Keep two questions in your mind as you read: 1) What do these verses mean? 2) What do they mean for my life now? ***If you can't find solid answers to either of these questions then get help from one of these commentaries***, or another commentary if you're reading a book we don't yet have a commentary of. (The NIV Study Bible and the internet resource [www.e-sword.net](http://www.e-sword.net) is recommended.)
- Carry into your day what you sense God saying to you. Perhaps write down the main things you sense God telling you each day. Pray to God about what he has just said to you. Make any needed adjustments in your heart and life as God reveals more and more of his Word to you.

### Using these commentaries if you're a preacher.

- These commentaries are adapted from a highly recommended series called, 'Preaching through the Bible' by Michael Eaton, who is arguably one of the world's most skilled Bible preachers (see [www.Michael-Eaton.de](http://www.Michael-Eaton.de)). That is why these commentaries are excellent resources for preachers. They will help you apply the Scriptures to the lives of your hearers.

- Freely download a manual called, 'Preaching for a change' (see [www.friends-first.com](http://www.friends-first.com) and click on 'free resources' and then on 'stuff for church leaders'). Chapters 2 and 3 will especially help you to adapt this commentary to a preaching format.
- Keep coming back to this website (see [www.friends-first.com](http://www.friends-first.com), click on 'free resources' and then, 'explore the Bible') for the latest uploaded commentaries.

## About the Letter to the Ephesians

It is a letter written by Paul from prison in the AD 60s along with Colossians, Philippians and Philemon. It helps us to love the Gospel of salvation (1-3), and then to live out this Gospel too (4-6). It has the following OUTLINE:

- Introduction (1:1-2)
- The first three chapters (1-3) deal with the Gospel of God's salvation / grace for us - they aim at a **revelation of the Gospel**. These chapters help us to **love the Gospel**.
  - A burst of praise about the greatness of salvation (1:3-14)
  - He begins his prayer that we will see the greatness of salvation (1:15-19a)
  - But then, after mentioning God's power in his prayer, does a tangent exposition of God's power
    - In Christ (1:19b-23)
    - In the individual (2:1-10)
    - In the church (2:11-22)
  - He restarts his prayer (3:1) - but then digresses to talk about how he himself has a part to play in God's plan (3:2-13).
  - He finally completes his prayer (3:14-21) - and what a prayer it is!
- The last three chapters (4-6) deal with **the application of the Gospel** of salvation / grace to our lives and churches. These chapters help us to **live the Gospel**.
  - Applying the Gospel to the church's unity and maturity (4:1-16)
  - Applying the Gospel to holiness in general terms - first what we must not be (4:17-19) and then what we should be (4:20-24)
  - Applying the Gospel to godliness in more specific terms: truth (4:25), anger (4:26-27), stealing (4:28), talk (4:29-30), kindness (4:31-5:2), common sins (5:3-7)
  - Two other ways of approaching holiness / godliness:
    - We are light, so we must be full of light (5:8-14)
    - We have the Spirit, so we must be filled with the Spirit (5:15-21)
  - Three sets of relationships where we work out godliness:
    - Husbands and wives (5:22-33)
    - Parents and children (6:1-4)
    - Servants and employees (6:5-9)
  - The devil and the Christian's armour (6:10-20)
  - Conclusion (6:21-24).

# Ephesians Chapter One

## WE ARE IN CHRIST (1:1-3)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,  
To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

- **God chooses whom he gives authority to within the churches.**
  - Paul refers to himself as an apostle. Apostles were given authority by God to lay the doctrinal foundations for the churches. He is emphatic that he did not self-elect himself for the job, but that God chose him for it.
- **Being 'in Christ Jesus' changes our standing with God.**
  - When Paul calls them 'holy people' (or as some translations put it, 'saints') and faithful he is not referring to what good people they are, but what being 'in Christ Jesus' has done to them. It has changed their standing with God.

2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **God, through this letter, wants to pour out grace and peace upon us.**
  - Grace = God's undeserved help
  - Peace = the joy of not having any hostility between you and God
  - Verse 2 creates an expectation of what we can expect to experience as we understand the truths that Paul is about to unpack in this letter.

