



Sermon– August 19, 2018  
Chris Osborne

**Verses Covered**

*Ephesians 1:1 – 2*

*Ephesians 2:8 - 9*

*John 14:21, 23*

*Colossians 3:1 - 5*

So we're going to start today strolling through the book of Ephesians. Obviously we're going to start in the first chapter and we'll go all the way through the book. So I'm sitting at the table with, supper the other night, with my daughter, my seven-year-old grandson, and my wife. We were discussing a guy in the church who's in the hospital and I needed to go visit him. So my grandson said, "Why is he in the hospital?" My daughter said, "Well because he's having trouble breathing." And so he said, "Why's that?" So she said, "Well because he's older and sometimes when you're older you have trouble breathing." And so he looked up at me and said, "Pops have you had trouble with that?"

So there's one benefit of being older. I understand snail mail. Now the college kids growing up have no idea what snail mail is. Snail mail, when you grew up, you always followed, they taught you, and you did this in school, they taught you a formula if you wrote a personal letter or if you wrote a business letter, and every letter had a different type of formula that you worked from. What you have in the book of Ephesians is snail mail. That's what it is. It's a letter that Paul wrote to a church that he kind of started. He went to Ephesus, he was kind of strolling through the town and he ran into some people who believed in John's baptism, but didn't really know anything about Jesus. He talked to them about Christ. And so he started this church off these group of men. He was there three years. Longer than he is anywhere else in the New Testament, except for jail. So he spends 3 years here, ministers to them. And so this is his snail mail letter to them. All letters in the first century did just like the snail mail we were taught. They followed a certain formula. You identified who was writing the letter. You talked about who was receiving the letter. And you might add a little something in there. And so because of that there's been a tendency for Bible scholars and commentators to just kind of skip over the introductions to these letters and go straight to the body of the letter. But we're not going to do that because every introduction, oddly enough, has a particular point. The introduction here, it's going to do one of two things today. It's going to really muddy your life up or it's going to clear it up completely. So we're going to do one of the two things off of what he writes. So this is a key introduction. I want us to understand what it

says. He kind of flip flops a couple of things here, but it's a great point that he makes. And it will help you process who you are and who you're supposed to be. Because those are two different things. So listen to what he says.

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God,

He doesn't make a big thing about that. Remember the entire book of 2 Corinthians is a defense of that. He doesn't do that because these people know him. They've had a great experience. They know who he is. And it's been very powerful. So now he goes to the letter. Now listen and then we're going to come back.

to the saints who are in Ephesus and to the faithful ones in Christ Jesus.

You might think those two things, maybe there's some people that are saints, maybe there are some people that are faithful. The Greek indicates very clearly the same thing. OK. So he says to the saints and to the faithful, and then he says,

<sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the key to you understanding who you are and what you're supposed to be as a result of who you are. Now here's what he says.

To the saints

Now that is not a reference to what we think of as saints which is somebody that's performed several miracles, done everything right, they've accomplished a great deal in their life. It's why in Alabama we call him Saint Nick. But that's not what it's talking about here. I thought that was funny, you didn't. So at any rate, I do want you to listen though so you understand. There are two things in your life. There is a position that you are in in Christ. There is a condition of your life that is a result of that position. Now so I want you to listen carefully. Your position is that you are, if you've come to Christ, a saint. Now the problem is just because you're a saint doesn't mean that your condition always reflects your position. As a matter of fact, your condition can be totally off base and you are still positioned in Christ. Now I want you to listen. This is the introduction to 1 Corinthians. He says:

<sup>1</sup>To the church of God which is in Corinth sanctified, in other words made saints, in Christ Jesus to the called saints.

