

WHAT IS CHURCH?

A Study of the Book of Ephesians

First Presbyterian Church of Yuma, Colorado
July 15 – September 2, 2018

Written by
Jamie Fiorino

Resources used in compiling this study

“Ephesians” by NT Wright. InterVarsity Press, 2009.

“Interpretation: Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon” by Ralph P. Martin. John Knox Press, 1991.

Strong’s Greek Dictionary and Accordance Bible Software, 2018.

All scripture, unless otherwise noted, from the New International Version. Retrieved from biblegateway.com, 2018.

What is this book?

The book of Ephesians is a letter from Paul to the newer churches he had started before getting arrested. He writes from jail a letter of instruction and encouragement not to the town of Ephesus specifically, but a general letter that is received by one church leader, written down for that church (in this case Ephesus), and then passed on to the next church.

Why study it?

I chose this book because (1) it is the lectionary's pick for Scripture this summer; (2) it is a small but powerful word of living our lives faithfully and with holiness; and (3) it presents a picture of how the church was envisioned. And as we are just getting to know each other, this is a good opportunity for us to start out on the same foot and have a conversation about what the church was, is, and ought to be.

How does this work?

Every Sunday, there is room for you to take notes on the sermon text. Some Sundays the sermon text will be ahead of you and some behind. Every other day of the week, you'll read one to three verses and reflect on one or two questions. There is some room to write down your answer to those questions, but it is not necessary.

Is there an answer key? How will I know if I'm right?

There is no answer key other than the scripture in front of you and the power of your convictions. I purposefully did that so you won't rely on my convictions, but rather you will build on your own understanding of faith. Yes, that may mean you struggle a little but I'm here for you—let's talk it out!

So, here's the first question:

How do you define Church?

Sunday, JULY 15

“The Church is Chosen” Ephesians 1:3-14

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. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

JULY 16 Ephesians 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

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

Paul offers four characteristics of the Church in his opening sentence. What are they?

What does it mean to be holy?

JULY 17 Ephesians 1:15-17

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

Read the previous verses. What is the reason Paul is referring to?

Do you read any new information about how to define the Church?

How does the Church today define wisdom and revelation?

JULY 18 Ephesians 1:18-21

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 holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

What is the hope of the Church, according to Paul?

Paul gives three things he hopes the Church will be enlightened with. What are they, and do you think the Church recognizes these things today?

Do you think our church recognizes them?

JULY 19 Ephesians 1:22-23

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

In the space below, sketch a quick flowchart of how the church is organized, according to this verse. Include a little star to indicate where you belong in the order of things.

JULY 20 Ephesians 2:1-5

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Re-read this passage and reflect on its message; it is at the heart of the Christian faith. We used to be one way, but are now something different. Praise God!

Write a prayer of confession and assurance of faith based on this passage, as if it were to be printed in the church bulletin.

*If you're feeling brave, give a copy to Pastor Jamie to be used during this sermon series! (It can be anonymous; it won't be attributed to you, unless you want it noted in the bulletin.)

JULY 21 Ephesians 2:6-11

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

According to Paul, God made us alive and raised us up in Christ. What does he say God wants to accomplish by this?

Many people think they can earn their salvation by doing good works. Do you ever feel like you need to earn God’s favor or grace? Why is it hard to accept a free gift?

Sunday JULY 22

Ephesians 2:11-22 “The Church is One”

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Yesterday's scripture says we are no longer strangers to God and to each other. So, Paul begins a new argument here. He's stitching together ALL the people of God: Jew (formerly the Israelites) and Gentiles (all the non-Jews). For that reason the information given previously just to the Jews is now revealed to the non-Jews.

JULY 23 Ephesians 3:1-3

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.

Why is it important for Paul to advertise (again) that he's in prison?

What does it mean to be a “prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of” Gentiles?

Do you know what this mystery is that Paul refers to? How would you find out?