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

- **Salvation is God's ultimate blessing.**
  - In the heavenly realms = in the spiritual realm - it refers to the fact that we have been transferred into a new realm altogether (Col 1:13 - we have been rescued from the realm of darkness and have been brought into the realm of the Son).
  - In Christ = in a word our new realm, our new eternal connection, is in the exalted Jesus Christ. We are *legally* (a fact to be affirmed) and *vitaly* (a reality to be experienced) united to him.
  - Spiritual blessing = blessings which come to us through the Holy Spirit.
  - 'Has blessed us' = when saved we are promised an eternity of blessings - it is already committed to us. We may not have begun to experience it all, but it is already allocated to us.

- 'Praise be to God' = when you understand salvation you will burst out with praise!
- **Salvation is a past, present and future reality.**
  - Verses 4-14 can be summarised like this:
    - Past - God the Father's plan before history began (4-6a)
    - Present - God the Son's work of salvation now (6b-9)
    - Future - God the Spirit's application of salvation (10-14)

## **WE ARE CHOSEN (v4-6a)**

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

- **We are chosen before the creation of the world.**
  - Long before we moved towards God, he moved towards us! Long before we were deciding what we would do with Jesus, he was deciding what to do with us as sinners. And he decided that Jesus would make it possible for us to be saved.
  - Up for debate: Does this mean that he chose us individually to be saved? Or does it mean that he chose that many would be saved - a many that would become 'us'? Or does it mean that he chose that all saving will be done 'in Christ'? Hmm? Eaton seems to put the emphasis on the second and third option - not the first.
  - That is why we can say that our goodness does not qualify us - and our badness does not disqualify us!
  - God had planned in advance that there would be a people - the church - whom he would draw into salvation in Christ. Salvation and the church are God's idea!
  - God also planned that I, Terran, would be one of those people who would respond!
  - Now - this last statement - is the mystery. This does not mean that everyone else who is not a Christian was not chosen. So we mustn't deduce what is not being said. Really the doctrine of election is a mystery. In the words of Eaton, 'I make no claim to understand it.'
- **We are chosen in Christ.**
  - God's plans for saving people all focus like a laser beam into Jesus. God is doing something (i.e. salvation and the formation of the church) - and he is doing it in Jesus. The surest way to know we are chosen is to connect to Jesus, the chosen one (1 Peter 2:4).
- **We are chosen for a new identity in Christ - the identity of holiness.**
  - The moment we believe we are made holy and blameless in God's sight. This is our *positional holiness* - which essentially is the same as justification.

- God literally sees us differently the moment we are in Christ.
- Christ's righteousness is credited to us. We are not only forgiven - we are made righteous. We have a covering righteousness. All the good deeds that Jesus ever did are credited to us.
- Holiness also means 'set apart' - God takes us and makes us his own - set apart for a special purpose!
- **We are chosen to experience a moral transformation.**
  - *Positional holiness* should evidence itself in a *progressive holiness*. This does not always happen, but it certainly is God's choice - his intention.
  - Practically this means that it is God's choice that all those who are saved will increasingly move toward:
    - Being holy - positively consecrated to him.
    - Being blameless - honest, sincere, genuine, not easy to accuse.
    - Being in his sight - living conscious of His Presence and Watch.
  - The emphasis of this verse is in what God does to us / for us. In other words God by his grace promises to work this into our lives. Yes, there is our co-operation - but the main operation is God's.

In love 5 he [b] predestined us for adoption to sonship [c] through Jesus Christ, (PHRASE MISSING FROM TNIV: FOR HIMSELF) in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace,

- **We are chosen to be God's sons and daughters.**
  - The phrase 'adopted for sonship' is a legal term referring to an adult male who was adopted and received the full rights of a son, especially the authority and promise of inheritance. That is why Paul speaks of sonship and not 'daughtership' - in that culture it was the son not the daughter who would receive the privileges. But certainly, in application to us, it refers to daughters as well.
  - Being a son / daughter has amazing privileges / implications:
    - Constant access to the Father.
    - Provision and protection.
    - Relationship and companionship with the Father.
    - The Father shares his secrets with us.
    - When Galatians speaks of 'the Spirit of sonship' it refers to how the Spirit enables us to be conscious of our sonship.
    - Representation / being a representative. In that culture adult sons strongly represented the father, and had the father's authority.
    - Amazingly, God is not just saving us to be servants. Far more emphatically he saves us to be his sons, companions.
  - But notice how God made us sons...
    - In love - he didn't adopt us because it was the right thing to do - he did it because he loved us.

