



In Christ, I Am ... Loved!

Ephesians 1:1–6

Key thought: We are loved and blessed beyond our wildest imagination!

Introduction to Ephesians

The Church at Ephesus (ca AD 53–58)

Paul had just finished 18 months in Corinth. He had evangelized, taught and worked as a tentmaker there. He met fellow tentmakers, Priscilla and Aquila in the synagogue. He may have led them to faith, or they may have become believers in Rome. In any case, Paul disciplined them to be church planters and teachers.

Paul, Priscilla and Aquila sailed from Corinth across the Aegean Sea to Ephesus. Paul had an initial time of evangelism in the synagogue in Ephesus. He left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus as he went on to Antioch.

During the time Priscilla and Aquila were in Ephesus they met a young preacher named Apollos and helped ground him in the faith. After a time, Apollos went to Corinth and Paul returned to Ephesus. Paul then teamed up with Priscilla and Aquila and based his ministry in Ephesus for the next three years. This is the longest Paul stayed in any one place. He established a lay Bible Institute in Ephesus in the Lecture Hall of Tyrannus. He probably preached and taught in the surrounding towns. The letter to the Ephesians appears to be written to a general audience rather than specific members of one fellowship.

After three years of incredible ministry—and plenty of opposition—Paul traveled on to Macedonia and Achaia. As he was returning by sea to Jerusalem for the last time he felt it important to meet with the Ephesian elders in the port town of Miletus. It was here that he gave his farewell speech.

The Writing of Ephesians (ca AD 60–62)

At the end of his third journey Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, held prisoner in Caesarea and finally sent to Rome for trial. During this first imprisonment (house arrest) in Rome he wrote several letters including this one to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:1–6

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: ²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Praise 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. ⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

For Discussion

1. Take five minutes and write out all the blessings that God has blessed you with. Share your list with the group.
2. Paul sits in house arrest waiting for judgment, having already spent two years in prison in Caesarea. He has had a harrowing journey to Rome of several months duration. What might our attitude have been after those experiences? What was it that enabled Paul to focus on his, “incredible blessings”?
3. Jesus is mentioned or alluded to six times in six verses. What is Jesus’ relationship to this incredible number of blessings God has given us?

For Your Own Meditation

Take the passage and write it out as a personal prayer to God. For example:

³Praise be to **you**, God, the Father of **my** Lord Jesus Christ. **You** have blessed **me** in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴For **you** chose **me**...