

Sustaining Revival: A Study on Ephesians
Lesson 2 “Accepted in the Beloved”

- I. Introduction - The Revival in Ephesus, which *Acts 18-20* discusses is the greatest revival in the New Testament. Paul wrote *Ephesians* to the church in Ephesus about five years later to establish them in truth after the goosebumps had worn off so they could have a sustained experience with God and continue to increase.
 - A. Faith built on truth helps us sustain when the emotions wear off and things get hard.
 - B. In *Ephesians*, God’s plan for man is laid out from the beginning of time and for the beginning of time.
 1. *Romans* shares many of the same truths, but *Ephesians* is different because it focuses on the why more than the what. The why is God’s passion for us! In this book we begin to learn about the radical love of God He has for all humanity since the beginning of time and not just the legal facts of our salvation.
 2. *Ephesians* has a poetry to it that gives us strength for the journey!
 - C. *Ephesians 1-3* focus on who we are in Christ and how much God loves us. It’s essential to understand these truths because they shape our identity and purpose. *Ephesians 4-6* focus on how we live out God’s plan for our lives from our true identity. They also focus on how the church increases and expands its influence in the world.
 1. **Genesis 1:26-28** God gave Adam and Eve **Identity, Authority, Blessed Them, and Gave Them Purpose.**
 2. God placed Adam and Eve in Eden to see what was true in Eden expand over the earth. **Isaiah 51:3.** God takes waste places and makes them like Eden.
 - D. Many theologians believe Eden was the original temple of God on Earth. He placed man at the center of it to minister to the Lord and to guard the temple.
 1. Parallels - Tree of life in Eden, tree of life is in the heaven (where God’s sanctuary is), Israel’s temple had wood carvings and Eden had wood carvings, just as river flowed out of Eden, a river flows out of the end time temple (*Ezekiel 47:1-12, Revelation 22:1-2*).
 2. **Why is any of this important? What does it have to do with *Ephesians*? We are now God’s temple individually (*1 Corinthians 6:17* and collectively (*Ephesians 2:19-22*).**
 3. When we get a revelation of our identity individually and collectively, He is able to inhabit us and His glory can fill the earth. ***Habakuk 2:14.***
 4. In *Ephesus* we see a counterfeit temple (Diana). This represents the idolatry and the world’s system that stands in opposition to God’s better plan for our lives.

II. Accepted in the Beloved - The big focus on tonight is to learn we are the garden of the Lord/Temple and that God speaks to us in our heart. We want to learn to recognize His voice of grace tonight. Life comes from His voice so we must recognize His voice to walk in His plan for our lives. (Say this, "I am a garden of God. I am a temple of God.")

A. Ephesians 1:1-6

1. **Verse 1** - apostle - sent one. Sent to reveal Jesus. Written to the faithful in Christ. We become faithful when we get in Christ.
2. **Verse 2** - God speaks grace and peace - One of the reasons many don't hear Jesus's voice is because they aren't looking for grace and peace. They expect judgment and condemnation when God speaks.
3. **Verse 3** - already blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places - Eddie story - "I'm mad. I've been lied to." Was taught he had to earn God's blessings.
4. **Verse 4** - God sees us before Him as holy and in His unconditional love.
5. **Verse 5** - No one has ever been accidentally adopted. That's how much God wanted us.

Eph 1:3-5 Amplified 3 *[Blessed and worthy of praise be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ, 4 just as [in His love] He chose us in Christ [actually selected us for Himself as His own] before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy [that is, consecrated, set apart for Him, purpose-driven] and blameless in His sight. In love 5 He predestined and lovingly planned for us to be adopted to Himself as [His own] children through Jesus Christ, in accordance with the kind intention and good pleasure of His will—***What did we do to earn any of this? Nothing. All we do is receive.**

6. **Verse 6** God has made accepted (highly favored in the beloved). The only other time the Greek word for accepted (charitoo) is used is to describe the virgin Mary in **Luke 1:28. This means we are just as accepted and favored as Mary.**

B. The same way God walked with Adam in the cool of the day, He walks and talks with you in the the garden of your heart. The things He is speaking to you are that you are blessed, favored, accepted apart from anything you do.

III. Conclusion - The purpose of tonight was to help you know what God's voice in your heart sounds like. Many do not connect because they don't let themselves hear God speaking kind words of favor to them. Hopefully, this will reset us and help us sensitize the ears of our heart to the voice of God. **Life is in His voice!**

IV. Discussion Questions

1. What are your biggest takeaways or aha moments from this teaching?
2. ***Ephesians 1:3*** says we have already been blessed with all blessings in heavenly places. This means the blessing has been given and all we have to do is believe and receive. What are so things you can do to build faith in this area and believe you have already received the blessing of God in every area of your life (ex: righteousness, healing, financial prosperity, mental peace).
3. God is so passionate about you, you are the garden He wanted to inhabit and temple He wanted to move inside. How does knowing how God sees you and how passionate He is about you effect you?
4. Many churches in the Bible Belt focus on behavior modification. This means that teach how Christians should behave without teaching who we are in Christ first. This causes many Christians to try to do in order to become. Have you ever experienced this personally? What was it like? How did focusing on changing behavior and keeping rules effect how you saw God? How do you see God differently after tonight?
5. How does knowing that you were made perfect, the exact away God wanted you to be change you? Brian said this truth delivered him from insecurity and gave him boldness around others. Are you more confident to be yourself without apologizing for who you are now? How can you take this truth and apply it in terms of how you relate to others?
6. Jesus said in ***John 6:63 my words are spirit and they are life***. Life comes from His voice! Can you give examples of where Jesus spoke things to you in your past and they gave you life when you felt weary? Share with the group in you are comfortable. **I would encourage all of you to write these things down and rehearse them as reminders as to what the voice of God sounds like.**