## A MIGHTY PLAN (6b-10)

6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

- **God's grace is given to us lavishly, abundantly, overwhelmingly, generously.**
  - God planned before the creation of the world to pour out grace on us - but there comes a time in our lives when he actually does it, when 'grace upon grace' is given.
  - God's plan was that through Jesus Christ it would be possible for us to be recipients of his grace. So it is in Christ that we receive grace.
  - Christ is loved by the Father. He is the One whom the Father loves. Amazingly, since we are in Christ we are also loved by the Father with the same love.

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us.

- **God's grace redeems us and forgives us.**
  - God's grace is connected to the sacrificial death of Jesus - his blood.
  - When Paul refers to 'redemption' it is a picture word that would have meant at least 3 things to the hearers:
    - 1) Slaves were redeemed - set free at a price.
    - 2) People on death row were redeemed / set free at a price.
    - 3) The Israelites had been redeemed / set free from Egypt at a price (the blood of a lamb).
    - Redeem = to set free at a price.
  - Our freedom comes at the price of Jesus' death on the cross!
  - We are freed from slavery to sin and freed from the guilt of our sin, which caused death to hang over our heads.
  - The essence of the redemption is that God chooses to forgive our sins - to remove the guilt of our sins; past, present and future - so that we are free to approach him, and free of the punishment of death / separation from the Life of God.
  - Again it is all 'with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.'
  - We must not press any picture / metaphor too far, so the question, 'Who was the price paid to?' is not answered. Some people answer death, or Satan. But theologically, if anything, the price that sets us free is paid to the Offended Holiness of God.

With all wisdom and understanding, 9 he [d] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

- **God's grace brings us to be involved in God's Project New Creation.**
  - God made known to us the mystery of his will. And he did this wisely and with great understanding. And he reveals it to us with joy too.
  - And this is his will: to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. That's it!
  - When humanity fell, all things fell apart. Our relationships with God, with each other individually, with ourselves, with creation, with other cultures, even with the angels were broken!
  - But God's plan has been to restore it in a kind of New Creation. And the essence of this New Creation is firstly, re-aligning ourselves to the supremacy and leadership of Christ and then, secondly, the restoration of all other broken relationships.
  - This will ultimately happen 'when the times reach their fulfilment' (i.e. at the end of this age and the launch of the New Heaven and the New Earth) BUT already now, the kingdom is coming. Jesus taught us to pray that the kingdom will come, that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven!
  - In fact, one of the major themes of Ephesians (in ch 2 and 4) will be the unity of the church - the unity between various races and cultures, and the unity between differently gifted people! The theme is introduced here.
  - This is a very important verse because it lets us know that salvation is not just about individual forgiveness - but about God restoring all things. Salvation is about joining God in what he is doing in this world. WOW! WOW!

### **INHERITANCE (v11-13)**

11 In him we were also chosen, [OR 'WERE ALLOCATED AN INHERITANCE' - NIV footnote: 'We were also made heirs'.] having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

- **We have been allocated an inheritance within Christ's larger inheritance.**
  - In verse 10 we see that the Father plans to bring all things under the leadership of Christ. This is inheritance. This echoes Psalm 2:8 where the Messiah asks the Father for all the nations of the world as his inheritance.
  - 'We' in these verses refers to 'us earliest Jewish Christians'.

- The phrase translated in the TNIV ‘we were also chosen’ is disputed in its translation. It can mean:
    - We were also chosen - but this is repetitive since verses 4 and 5 have already made this clear.
    - We were made an inheritance - though this is a biblical idea, it has no parallel in Ephesians.
    - We have already obtained an inheritance - this, argues Eaton, is out of harmony with the rest of Paul’s teaching which seems to separate salvation with inheritance.
    - We have been made heirs / we have been allocated an inheritance. It is common biblical teaching that believers will inherit the promises if they persist in faith. In 1:18 he will come back to the subject of inheritance. This one is probably the right one.
  - If we have been allocated an inheritance, what is it? Well, given the context of verse 10 before it very likely means: ‘As God is at work in Project New Creation, every individual Christian, and every church, has an allocated part to play in partnering with God in what he is doing.’ Within Christ’s inheritance, we are allocated an inheritance.
  - Our inheritance includes all that, over and above salvation, God has for us specifically to receive and achieve now that we’re saved! Read this line again because it serves as a definition of inheritance.
- **God sovereignly and creatively weaves our lives into the larger tapestry of Project New Creation / the coming of the kingdom.**
    - He works out our lives in conformity with his larger purpose and will (which is Project New Creation - as we saw in verse 10).
    - Not only does he have good works planned in advance for us to do - he promises to superintend the course of our lives in the direction. He will prepare us for our future. Our lives will not be wasted. We can rest in his sovereignty!
  - **As we, through persevering faith, move into our inheritance our lives bring great glory to God.**
    - In order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory (v 12).
    - The thing about God sovereignly and creatively weaving our lives into the tapestry of what he is doing in the world is this: it is absolutely dependent on his grace! And since we rely on his great grace - we also give him great glory. The way to give God great glory is to draw from him great grace. Yes, there is honour for us - but what is most obvious is not our contribution but his own. Our works merely co-operate with his primary orchestrating work.

