

Bible Study Ephesians 1:1-2

Introduction

“Paul maintained contact with Jerusalem and Judaic Christianity and sought to express and to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace by means of the Gentile collection for the Jerusalem saints” (Lutheran Bible Companion, Volume 2, 525).

How does a collection for another church express and maintain unity?

“Again the strength of the Lord was being made perfect in weakness. The Gentile churches saw the human weakness of the imprisoned apostle more clearly than they saw the divine strength that worked through him; they had grown dispirited at the news of [Paul’s] imprisonment” (LBC, Vol. 2, 525).

How would you express the feelings of the Gentile churches because of Paul’s imprisonment?

“(1) [Paul] asked for the intercessions of the churches, thus removing them from the role of lamenting spectators and making them active participants in his great ambassadorial task. (2) He held up for them the greatness of the task, the greatness of the church that the mighty divine word proclaims by him had created and was sustaining” (LBC, Vol. 2, 525).

What do you think is the great ambassadorial task Paul was engaged in?

What sorts of things make us want to fall into the role of lamenting spectators instead of active participants in the great ambassadorial task?

“Paul spoke of Christ “our peace” (Eph. 2:14) to all the scattered and troubled churches and held before them the greatness of the new people of God, which God had created by uniting Jew and Gentile, once enemies, in one church; he held up before them the glory of that one, Holy Church, thus keeping the churches conscience of their **high privilege** of unity in Christ and the obligation that the **high privilege** of membership in the one church involves” (LBC, Vol. 2, 525).

How do you understand this idea of high privilege?

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1. Greetings (even the most rudimentary ones) are often reflections of relationships and the status of those relationships. What does a wave from the bread deliverer on Highway 12 imply? What does hug from an old friend imply versus a handshake? What does a knock on your door and greeting from a police officer imply? What does a snub imply?
2. The corporate versus the individual. Scripture speaks of salvation corporately more often than individually. Exodus 2:23-25; Psalm 53:6; Matthew 21:43; Third Article of the Apostles' Creed.
3. Saints, faithful, grace, peace—these are adjectives we think apply to us individually, yet St. Paul means for them to apply to us corporately. To understand this, what is the difference between being healthy as an individual and healthy as a family? What does success mean for an individual basketball player versus a team?
4. Saints. This literally means “holy ones,” as in the LXX’s God’s people. Colossian 1:21-22. What sort of responsibilities does this give us when we realize that our holiness is not ours individually but our corporately?
5. Faithful. 1 Cor. 1:9; Matthew 24:45-46. Faithfulness comes from the Holy Spirit working through Word and Sacrament. What sort of responsibilities does this give us individually and corporately?
6. Grace. Ephesians 2:4-9. What is the relationship between grace and the Means of Grace? What sort of responsibilities does this give us corporately?
7. Peace. Shalom and righteousness. Ephesians 2:13-19. Since this peace is applied to the church and not to us individually, how does this change our view of peace? In response to the peace of Christ, what responsibilities does it give us?
8. What role do you think modern notions of happiness play in our misunderstanding of the church and its corporate nature?