So he says to the church, right, he says, "Listen. You guys are saints." But when you read the book, you start out, he starts out the book saying, "You guys are divided into four groups on four different preachers, and your church is messed up. They don't understand how to treat apostles. They abuse them. They got a guy in the church that's so bad, they don't even do anything about and Paul writes, "You have got to kick him out of the church." They sue each other. They have enormous difficulty in marriage. They don't know how to date. They don't know how to marry; they don't know how to divorce. They don't know how to do anything right. They've struggled with that. They become stumbling blocks to each other inside the church. They've committed

idolatry. The ladies are coming to the church basically in our day, without wedding bands on refusing to submit to the lordship of their husbands. They're at the Lord's supper, the rich people are coming. They had the Lord's supper not on Sunday morning, but at a meal. The rich people are coming and fully eating, gouging themselves, getting drunk and the poor people are doing nothing. And then on top of all that, they're abusing tongues versus prophecy. They've begun to focus on the spiritual gifts instead of the giver of the gifts. They don't know how to love each other. So he writes this entire chapter on love. And then finally, they're not sure about the resurrection of Christ. Now I'm telling you, if you're a young pastor coming out of the Baptist Seminary of Jerusalem, and you get a call from this church, you are not responding to that call. You are not going to this church. Because they're nuts. After all that, what does he say? You guys are saints. Even though you're the most messed up church I've dealt with in the entire New Testament. But you are saints. Your sainthood is an established position. Now go back. Listen to what Paul writes to the Ephesians, verse 1, 2. Listen to what he says.

To the saints who are at Ephesus and the faithful: <sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ.

Now listen. Your position as a saint is established by the grace of God alone. Now what that means is God gives you favor that you don't deserve. In Ephesians 2 we have the Baptist verses beginning in verse 8.

<sup>8</sup>By grace you're saved through faith; not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup>not of works so that no man can boast.

That is grace. God, He sends His Son, we didn't ask for His Son, we didn't want His Son. He sends His Son anyway. He dies on a cross. His blood is poured out. He's resurrected so it authenticates that His death was not His fault, but ours. And so God takes our sin, puts it on His back and then the Holy Spirit will come. We sang that today, Come Holy Spirit, He will come and say to you that this story about Jesus is true. When He does that, then if you respond in faith and say, "I believe it and I surrender to it and I want to trust in it as the basis of my salvation." If you do that, the moment you do that, now listen, at that instant you are positioned in Christ. The Bible's going to say two things about you. It's going to say, Christ in you, the hope of glory, and it's going to talk about you being in Christ. As a matter of fact, in 1 Corinthians 12:13 he says we were all baptized by one Spirit into Christ. So God's grace makes you a saint. It establishes your position in Christ which obviously no matter what your condition struggles with, it doesn't remove your sainthood. Why? Because your sainthood isn't based on what you do, it's based on what God did for you. So you can't lose it. You didn't do it. You didn't earn it. You didn't do anything to get it. He gave it to you. It's a gift of God. He gives it to you as you respond to the Holy Spirit's truth about what He did in Jesus Christ. So once you do that and my position is established, this is permanent. It is rigid. It is static. It is set in stone. It cannot be changed or moved no matter what happens with my condition. This thing is settled. You're good.

Now your condition, your position never changes, your condition changes every day. Some days your condition more closely reflects your position than other days. This changes continually. Your sainthood is based on grace. Now watch this.

<sup>2</sup>But grace to you and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I'm going to read you, and I want you to understand something here, peace, when he says that, it doesn't mean your life's calm and everything's wonderful. OK. It's not the meaning of either Hebrew word Shalom or the Greek word *eiríni*. They both literally meant, now they kind of became like we say "How are you doing?" I get that. But both words generally carry the content of if I said to somebody, Shalom or *eiríni*, what I was saying to them is, "I want for you God's best." So when he says, "Grace to you and peace," and it's always in that order, he never says peace and grace. He said, "If you've been positioned by My grace, you now have a chance to experience God's best for you." Now hang in there with me. Let me walk you through real quickly, beatitudes, blessed are those who are poverty stricken in their spirit, who mourn over their sin, and who are meek before God. There's the three steps to dying to self. Then they hunger and thirst after righteousness. They become merciful, pure in heart, and they become peacemaker. That doesn't mean they become people that keep people from being mad at each other. But when all that occurs, when you die to self and you become filled with the righteousness of God, and you become merciful and pure in your heart, you then become a person who wants God's best for people. And you become a person that tries to do that. Listen to John 14 because this is always a struggle for people who only focus and don't really understand this here. Listen to this.