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed...

- **The Gospel includes us.**
  - The way to be included in salvation and in God's Project New Creation is that we hear the Gospel preached (the Gospel is 'the word of truth') and we believe!
  - We respond with faith as the message comes with Holy-Spirit-power.
  - The message is truth. The message is Good News. The message is about salvation in Jesus. The message is an invitation to 'be included in Christ.' The message must be heard.
  - 'you' = second generation Christians - the recipients of the letter, many of whom were Gentiles. It seems the emphasis is on Gentiles.

### THE SPIRIT (v13b-14)

When you believed (OR 'HAVING BELIEVED'), you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit (DOWNPAYMENT) guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

- **The Spirit confirms our salvation and promised inheritance.**
  - When we believe in Christ we receive salvation and a promised inheritance. But then - either at that time or some time later - we also can expect to experience the Spirit confirming our salvation and promised inheritance.
  - Acts 10:44-47 and 11:15-18 make the same point - when the outpouring of the Spirit on Cornelius and his connections convinces the apostles that Christ has saved them too - even though they were Gentiles.
- **Once we're saved - we need to seek God for the infilling of the Spirit.**
  - Eaton (and John Pawson and Terry Virgo) all believe that the sealing mentioned here is not the 'new birth of the Spirit', which happens at the same time as salvation. But it refers to the infilling of the Spirit, which doesn't always happen at the same time we're saved. This is why they make this argument:
    - 1) Acts 10 and 11 make the same point - where the receiving of the Spirit is highly experiential.
    - 2) We see the same thing in Galatians 3:1-5. Paul refers to a moment that they can remember - the moment they experienced the Spirit.
    - 3) How can a person receive a down payment (i.e. a portion guaranteeing the rest is coming) of heavenly glory and reward and not know about it?

4) A seal was something which was meant to make a matter certain and clear. The outpouring of the Spirit throughout the book of Acts is something that people were conscious of (Romans 8:15-17 is a description of this) and something conspicuous to others (see Acts 10 and 11 again).

- **We belong to God.**
  - Many religions 'sealed' their members - i.e. put tattoos on them marking them as members of various sects. But God himself tattoos us, in particular he tattoos our spirits with his Presence. We are 'God's possession' (verse 14).
- **We're free - but there's so much more freedom coming.**
  - Verse 7 tells us we already have been redeemed - but verse 14 suggests that our full redemption has not yet happened. Although we already are free from sin and death in the sight of God - our experience of 100% freedom will happen in heaven.
- **The infilling of the Spirit is a foretaste of our inheritance, our heavenly glory and reward.**
  - Our inheritance is all that God wants us to receive and achieve (now that we're saved) in this life but especially in the next. The Spirit comes to give us a taste of our inheritance - in this life, but especially in the next. We literally get to experience some of heaven - with its intense Presence and Power of God - in advance! And we get to experience some of the pleasure of God toward us in advance!
- **The infilling of the Spirit both motivates and warns us.**
  - The infilling of the Spirit is both an intense motivator (to pursue the promised inheritance faithfully) and a serious warning (if we do not).
  - Although all believers in Jesus will be saved - it is possible to so blow our inheritance that we are saved as 'through the fire'. This means that our inheritance of heavenly glory and reward can be greatly diminished. In this sense the Spirit's outpouring motivates us with the promise, 'There is so much more I want you to receive and achieve now and forever' - and yet also warns us of what can be forfeited / diminished if we do not persevere with faith.

