

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians

(1) From Paul, sent by Papa to announce Master Jesus. To those sent by Papa to bless Ephesus, those who share in Master Jesus' faithful knowing of Papa. (2) May you be receiving what Jesus and Papa are daily sharing with us—their own life-together of grace and peace.

(3) How wonderful is Master Jesus' Papa! In Jesus, we have already ascended to the penthouse suite of the cosmos, the captain's bridge of Spaceship Earth. There we are already receiving the extravagant love Papa has for His Son. (4) Even before He banged the Big Bang, Papa decided that we would share in His Son's relationship with Him—a face-to-face relationship of whole and unbroken love. (5) It gave him great pleasure to give us our destination—adoption as his children, a share in Master Jesus' sonship, (6) a participation through the Spirit in everything Papa freely lavishes upon His beloved Son.

(7) Out of the riches of the Triune love, Jesus entered into our death to set us free from it, to share with us his own eternal freedom from death and shame. (8) In his own brilliant way, (9) Papa has (through Master Jesus) revealed to us His unfathomable plan—(10) His plan for everything—all creation from top to bottom, when the time is ripe—to be included in Master Jesus' life with Him!

(11) We have now received what Papa promised to Abraham—the honor of being the carriers of His blessing to the whole world. (12) Papa gave this gift to us Jews so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Master Jesus, might participate in the glorious Triune life. (13) And as you Gentiles hear and believe the truth (the good news of your inclusion), you receive this inheritance right along with us. Our life-together bears the marks of the Holy Spirit—(14) He who Himself is the presence of the Triune promise, and the promise of the Triune presence.

(15) I have heard of your trust in Master Jesus and your love toward His people. (16) I am constantly thanking Papa for you. (17) I pray that you will come to know Him more and more through the Spirit's wisdom and revelation, (18) so that in the Spirit you will be able to experience the infinite goodness of our ultimate future, the infinite abundance of our inheritance, and (19) the infinite strength that is unleashed in those who believe the truth.

(20) It is with the Spirit's strength that Papa resurrected Jesus and brought him up to the top-floor corner office, (21) far above every other office, at the top of the corporate ladder, now and forever. (22) Papa made Him chairman and CEO of the whole company. He is the head of our life-together in the Spirit, and (23) we are his body; the in-the-flesh presence of the One who is everywhere.

(2.1) You were utterly lifeless, totally stuck in unboundaried ways of living, (2) just like the rest of the world, following the world's all-pervading spirit of darkness. (3) We were all once in that same place, just doing what felt good at the time, but then getting stuck with the nasty consequences.

(4) But Papa, who overflows with kindness, (5) because he loved us even when we were dead, resurrected us when he resurrected Jesus. Union with Jesus is his free gift to us! (6) In Jesus, Papa raised us to heaven and seated us next to him, (7) so that we can spend forever experiencing just how far his kindness goes. (8) It is his kindness alone that is making us whole as we come to believe the truth about him. Even our believing itself is Jesus' accomplishment, (9) not ours, so we can't even brag about that. (10) We are what Papa made us in Master Jesus—agents of goodness, exactly what He always meant for us to be.

(11) So remember, Gentiles (you who lack the physical sign of inclusion in God's family, a sign made in flesh by human hands), (12) remember that you used to be in the dark about the Master of the universe; you were a foreigner to Israel, his revealing/reconciling community. You were ignorant of his promises; you had no real hope. (13) But because Master Jesus came into your alienation (even to the point of sharing in your death!), you have now come to share in the intimacy of the Spirit's fellowship. Jesus is the union of God and man, Jew and Gentile. He has demolished all obstacles to our harmonious life-together. (15) Since we were unable to love, he came and loved for us, rendering obsolete our need for rules that could only approximate love. He did this to create in Himself a new humanity, beyond the divisions of Who-Knows-the-Rules versus Who-Doesn't-Know-the-Rules. (16) By bringing both sides fully into His own relationship with Papa, He ended that silly fight once and for all. (17) He revealed to both sides the free gift of our inclusion in his harmonious life with Papa. (18) Both sides are coming in one Spirit to share in Jesus' knowing of Papa.

(19) You Gentiles are not illegal immigrants in Papa's country; Jews and non-Jews together are Papa's house, (20) built on the one foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Master Jesus Himself as the cornerstone.

(21) In Him we grow up together into one beautiful temple, the one Triune fellowship enfleshed in the world.

(3.1) This is why I Paul am a prisoner for Master Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles. (2) You already know about how Papa sent me to you (3) and revealed the gospel to me. I have summarized the gospel for you in this letter. Read it, and you will understand the glorious enigma of Jesus. (4) It used to be that nobody knew about it, but the Spirit has now revealed it to his apostles and prophets. (6) Here is the enigma—that what Papa promised to Abraham has been given to non-Jews as well as Jews, that we are members of one body in the one Spirit, sharers in the one promise of what Master Jesus has attained on behalf of us all.

