

Rags and Robes

Chapter 5

Audio Lesson: New Testament #59



Objective: To understand the major themes of the letter to the Ephesians.



For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

– Ephesians 2:8-9

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

– Ephesians 3:14-16

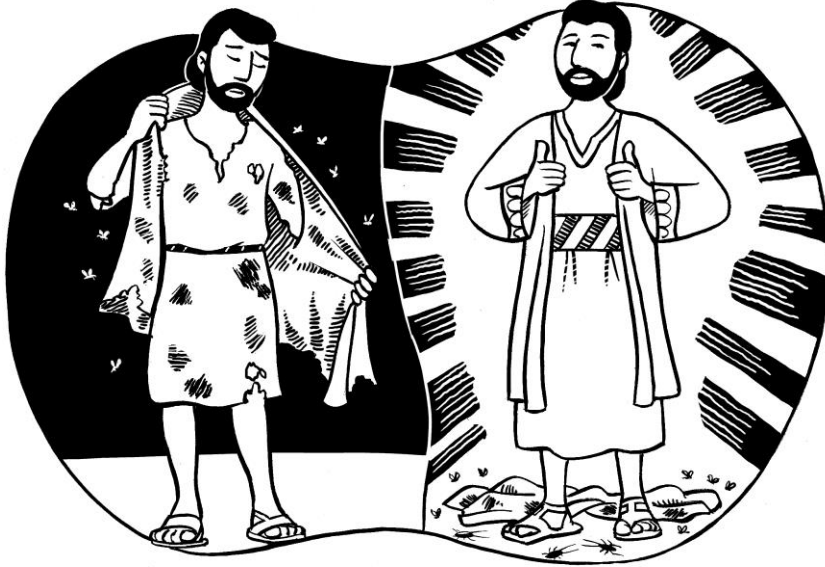
It was mentioned previously that Ephesians is Paul's masterpiece on the subject of the Church. Paul wanted to show the Church of Jesus Christ what it was designed by God to be. Before time began, God chose us as members of His Church, a called-out people who would live holy lives and be a witness to this world. The world has never needed the witness of the Church more than it does now.

In chapter 1, Paul told us that, in the heavenly places, we have all the spiritual blessings we need to live our lives in Christ. Christ lives in the heavenly dimension, and we can live there with Him. Not everything in the heavenly dimension is good. Evil spirits exist there, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, the believer in Christ can be victorious over the wicked powers of darkness in the spirit world or heavenly places.

Paul's prayers in chapters 1 and 3 show that he was a great intercessory prayer warrior. When he heard that someone had faith and became involved in the work of Christ, Paul began to pray for them and never stopped.

In chapter 3, Paul revealed that the Church is a great mystery of God. Paul wanted the Ephesians to remember what their old life was like, and how wonderful it was when Christ gave them new life. In chapter 4, Paul compared our spiritual life with the clothes we have. We are to put off the rags of the old life and put on the robes of the new life. We are to walk, to live in Christ every day, putting off the old ways such as lying, anger, bitterness, and strife, and putting on the new robes of holiness, righteousness, truth, hard work, graciousness, and love. Finally, Paul commands believers to be filled with or controlled by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will give us the power to live and walk in the heavenly dimension in Christ, no matter what our circumstances may be.

1. True or False? Before time began, God had planned for the existence of the Church.



2. True or False? Paul regularly prayed for the physical needs of the people in the Church.
3. True or False? Paul wrote that Christians should be so focused on heaven that we are not concerned with the needs of this world.
4. True or False? Paul teaches that salvation is only by grace through faith.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. What is the purpose of Paul's letter to the Ephesians? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. To chastise the Ephesians for their sin
 - b. To show God's purpose for the Church
 - c. To encourage the church in Ephesus to be the authentic Church of Jesus Christ
 - d. To urge the Church throughout the centuries to live in the heavenly places with every blessing
6. Which of these statements about the heavenly dimension are correct? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. It is the invisible world of the spirit.
 - b. It is a place where only the Holy Spirit dwells.
 - c. It includes evil and good spiritual forces.
 - d. Believers cannot go there until they die.
7. What does Paul say is the great mystery of God?
 - a. Salvation
 - b. Marriage
 - c. The Church
 - d. Creation

8. Paul used a metaphor or image to describe how Christians are to live. What are some examples he gave of the robes we are to wear? (Choose all that apply)

- | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------------|
| righteousness | holiness | hard work |
| bitterness | rage | anger |
| brawling | slander | malice |
| kindness | compassion | forgiveness |

9. Christians should edify or build each other up. How do we do that?

- a. Pray for each other
- b. Confess our sins to each other
- c. Speak encouraging words to each other
- d. Fellowship regularly with each other

10. In Ephesians 5:15, we read, “*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.*” What does Paul mean when he says to be careful how we walk?

- a. Be aware of how we live in an evil world.
- b. Focus only on your future life in heaven.
- c. Be focused on our life and our needs.
- d. We should not walk in the dark.



Believers who live in Christ see and respond to the needs of the world. Hospitals, orphanages, and homes for unwed mothers were created by people who walked *as children of light*. (Ephesians 5:8) What are some ways you can reach out with compassion in your community?

In Ephesians 5:18, Paul tells us not to be controlled by wine or strong drink but to be controlled by the Spirit. Are you letting the Spirit control you? What are some ways that you can allow the Spirit to control more of you this week?



Thank God for the Church and for His design for how it should work in the world. Praise Him for new life in Christ. Thank Him that you can live in Christ right now in the heavenly dimension. Ask God to help you be more compassionate and to show you who you can help this week.



Going Deeper

1. What are “the robes of the new life,” and how do you “get dressed” in them every day? _____

2. What are “the rags of the old life,” and what does it mean to be wearing them every day? _____

3. Explain what it means for your speech not to corrupt, but rather, to be filled with words that minister grace and build up those who hear you. _____

4. What does it mean and how are you to apply what it means to “walk circumspectly” every day? _____

5. How can you apply what Paul wants the Ephesians to remember in this letter? _____

6. How can you apply what Paul wants to bring to resolution in this letter? _____

7. How can you apply what Paul writes to this church when he tells them (in 1:4) that they were chosen in Him before the world had foundations? _____
