

Title: **Final Concerns**

Scripture Reading: **Ephesians 6:18-24**

Introduction:

- I. The letter to the Ephesians - How do you conclude a letter to your brethren?
 - A. Paul's treatise of God's blessings through Christ and eternal redemption -
 1. **2:2** - "² in which you **formerly walked according to the course of this world**, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."
 - a. The world lives in wickedness and sin - man's greatest need is the grace of God. Paul does not write to the Ephesians concerning spiritual failures in the church, but rather he reminds them of the great honor/privileges obtained through God's eternal plan through Christ.
 2. **1:3** - "³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.**"
 - a. The book of Ephesians is remembered by many scholars as Paul's finest work -
 - 1) Barclay - "Queen of epistles"; Coleridge - "the divinest composition of man"; Robertson - "has written nothing more profound than chapters one to three of Ephesians."
 - B. How does one adequately conclude such a beautiful book?
 1. **ch. 1-3** - God's eternal plan/purpose in Christ
 2. **ch. 4-6** - Life in keeping with God's eternal purpose
 - a. **6:18, 19-24** - Paul's final concerns for his brethren in Ephesus.
- II. Purpose of our study:
 - A. The benediction of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians reveals his true love and concern for his brethren and his desire for their spiritual success.

Body:

- I. **Ephesians 6:18-20** - The necessity of prayer
 - A. Paul's emphasis of prayer throughout the epistle -
 1. **1:15-19** - Paul prays for the brethren to be enlightened
 2. **3:14-21** - Paul prays for the brethren to understand God's richest blessings
 3. **6:18** - Paul prays for the strength of his brethren
 - B. Paul's need for the prayers of the brethren - cf. **Romans 15:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:25**
 1. Pray that I may proclaim the "mystery of the gospel" (cf. **1:9; 3:3, 9**). The mystery was not to be further concealed through Paul, but rather revealed through his preaching/teaching.
 2. Pray that I will fulfill my duty to my King -
 - a. **1 Corinthians 9:16** - "¹⁶ For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; **for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.**"
 - b. The apostle Paul was specifically called and commissioned by the Lord -

- 1) **Acts 9:15-16** - “¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; ¹⁶ for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”
3. Pray that I will preach with boldness -
 - a. **Colossians 4:2-3** - “² Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*; ³ praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;”
4. F.F. Bruce - “Who was the real prisoner?” -
 - a. “...Those guards who took four to six hour shifts attached to the other end of the apostle’s bonds may have been the real prisoners. Paul always spoke as a free man when he was delivering the message of Christ. What would it have been like to have been chained to an ambassador like Paul? He was the one who enjoyed the ‘captive audience.’”

II. **Ephesians 6:21-22** - The necessity of brethren

- A. The role of Tychicus and the Ephesian brethren -
 1. **Acts 20:1-6** - Tychicus is named among those who traveled with Paul on his third missionary journey.
 2. Tychicus was possibly sent by Paul to Titus (cf. **3:12**), but eventually would have been sent back to Ephesus (cf. **2 Timothy 4:12**). It seems reasonable that Tychicus would have brought with him the epistle to the Ephesians, Colossians and to Philemon (cf. **Colossians 4:7-9**).
- B. Paul’s dependence on his brethren -
 1. **Romans 16** - Paul’s great list of brothers/sisters in Christ (twenty-six individuals, two families, and three house churches)
- C. The knowledge of Paul’s condition brought “comfort” to the Ephesians - cf. **Acts 20:17-38**

III. **Ephesians 6:23-24** - Three essential characteristics for every Christian

- A. Peace - the union with God and the brethren
 1. **1:2** - “² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
 2. **2:14-15, 17** - “¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace,...so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus establishing peace,...*¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near,”
 - a. (Jew/Gentile relationship through the gospel)
 3. **4:3** - “³ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
 4. **6:15** - “¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;”
- B. Love - the active good will toward both the Lord and each other
 1. **1:15** - “¹⁵ For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists among you and your love for all the saints*,”
 2. **3:17** - “¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and that you, being rooted and grounded in love*,”

3. **4:2, 15-16** - “² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,...¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love,...causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”
 4. **5:2** - “² and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”
 5. **5:25, 28, 33** - “²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,...”
- C. Faith - the essence of loyalty to and trust in God
1. **1:15** - “¹⁵ For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints,”
 2. **2:8** - “⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;”
 3. **3:12, 17** - “¹² in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him...¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,”
 4. **4:5, 13** - “⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism,...¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith,...”
 5. **6:16** - “¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*. ”

- D. These three traits all originate through the godhead - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Conclusion:

- I. The final concerns of Paul -
 - A. Grace - man’s greatest need and most undeserved blessings given by God.
 1. We must love with an incorruptible (“sincere”; KJV) love - cf. **1 Corinthians 16:33; John 14:23**

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