(7) In mind-boggling kindness, Papa gave me the task of serving his powerful message. (8) As far as sainthood goes, I am at the bottom of the barrel, but He chose me to tell you Gentiles about the inheritance you didn't even know you had—the boundless riches that our Master has stored up on our behalf. (9) He chose me to show everybody the ancient enigma hidden within the very being of our Creator, (10) so that all the powers of heaven and earth would witness the brilliance of the Triune life incarnated in the life of the church. (11) This is all going according to plan, the eternal plan that Master Jesus has now executed. (12) We are face-to-face forever with Papa, and as we come to trust in the sonship Master Jesus has attained for us, we grow to live more and more with the bold confidence of secure children who know they are loved.

(13) So as I suffer on your behalf, I ask Papa to use my sufferings to show you how fiercely loved you are. (14) I ask Papa—(15) the patriarch of heaven and earth—(16) to lavish His strength upon you through His Spirit, (17) and to fill your inner being with Jesus' own faith, His own sense of confident assurance as you yourself are secured and nourished in the reality of the Triune love. (18) I ask the Spirit to fill you (and all of His people) with His power to see how massive this love really is, (19) to comprehend the Master's incomprehensible love, so that you will be filled to overflowing with the infinite Triune aliveness.

(20) We have already been given what I've asked for. The Spirit (who is powerfully at work within us even now) is able to do way more than we are able to even ask or imagine. I pray that in His strength, the church will work with Master Jesus to incarnate Papa's love in the world, forever and ever. Amen.

(4.1) So as I sit in prison for the Master, I intensely desire that you will live according to the future Jesus has given you. (2) Believe the truth about who you are and

your place in the big scheme of things. Handle your brothers and sisters with Jesus' gentle hands. They are worth putting up with, just like you are. (3) Join in the Spirit's work of bringing the Triune oneness and harmony into everyday human life. (4) There is only one Spirit, and He is making only one body with only one future, (5) through the singular faithfulness of our one Master, who gives us only one new life (6) with one Papa who is the source, condition, and destination of all things. (7) But this one gift is different for each of us. (8) As we say, "When he ascended to glory, he conquered darkness and shared the plunder with his people." (9) He was able to ascend because he had already *descended*. (10) The one who penetrated our deepest hell has now ascended above the highest heaven, so that no matter where *you* go, he will be *there* for you. (11) Wherever you are right now, he is already giving you the gift of sharing in his victorious work that is overcoming the world. You have a role to play! Some (like apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) have the job of (12) equipping others for *their* work. But *all* of us share a single goal—loving and nurturing the one body of our Master, (13) so that we may all grow up into that one body together, knowing Jesus faithfully and working with Him in love, incarnating the Triune Life in the world. (14) It's time to grow up, to mature beyond the gullibility of children who believe everything they hear, falling for cheap religious tricks and schemes. (15) Instead, let's love truthfully and tell the truth lovingly, growing together to be more like the Master, (16) who personally holds the body together and makes it function as the body builds itself up through love.

(17) This is non-negotiable: Don't live like those who grope around in the darkness, trapped inside their own minds, following their own uninformed opinions and blind mythologies. (18) They don't know what's real. Because of their proud refusal to hear and believe, the Triune Life is alien to them; they don't know the One who has embraced them. (19) To avoid Him, they have de-sensitized themselves to reality; they have lived without boundaries, ignoring their limits, always eager to find a new way to poison themselves and everything around them. (20) Jesus taught you better than that! (21) If you know the truth, you know Him. (22) He taught you to walk away from your false self, with its thoughts and feelings so distorted by its constantly dissatisfied cravings. (23) He taught liberated living through clear thinking.

(24) He has forged in himself a new humanity, and he has taught us to put it on like a new set of clothes—our new life that shares fully in the Triune passion for goodness in our souls and in the world. (25) When we

feel tempted to lie, we put on the Master's transparency, because we know we are part of each other. (26) When we feel angry with each other, we put on the Master's passion for reconciliation. We talk it out promptly and completely, (27) to protect our relationship from the Enemy. (28) When we start to get obsessed with things we don't have, we put on the Master's generosity, working hard so as to earn something to share with others. (29) When we feel tempted to use words destructively, we put on the Master's gracious, constructive speech. (30) The Spirit has marked you for an eternal life of freedom. Don't resist His work; He hates that. (31) Take off the old rags that are unworthy of you—bitterness, rage, manipulation, gossip, and malice. (32) Instead, put on the Master's kindness and tenderness. You have been forgiven. Pass it on.

(5.1) Set your heart on growing up to be like your Papa who loves you so much. (2) The Master loved us, gave up everything for us, giving himself completely to Papa on our behalf. This is the love that has eternally embraced you. Live in that. Put it on. Wear it.