JULY 24 Ephesians 3:4-6

In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Paul's mystery is revealed today! What are the three great privileges of the mystery?

Look back at that flowchart you drew on page 6. How does the Spirit work to inform the organization of the Church? (I left you space to re-draw it if you'd like.)

JULY 25 Ephesians 3:7

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.

Americans have a tough time with this word translated here as “servant.” Because of our national history, we don’t want to say *slave* even though it is the closest word. The language of the people of Hawaii is Pidgin, and they have translated the Bible into their language. (It’s called Da Jesus Book!) The American paraphrase of their translation is this: “*And me, God went and made me just one worker guy for him. God gives me this job, just like it was a special gift, to tell The Good Kinda Stuff From Him. And he gives me this job because he has the power to do whatever he likes to do inside of me.*”

What sticks out to you in Da Jesus Book translation?

JULY 26 Ephesians 3:8-9

Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

God asks Paul to preach and explain how the mystery works. What does this reveal about the character of God?

What does it mean for the Church today?

JULY 27 Ephesians 3:10-12

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

What, according to Paul, is the purpose of the Church?

What's the difference between what the Church says and what the Church is? Should they (can they) be the same thing?

JULY 28 Ephesians 3:13-19

I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory. For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every 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, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

What are some words to describe what your prayer life is like?

If we approach God with confidence and assurance (vv. 11-12), how would that change your prayer life?

What difference can a fuller understanding of God’s love make in specific ways? (Think: interaction with others, self-image, financial management.)

Sunday JULY 29

Ephesians 3:14-21 “The Church is Powerful”

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every 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, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to

him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

JULY 30 Ephesians 4:1

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

What are you called to do?

JULY 31 Ephesians 4:2-6

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Describe the unity that God has given to Church.

What are the threats to Christian unity today?

AUGUST 1 Ephesians 4:7-10

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.” (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)*

* Psalm 68:18.

Just as Moses went up Mt. Sinai to receive the law, Christ’s death and resurrection is a “new Exodus” to release us from the bondage of sin and death. With his resurrection, Christ left gifts for the church just as Moses did.

What role does grace play in the structure and unity of the Church?

AUGUST 2 Ephesians 4:11-14

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

Christ has given other gifts to the Church, but these first five were important to start the Church. What are the results FOR THE CHURCH of using the gifts which we have been given?

Infants cannot defend themselves, hence they are easily manipulated and injured, as was the young Church. In what ways has the Church matured and can defend itself? In what ways is it still growing?

AUGUST 3 Ephesians 4:15-19

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all

sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

The word translated here as “sensuality” is a Greek compound word from (1) the negative particle and (2) a word that means continent. Together it’s like saying the thing is not whole. If I ever write a translation, this verse would say:
Having lost all their moorings, the non-believers willingly cut their anchor and are floating away on a sinking ship of impurity and are happily drowning in a sea of greed.

Paul reminds us that we used to be something different from what we are now. Fill in this chart using the opposite words, as presented in this scripture.

<i>If the Gentiles are...</i>	<i>Then Christians must be...</i>

AUGUST 4 Ephesians 4:20-24

That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Are there things in your life that try to pull you back into the old way of living?

What do you do to renew the attitude of your mind?

Sunday AUGUST 5

Ephesians 4:1-16 “The Church Seeks Peace”

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.” (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Here comes the list of do's and don'ts. Every day on this page, you'll read a list of things that the non-believers do every day: lie, hold a grudge, steal, withhold, gossip, fight, and harbor bitterness. Each day reflect on your daily patterns and pray for the strength to follow Christ's example away from these things. Then write one or two words to describe the lifestyle the Church ought to be modeling to the world.

AUGUST 6 Ephesians 4:25

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

AUGUST 7 Ephesians 4:26-27

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold

AUGUST 8 Ephesians 4:28

Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

AUGUST 9 Ephesians 4:29-30

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

AUGUST 10 Ephesians 4:31-32

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

AUGUST 11 Ephesians 5:1-2

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Paul says imitate God. That seems like a hard task. How can we begin to do that?

