

90 Days through the Bible

Acts - Philemon

Paul's Seven Metaphors of the Church

Opening Thoughts

- The gates of Hades will not prevail against it ... But the devil will try.
- A beautiful diamond with many facets – every time you turn it you see a different characteristic.
- The ultimate purpose of the church – “To make his mystery known”

Ephesians 3

¹For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

²Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶This 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.

⁷I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰His 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, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. The Building of God - A dwelling built on a foundation of truth

The Church is called to be the pillar of truth – An agency of truth!

- **1 Tim. 3** – “I am writing you these instructions so that... you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.”

Ephesians 2

¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole building is joined together and rises to

become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

A house built on a solid foundation of Christ & the Apostles, Prophets

- Prophets – Old Test. revelation concerning the messiah
 - O.T. written over 1000 year period
 - 300 references to His coming
 - 60 major and specific messianic prophecies with 270 ramifications that were to be fulfilled by the coming Messiah.

Jesus told his disciples after his resurrection

Luke 24

⁴⁴He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

- Apostles – New Test. eye witness of the Apostles

All had been imprisoned and all but John had died for something they knew to be true:

- Peter – crucified
- Andrew crucified
- James, son of Alphaeus – crucified
- Philip – crucified
- Simon - crucified
- Bartholomew – crucified
- Thaddaeus – killed by arrows
- James, brother of Jesus – stoned & clubbed
- Paul – beheaded in Rome
- Matthew – the sword
- James, son of Zebedd – the sword
- John – natural causes – he wrote

1 John 1

¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ²The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

- Christ – The chief corner stone – the basis for the entire building.

1 Peter 2 *The Living Stone and a Chosen People*

⁴As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--
⁵you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For in Scripture it says: (Isa. 28:16)
 "See, I lay a stone in Zion,
 a chosen and precious cornerstone,
 and the one who trusts in him
 will never be put to shame." ⁷Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,
 "The stone the builders rejected
 has become the capstone,"
⁸and,
 "A stone that causes men to stumble
 and a rock that makes them fall."

Corner stone & capstone – first & last.

2. The temple – The church as an agency of spirituality – the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 2

²¹In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3

¹⁶Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in^l you? ¹⁷God will bring ruin upon anyone who ruins this temple. For God's temple is holy, and you Christians are that temple.

1 Corinthians 6

¹⁸Run away from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. ¹⁹Or don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, ²⁰for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

3. The Bride – The church as an agency of purity and sanctification

Ephesians 5

²⁵And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God's word. ²⁷He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.

Revelation 21

² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

Baptism = a sign of receiving Gods healing, cleansing and renewal.

4. The Body – The Church as an agency of function & unity

1 Corinthians 12

¹²The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.

- Every part has been created to be unique and different.
- Every part is needed. Every part is necessary for the well being of the whole body.

²⁶If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.
²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

- For the church to thrive we need each other.

Romans 12

⁴Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

5. The Family or Household of God – The Church as an agency of relationship.

Ephesians 1

³How we praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we belong to Christ. ⁴Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. ⁵His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure.

Ephesians 3

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth

derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now 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, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Romans 8 – A family established in Jesus

¹⁴because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

- A Father of unconditional love
- Of eternal inheritance:
- Children with Identity & Promise:

6. The Flock – The Church as an agency of security and care.

The metaphor of the flock of God is a picture of the work of Jesus, "The Great Shepherd" – God's compassion and provision.

Isaiah 53 Messianic prophecy fulfilled in Jesus and a people who have all gone their own way

⁶We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Matthew 9

³⁵Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

New Testament fulfillment

1 Peter 2 Fulfillment of Isa. 53

²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

John 10 The Shepherd and His Flock

¹⁴"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-- ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father--and I lay down my life for the sheep.

- People who are without Jesus are driven by want. People who are driven by want become people with the greatest need.
- People who authentically discover that their needs can be met in Jesus are without want. *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."*
- A community of care – [Leaders called to be shepherds of integrity; imitators of the Good shepherd – 1 Peter 5]
- A community of identify & significant encouraging people to become apart of its life. Encouraging people to participate.

7. The Army of God – The church as an agency of warfare and advancement for the Kingdom.

2 Timothy 2

3Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4And as Christ's soldier, do not let yourself become tied up in the affairs of this life, for then you cannot satisfy the one who has enlisted you in his army.

Ephesians 6

11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 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. 13 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.

The armor and clothing of a warrior

- The belt of truth buckled around your waist.
- The breastplate of righteousness.
- Your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.
- The shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
- The helmet of salvation
- The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Issues of Spiritual warfare

The devil is fairly predictable – He understands God's intention for his church and knows how important it is for Gods mysteries to be revealed.

Nature of attacks

- The Body = Disunity & dysfunctional (ineffective)
- The Bride = Without grace – judgmental and bound in legalism (no healing)
- The Flock = Independence & rebellion – driven by want & materialism
- The Family = Wounded father issues.
- Temple = Immorality & hidden sin

Why the enemy desires to destroy the church – It is Gods plan to let the world know about his great love his promise and his plan. It is an agency of grace.

- How the enemy damages the church
 - Attitudes
 - Wounded-ness
 - Human agenda (Crusades, etc)
 - Misconnects