#### **OPENED EYES (v15-19)**

- **We cannot take others where we ourselves have not been.**
  - Paul shifts from praise to prayer now. After describing aspects of salvation (that he so clearly sees) in his doxology to God, he now prays that we will see it with the eyes of our hearts. He wants to point us toward what he is already living in.

15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all his people, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

- **The book of Ephesians was written for all Christians everywhere - which includes us.**
  - The main reason that the letter to the Ephesians is so immediately applicable to us is that is, in a sense, written to all Christians everywhere.
  - This verse (v15) shows that Paul is praying for more than just the Ephesian Christians he knows (see Acts 20:17-38) but also for new Christians / churches that he has not personally met or just heard about. It is, therefore, a circular letter, written generically to all Christians, hence explaining why the letter is so immediately accessible to us now.
  - Compare the letter to Ephesians with the two to the Corinthians and you will see that there is less reference to very specific challenges they were facing, and more general truths that are true for all Christians everywhere.
- **Nothing can so encourage us like hearing how the Gospel has changed people.**
  - Paul has heard that they believed in Jesus. He has heard that they too encountered the Spirit (v13,14), and he has heard that their lives have changed in that they are beginning to love each other (which is the most important effect of salvation and the Spirit's infilling on our lives). Of course, this has greatly encouraged Paul who is in prison and he regularly thanks God for what he is doing.

17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit [f] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know

- **We need to seek a growing relationship with God, the Father, the Son and the Spirit.**
  - It is not so much that we know salvation - it is first that we know the Triune God - God and Christ and the Spirit (verse 17). (God is the glorious Father. Jesus is Christ and Lord. The Spirit is the source of wisdom and revelation.) The essence of salvation is a personal experiential relationship with God himself.
  - Recently I heard Rigby Wallace say, 'We can't serve God in a new way until we love God in a new way. We can't love God in a new way till we see God in a new way. We can't see God in a new way until we seek God in a new way.' This verse calls us to seek God.
- **We need more knowledge of salvation and God and we need more revelation of that knowledge.**

- Paul knows that there is so much more God has for us. But it all starts with revelation.
- The Greek word 'know' is *gnosis* which refers to experiential knowledge not just intellectual knowledge. Revelation comes from God - and through the Spirit.
- How do we experience this revelation?
  - 1) It starts with good teaching. This opens our mind to the truth.
  - 2) But then we need to pray for deep Holy Spirit insight into the truths. We need the eyes of our heart opened.
  - 3) 'keep asking' suggests a continued meditation on various verses / truths in a persevering dependence on the Spirit is what is needed too. 'Reflect on what I am saying and the Lord will give you insight into all this.' - 2 Timothy 4. We do not grow in this revelation after a few minutes of prayer and meditation - but over a whole lifetime of meditating and relying on the Spirit to give us a heart-insight into the truths of Ephesians.
- In verse 18 this revelation is described as 'enlightenment' - my Word comes as light to the soul. To receive revelation is to receive light from heaven - it is a conscious experience at a specific time.

18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his people, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

- **God wants to open our eyes to the hope to that which he has called us.**
  - Paul has already affirmed that they have faith and love - but in his prayer we see that Paul knows that there is something else missing - hope.
  - Hope in the biblical senses DOES NOT MEAN 'a doubtful desire that something will happen'. It DOES MEAN 'a real conviction, expectation, anticipation that something will happen.' Simply stated, 'hope' means 'God-given future'.
  - We have already seen that the hope is that God will bring all things together under one head - Christ, and that we have a part to play in this too. And we are certain of heaven. And we're certain that God has a unique path for us to take in all this.
  - Calling = a reference to God's saving work. We're all called to put our faith in Christ and we are all called to find our hope (i.e. certainty of an unshakable future) in Christ too.
- **God wants to open our eyes to see how glorious and precious his inheritance for us, his people, is.**
  - Although it may seem to suggest that God wants us to see His own inheritance in the church, Eaton suggests this is not the meaning.

Rather it refers (given the context) that God wants us to see the riches and glory of the inheritance he has for us!

- In many ways this echoes the previous sentiment. The difference is that hope refers to something in the future, whereas inheritance refers to something in the future that we can already start experiencing now! Already now we can begin to receive from and achieve for God. We experience his presence, his resourcing; we see glimpses of heaven's glory.
- **God wants to open our eyes so that we can see his great power that is for us who believe.**
  - Faith is a key to experiencing God's incomparable power! But faith flows out of revelation. As we grow in revelation of God's power so we can grow in faith that God's power will be available and then grow in our experiencing of that power in the days of our lives.
  - This power will serve as the theme from this verse on until the end of chapter 2, and then again in the prayer of Ephesians 3.