Re-read those words from the previous page. What are the characteristics the Church should be modeling to the world?

Read it again, this time, read them as a description of how God acts toward us. Does it ring true? How does that make you think and feel differently about the passage?

Sunday AUGUST 12

Ephesians 4:25-5:2 "The Church Seeks Integrity"

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

AUGUST 13 Ephesians 5:3-4

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

What's Paul's remedy for immorality?

Do you think it would work in the 21st century? Why/why not?

AUGUST 14 Ephesians 5:5-7

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.

What do you make of the fact that Paul lumps sexual immorality and greed in the same category?

Empty words are deceiving. Without using politics or politicians as an example, what are some modern day examples of empty words that deceive people?

AUGUST 15 Ephesians 5:8-11

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

Is Paul saying what pleases the Lord can only be found in the light? If so, what are those things?

AUGUST 16 Ephesians 5:12-14

It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

What, then, should the Church’s attitude be toward “the works of darkness”?

What are some dark works we encounter often?

AUGUST 17 Ephesians 5:15-17

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.

What is one practical way you can live out each of Paul’s instructions?

AUGUST 18 Ephesians 5:18-20

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Instead of being filled with the things that dull the senses, Paul encourages us toward psalms, hymns, and songs. What does that say about the role these things played in Paul's life?

What about you? What role do psalms, hymns, and songs play in your spiritual life?

AUGUST 19: Praise in the Park!

The next few days are Paul's instructions on relationships. In true Pauline style, he sets up his argument in the first sentence and then gives examples of how that ought to work using metaphors and common illustrations. And then summarizes in the last verse of the argument. In this case, Paul's argument is made in 5:21 and the examples he chooses are in the form of familial relationships. In no way does Paul then or the church now condone violence or abuse (in any form).

AUGUST 20 Ephesians 5:21

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

How do you define submission?

What does it mean to you that you are told to submit out of reverence for Christ?

AUGUST 21 Ephesians 5:22-24

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

What should submission look like in daily life?

AUGUST 22 Ephesians 5:25-28

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other

blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

How does Paul's reminder to submit to husbands because it is really submitting to Christ affect the relationship with the husband?

AUGUST 23 Ephesians 5:29-33

After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Can you think of any examples of Christ feeding and caring for his body, the Church? Not just physically, think spiritual food!

AUGUST 24 Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a

promise—“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

**What does it mean to honor our father and mother?
(Especially if you have a complicated relationship with your parents.)**

At what age can we stop obeying our parents?

AUGUST 25 Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

What does it mean that Paul has given a mandate for mutual responsibility?

Sunday AUGUST 26 – Blessing of the Bags

(Don't forget to bring your bag to church!)

Ephesians 5:8-14 “The Church is Visible”

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is

said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

AUGUST 27 Ephesians 6:5-8

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

How are slaves, or employees, to do their work?

Does this describe your work ethic?

AUGUST 28 Ephesians 6:9

And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

In turn, how are masters, or employers, to treat their employees?

Does it make a difference that this is also set up with mutual responsibility?

AUGUST 29 Ephesians 6:10-12

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

What kind of warfare are we engaged in?

How does that manifest itself today?

AUGUST 30 Ephesians 6:13-17

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in

place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Take a pencil and number the six pieces of armor God has provided for the battle. Below, name a specific way you can use that today.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

AUGUST 31 Ephesians 6:18-20

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

The seventh weapon (or bonus weapon, if you will) is prayer. How does prayer help us fight spiritual battles?

How is prayer hard work for you?

SEPTEMBER 1 Ephesians 6:21-24

Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you. Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

Why send the personal note about Tychicus?

Why would Paul end this letter—what could be his last letter, as he is in jail—with an emphasis on peace?

Sunday SEPTEMBER 2

Ephesians 6:10-20 “The Church is Prepared”

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.