<sup>21</sup>The one who has my commandments,

OK. They're in here.

and keeps them, that one is the one who loves Me;

Now loving Him is condition. He loves me is my position. My loving Him back is my condition. Now watch this.

but the one who loves Me, shall be loved by My Father, and I shall love him and I shall make Myself known to him.

And then two verses later he says,

<sup>23</sup>Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father shall love him, and We shall come to him and make Our house Our room.

With Him. Now there's the condition. Now listen. I want His peace. I want God's best because God's best is obviously not whether or not I keep a bunch of Baptist rules, but God's best is whether or not Jesus and His Father come into my life and make themselves known to me. The richness of Christianity isn't morality. It's a relationship with Jesus. So I have the chance to experience Him in a personal, rich encounter. That, though, now listen, what did he say to the Ephesians? To the saints who are faithful, grace and peace. Now listen. Grace is what God does for you. It's settled. But your condition is what you do for Him as you understand your position. If I understand really fully my position, 1 John 4:19, we love Him because He first loved us. If I understand the root of this position, that it's in the fact that He loves me, then I will love Him back. And Jesus says if I love Him back, then He will come to me and manifest Himself in my life. I

want to say this carefully, OK. You can have all the quiet time you want, but you will not experience Jesus Christ if your condition isn't reflecting your position. That's why he says, to the saints and to the faithful ones. When I begin to understand who I am in Christ and I become faithful to that, that is, I begin to try to wrap my life around who I am in Christ so that I reflect and I show off what God did for me in His grace. When I begin to do that then Jesus comes and manifests Himself in my life. His manifestation is based on the faithfulness of my condition to the position His grace put me in and now I experience His peace. It's a tremendous concept. His grace enacts a permanent position of sainthood. My reaction to that elicits His response in my life of an experiential God who encounters me on a daily basis. So that when I come in here on Sunday morning I can worship someone I actually know. So my condition is my faithfulness to the position that His grace brought me into and then I experience His peace, or that is, His best for my life. So they fit perfectly together. This never changes. This changes all the time.

So what do I do? I want you to understand a couple things. Now listen carefully. Neither one of these creates the other. My condition never creates my position. And I guarantee you there's some of you in this room that think that's true. You think you come to church and read your Bible, you give a little money, you're really a pretty nice guy, you don't cheat on your taxes. That your conditions OK so that God, when you die, will give you this position. No, no, no, no, no. This position isn't based on anything you do. It's based on what He did for you on the cross. So your condition will not create your position. And as we learned from 1 Corinthians, just because you have the position doesn't mean it's going to create the condition. It gives you the potential for the condition because now the Holy Spirit indwells you and now based on Romans 8, in the power of the Holy Spirit I can alter my condition in a way that I experience Jesus Christ in a rich and a deep powerful way. They don't create each other. This one is fluid. This one is permanent and static. This is why you hear people say once saved always saved. I think the better thing is once a saint always a saint. You get sainthood through the grace of Jesus Christ. That's never lost. That's there. Now the rest of your life, you're working to let your condition fit that position. You want your faithfulness to the position to bring God's peace into your life so that God's best occurs for you. You say, "Well what do I do?" You understand something that both are important. I want you to turn to Colossians 3. I want to look back at something in a little bit of detail that we glanced at a couple weeks ago. But I want you to understand. You don't want to start focusing on your condition because what will happen is one of two things. If you get up in the morning and you focus on your condition, one of two things will happen. You will become so guilty over your failures that you'll quit. Or what you'll do is what the Pharisees did. You'll create rules you can keep so it will remove the guilt in a non-Biblical way. So we don't want to focus on our condition. We want to focus on our position. As a matter of fact, listen to what Paul writes.