(3) Be especially careful in matters regarding your sexuality, your consumption of resources, and your mouth. These are forces more powerful than you realize, and they require rock-solid boundaries if they are to be handled safely. (4) Don't talk trash; speak gratitude. (5) To fill your life with out-of-control sex and consumption is to empty your life of the love/joy/peace that is your inheritance. (6) Don't be fooled: When you let these forces overflow their boundaries, they become poison. And Papa is infinitely intolerant of the poisoning of his children. (7) If your friends are poisoning you, it's time to get new friends. (8) *You are not in the dark anymore.* Light Himself is your Father. Blast off from *that* launchpad, and see what happens! (9) Light makes stuff happen, *good* stuff. Wherever you find truth, goodness, and beauty, you are meeting the Light there. (10) Learn from the Master what is pleasurable and what isn't. Because He knows. (11) Darkness is useless; don't waste your time with it. Instead, shine light on it! Speak truth to the lie. (12) We bring our shame to the surface when we talk about our lies and secrets; (13) Exposing them to the light makes them visible and robs them of their power. (14) When your darkness becomes visible, that's the first step toward becoming light. "Wake up sleepyhead! Leave your dark grave and bask in the light of the Master." (15) Live consciously. Don't be dumb. (16) Don't waste your time (17) Instead, seek out the Master's good work, and do *that*. (18) Don't numb yourself with booze; instead, get high on the Spirit (19) as you get on with the serious business of heaven—JOY. Shout. Praise. Sing. Hum. (20) Saturate your

days with gratitude, thanking Papa for everything, in the name of our Master Jesus.

(21) Jesus lays down his life for you and for everyone around you. To share in his glorious life is to share in his self-emptying, to put it on everyday like a garment. So lay down your lives for one another; submit to one another. Here are some examples of what I mean:

- (22) Wives, look at how Jesus lays down his life for your husband. Join him in doing that. (23) As Jesus takes care of the church, as the head takes care of the body, your husband's job is to take care of you. (24) Receive your husband's care for you, as the church receives care from Jesus.
- (25) Husbands, look at how Jesus lays down his life for your wife. Join him in doing that. Love her like Jesus loves the church. Jesus gave himself up for her, (26) telling her the truth about herself so as to make her whole, (27) beautiful, flawless, glorious. (28) Husbands, love your wife like *that*. Care for her like you care for your own body. (29) Nourish and tenderly care for her, just like Jesus does for the church, (30) because we are his body. (31) "A man leaves his father and mother to be unified with his wife, and the two will become one flesh." (32) This is a profound mystery, the way a husband and wife are like Jesus and his church. (33) Anyway, the husband-wife relationship is meant to be one of love and respect.
- (6.1) Children, look at how Jesus lays down his life for your parents. Join him in doing that. It is good for you to do what you're told. (2) "Honor your father and mother..."--this bit of instruction carries a promise with it--(3) "...that you will live long and prosper."
- (4) Fathers, look at how Jesus lays down his life for your children. Join him in doing that. Don't be a jerk. Instead, share in Papa's work of parenting his children, patiently and persistently teaching them to live in truth.
- (5) Slaves, look at how Jesus lays down his life for your earthly masters. Join him in doing that. As you obey the Eternal Master, obey also your temporary masters with respect and love. (6) We are all slaves of Jesus, following his orders, not because we want to impress him or suck up to him, but because we love him. (7) Find joy in being a servant, because ultimately you are not serving a mere human master; you are serving the Real Master. (8)

We receive the Triune life of goodness by doing good, by participating in goodness wherever we are. This is true for all of us, slave or free.

- (9) Masters, look at how Jesus lays down his life for your slaves. Join him in doing that. Don't threaten them; love them. They do not belong to you; they belong to Him, and so do you. Do for them what The Master has done for you.

(10) Finally, brothers and sisters, live strong. Move through the world with the Spirit's unbounded strength in your muscles. (11) Everyday, before you face the Enemy, gear up. (12) Remember, we fight not *against* bad people but *for* them. We make war with the evil forces and mythologies that still darken the minds of Papa's children, and we shall not relent until darkness lies dead at our feet. (13) So get your armor on. Put on the Trinity--Father, Son, and Spirit. You will be bulletproof. (14) Stand, warrior of Light, and be true. Truth is your belt; without it, everything falls down. Protect your heart by sharing in Jesus' heart--his single-minded desire for his eternal kingdom of justice and rightness. (15) Your combat boots are running shoes, your eager preparedness to speak truth to power, to speak peace to hate. (16) Rely on the steadfast faithfulness of Jesus, a shield which no armor-piercing rocket can penetrate. (17) His gift of healing/salvation is your helmet. Strap it on; refuse to allow the serpent's whispers to cloud your mind. Wield with skill the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, the Truth of all truths. (18) Keep your mind tuned into the Spirit at all times. You are part of the Triune conversation now, so be an active participant. Be constantly sharing in the Trinity's work of being aware of and meeting the needs of others.

(19) Ask Papa for what I need—a clear message for every audience I meet, so that I can speak boldly to them the mystery of the gospel, (20) you know, the kind of behavior that keeps landing me in jail. ☺ Ask Papa to make me fearless. (21) I am sending Tychicus to tell you the whole story about what's going on here; he is a dear brother and a reliable laborer with Jesus. (22) He will tell you what's up with me, and he will share his courage with your hearts. (23) I ask Jesus and his Papa to fill your community with the love/joy/peace of the Spirit, (24) and to fill your experience with their grace, as you fall in love forever with our Master Jesus.