### **THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTED, EXALTED, LIVING CHRIST! (v20-23)**

- Paul is mid-prayer - and he mentions God's power. Then he stops praying (until 3:1 where he will pick up on it again) while he begins to explore the power of God in Christ's resurrection (1:19-23), in the believer's resurrection (2:1-10) and in the creation of the church (2:11-22).

That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that can be invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over

- **The power available to us is demonstrated and let loose in Jesus' resurrection from the dead!**
  - Death has rights over us because it is the salary paid by sin (Romans 3:23). It is a mighty power - the chords of death entangled me (Ps 18:4). But God's power is greater than even death. The moment Jesus rose from the dead he was not just conquering his own death - but our death too! It was the official launch of God's Project New Creation! God's power would prevail over every power that resists it. And God's power would bring life.
  - We see six different words that speak of this power in these verses: power, mighty, strength, exerted, raised, seated.
  - Interesting, Paul does not compare the power available to us with God's Creative power (i.e. the power of creation) - he sees the resurrection of Jesus (and the New Creation it demonstrates and

promises) as something so much greater! In the Old Testament one verse speaks of God's creation being done by his fingers - but when it comes to salvation his arm moves. In other words Salvation (i.e. New Creation) is an even greater feat than Creation itself!

- **The power available to us is demonstrated and let loose in Jesus' exaltation to the right hand of God.**
  - That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.
  - God's power did not just rescue Jesus from death but went much further - exalting him to co-ruler with God.
  - Jesus is at the Father's right hand - this means that he executes / acts out the will of God.
  - Jesus is seated - this refers to two things:
    - His work of atonement is complete and therefore he is in a position of rest / accomplished victory.
    - He is seated on a throne.
  
- **The power available to us is demonstrated and let loose in Jesus' unrivalled authority over every other authority, and over everything.**
  - 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that can be invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over
  - Christ has all authority in heaven and on earth. Every form of resistance is merely being tolerated by him for a short-while but already now he runs the universe.
  - Every political, ideological, demonic, personal resistance will ultimately be overcome!

22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.
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- **Jesus - with all his resurrection, exalted, ruling power - is focused on the success of the church.**
  - 'over everything for the church'.
  - Christ reigns for his church - he defeats everything (circumstances, the attack of the enemy, the power of sin) that comes against us. 'If Christ is for you, then what can be against you?' asks Paul elsewhere (Romans 8:31).
  
- **We need to learn how to draw on the life and resurrection power of Jesus which flows into the church, his body.**
  - the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

- This means that the life and energy and resurrection power of Jesus flow into the church. We as God's people share his power.
  - We experience a vital union with Christ! The kind of union a body shares with its head, or a branch shares with its vine, or a husband with his wife.
  - The secret of the Christian life and church-life is this: we need to learn to draw on the life and resurrection power of Jesus. The connection is there, but we must learn to draw this life from Christ through the Spirit! This requires a conviction of the availability of God's grace in Christ and a posture of hungry dependence on God in the hours and minutes of our lives.
- **The church is the expression and extension of Jesus on the earth.**
    - The church is the fullness of Christ. The word 'fullness' here means 'completion' of Christ. After all, what's a head without a body? It is a poetic way of saying that the church is an extension and expression of Christ on the earth. While Jesus was on the earth he ministered through his physical body, but now that he is in heaven he ministers through his body, the church. Jesus gets things done in this world through his church, his body.
    - We do not know Jesus if we do not know his passion for his church. He is absolutely committed to the well-being and success of his own body, the church! His church is the primary agent of his saving and reconciling work on the earth! The church is the A-team that partners with him in Project New Creation!
- **Jesus 'fills everything in every way'.**
    - This is a poetical term which, given the context, means 'he has the ability to influence every part of the universe as he wills.' It refers to his complete authority and his ability to do freely whatever he pleases in all of creation!
    - The church is the fullness of Christ, who fills all things in every way. This means that Jesus is concentrating his activities for and through the church. Although Christ is at work in the whole world, and will restore the whole of creation (as seen in 1:10) he concentrates his activities in and through the church.