<sup>1</sup>Therefore if you've been raised together with Christ,

Is that a position or a condition statement? Ok this is not a trick question. This is not Bible school. Is that a position or a condition statement? Position. You didn't raise yourself with Christ. He raised you.

Seek the things above,

Is that condition or position? That's condition. You then seek the things above.

where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Is that position or condition? That's His position and you are positioned with where He is.

<sup>2</sup>Think the things above, not the things on the earth.

What is that? That's condition.

<sup>3</sup>You've died and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.

There's your position.

<sup>4</sup>Whenever Christ is manifest, then your life also, you yourself shall be manifested with Him in glory.

Now listen to what he just said. OK. He intermixes position and condition. But what he says is, you have been placed in heaven with Christ and when He comes, and that's settled, and then he says, and when He returns, your life will show up with Him. There's my position. There's a position here and then I'm in Christ. There's a position here that when I die and He comes back, He and I are together. That position is settled by His grace. That's it.

Now my condition though, look in verse 5.

<sup>5</sup>Therefore, put to death the members which upon the earth

And then he lists several things that are central. He says he doesn't tell you to worry about putting to death the things in your life that God doesn't like until He's told you about your position. So you don't worry about your condition when you get up in the morning. You worry about your position. Here's why. You're going to spend the rest of your life trying to figure out all there is to the position you hold in Jesus Christ. My life is hidden with Christ in God. I can't fathom that. So I'm going to spend the rest of my life trying to figure out my position, but here's the deal. As I begin to understand my position, it creates in me a desire to want to reflect what it is that I have in my life. What does the Bible say? We love Him because He first loved us. When I understand that love, then I want to love Him back. And then my condition is altered. My position's static. But I want it to be my focus when I get up in the morning so that when I go through the day and something happens that I know I shouldn't do, I think back and you know that's not what Jesus saved me for. I don't want this in my life today. Let me tell you something. If you understand one thing, which to this day I've been doing this, I've been saved since '69. I still to this day do not understand the depth of that cross. But the more I understand it, I've discovered a change inside my life. I don't want in my life the things that caused Him to die. And I want in my life the things that when He died, allowed Him to pay for my sins. Just a re-understanding of the cross and the position that it brought me, alters my heartbeat toward my condition. I don't want to focus on my condition. I want to focus on my position. But in a way that as I understand it, I want my condition altered. And as I want it altered, and I walk that way, then Jesus comes down, manifests Himself in my life, and as I experience Him, I think this is the richest thing I've ever had. And

then I go back to my position. I think, "Wow!" And then I come back and I experience Jesus. It's a catch-22 think that's incredible. The more I understand my position, the more I change my condition. The more I experience Christ, the more I experience Christ, the better I understand my position. And it just goes back and forth and back and forth and back and forth. Or it's a catch-22 that I don't even focus on my condition. And so I don't care about my condition. It doesn't matter how I live because I'm OK. And that's all I know and it's all I care to know. For a number of us fire insurance is enough. You tell me I'm a saint, I've got fire insurance, it'll both be OK when I die. That's all I need to know. And if that's all you focus on, then you will never care about the change in your condition. But if you begin to understand who He is and what He did and why you're a saint, then you will want your condition altered which will deepen who Jesus is in your life. I'm a saint because of the grace of God. I have His peace because I'm faithful to that grace and to that sainthood. That's why he writes what he writes.

So two questions today, right. Number one, are you a saint? And you think because you're over here that you're a saint, no, no, no, no, no. You don't do anything to earn sainthood. He does that for you. So the question is, are you a saint? Number two, if you are a saint, here's the real questions. If you are a saint, what does that mean? And the more you understand what it means, the deeper you understand and experience the Creator of this universe. That is worth everything.

Let's pray.

Father, thank You for the sainthood. And I ask You for me that I begin even anew as best I can every single day this week to learn what You did for me in Your grace. Father I want Your peace and I want to be faithful to what You did for me. Bring that home to me. Bring that clarity to me as only You can. In Jesus Christ name.