

The saints which are at Ephesus (Quality Good)

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Preacher: Kilmister, Paul Milton (Bill) (1922 - 2013)

- [0 : 00] To the Ephesians, and to chapter 1, and a subject that you will find in the first verse.
- Ephesians chapter 1, and in verse 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.
- And this morning I just want to set before you, as the Lord may help me, a few thoughts on what the dear apostle says as he addresses the church at Ephesus.
- The saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. I'm quite sure that there is no one in this congregation this morning who does not recognize the fact that the word saints applies to every true believer.
- Not to some special people whose memory has been taken by the Roman Catholic Church, and they have been exalted to a position of sainthood through the instrumentality of the Vatican Council, or something like that.
- [1 : 36] The word saints refers to those who have been separated, who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus. And this is how the apostle Paul addresses these humble folk to whom he writes in the city of Ephesus so long ago.
- He addresses them all as saints. There are some people who think that they only become saints when they die.
- Well, this is not true. Of course, there are saints who belong. There are some who use it to describe a person they regard as being very, very good and righteous, or even holy.
- There are some people who believe in Christ Jesus.
- He is amplifying what he has already said. When he says, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.
- [3 : 04] That qualifies the word saints. They are the faithful in Christ Jesus. In short, he gives us a brief but very adequate picture of a true believer.
- Of a soul that has been born again. Of a sinner that has been saved by grace. He addresses the whole church, yet in a sense is addressing every individual member of that church as the saints.
- Which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. And it is at this subject I want then for a few moments to try and direct your thoughts.
- Because as I look at this statement. I look at the state of the nation in which you and I now live.
- And I look at the state of the professing church in our land. Which has fallen into such appalling heresy and departing from the scriptures.
- [4 : 24] We are living in a day when unity is sought at the expense of truth. We are living in a day when the fundamental truths of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation are not only discounted by the world outside as it were.
- But even by those who profess to be spiritual leaders. We read together a most solemn portion of scripture during the prayer meeting.

And all how the religious leaders of that day were described as hypocrites. Hypocrites. What a solemn portion it was.

Now, we are very careful what I say about other professed believers. We need to be careful. But the fact remains that we see in these days a sad departure in the professing church from anything and everything that is laid down in the scriptures.

You've only got to hear what goes on in the various meetings in respect to our established church. To see that the views of those who totally discard scriptural teaching are being now taken into account.

[5 : 47] And indeed are taken over even in the established church of our land. And so we have to say we're living in a day of small things.

And we're living when we prove the reality of the power of Satan. When we see sin unrestrained and blatant in every aspect of the life of our nation.

There's terrible increase in crime, isn't there? Terrible increase in violence and ungodliness around us so that we cannot even walk safely.

Not only in the streets of our cities but even in our country towns and villages. Because of the fear of violence. Because of the fear of evil people.

And the youth of our nation seem to be totally unrestrained. And the so-called media permeates the life and the thinking of everybody. I'm drawing this picture.

[6 : 54] You know it all already. But I am just reminding you of what happens to the human heart and the human life. When there is no influence of godliness.

You see for a season in this nation we have benefited from what has taken place in earlier generations. There has until quite recently been some regard and respect for the scriptures.

Some regard and respect for Christianity. And there has been that which has had a restraining effect upon the public at large.

But gradually, indeed more than gradually, now there is a landslide taking place. And around us we see the opening of the very gates of hell in our land.

And all the iniquity and evil that abounds on every hand. We wonder sometimes how long God's righteous judgment will be withheld.

[7 : 55] We cannot discount these things. We see our nation as a nation ripe for judgment. A nation ripe that God should deal with us.

And yet, and I mustn't stay longer with this, but there is a fundamental need in this nation today. And you and I look at our chapels that are emptying, and our prayer meetings that are being less well attended, and we see people are pouring contempt now upon anything that is good.

If you begin to mention the Bible in these days, you're regarded as someone who is a little bit weak in your head. And, you know, people that once would listen to biblical discussion will no longer do so.

Then I want to take you back a little bit in history. Recently, I paid a visit to Cornwall for a little holiday.

And I visited a relative of mine who's a pastor of a Reformed Baptist church down in Cornwall. And when I told him where I was staying, he said, Oh, you must be near Gwennett Pitt.

[9 : 16] I said, Gwennett Pitt? What is that? Oh, he says, haven't you been there? You better go and have a look at it. And so under his direction, we did. There was this great natural amphitheatre, sort of a basin in the ground, perfectly natural, in a perfect circle, I should think, about 70 yards across.

And what was important about Gwennett Pitt? Well, because in the days of the Evangelical Revival in the 18th century, men like Wesley and his contemporaries would preach in that pit, and the people were there in their thousands.

The people were there in their thousands. They were there to hear the Word of God. They were there to hear the Gospel. And as I looked at this pit, you know, it suddenly struck me that these things really did happen.

We live in such a day of small things that we're beginning to forget the power of God, the Holy Spirit. Strangely, a few days later, I was in an evangelical library, and I saw two volumes of Wesley's journals.

And I don't know a lot about Wesley's writings, possibly for obvious reasons, but I picked up one of those books, and I opened it, and the very page that I opened on, there was an entry for a certain Lord's Day, back in the 1700s, and it noted there that he preached at St. Ives in the morning from 9 until 11, he preached at Red Ruth from 11 until 2, and then he had preached at Gwennett Pitt from 5 o'clock until 7.

[11 : 10] And may I remind you, he did all that on a horse, and preached in that way, and spoke of the thousands that sat even on the roofs of the houses to hear the Gospel.

And he recorded, and the power of the Holy Spirit was manifest amongst us. That happened in Cornwall.

It happened all over this country, as Whitfield and others went forth in the power of the Gospel. And then my mind went to Ephesus, and to what took place there.

Because, you see, we can go right back to the beginning, to the Roman world as it was then, full of idolatry, full of paganism, and ignorance, and darkness.

And yet, against that background, the Apostle Paul could write to people living in one of the wickedest cities that the world has ever known, and write to saints, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

[12 : 23] You see, God moved at the time of the Reformation. God moved at the time of the godly Puritans.

God moved in the 18th century. God has moved since then, in our nation, from time to time. And this God is still the same.

He is still on the throne. And this gospel is still the same. What took place at Ephesus? They worshipped Diana of the Ephesians.

You know that. Reading what happened later in the 19th chapter of the book of Acts. They were in total ignorance and darkness. And even the few believers that Paul found there when he came to Ephesus, they had not a very full understanding of the gospel.

Twelve people only. And they only knew the baptism of John, the John the Baptist, and needed to be taught the truth in Jesus.

[13 : 38] And yet, God did something there which produced certain effects which have been right, come right down to us in this wonderful letter or epistle which he wrote to the believers there in Ephesus.

The first thing I want to remind you of is this, that what took place then was as a direct result of God's purpose and God's power.

God's purpose and God's power. You know, we look too much sometimes at the opposition. Too much at the walls of Jericho.

Too much at the power of Satan. And do not take stock of the power and the purpose of God. We believe in the doctors of grace.

We believe in the sovereignty of God. We believe in a God that will have the last word in every respect in human history and in the building of his church.

[14 : 56] Look at chapter one in this epistle for a moment because you see Paul says that God has made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.

He hath purposed in himself. What happened at Ephesus when Paul came there and preached? God was fulfilling his purpose and it was a purpose that was not influenced by Paul.

It was not influenced by the people of Ephesus. It was not influenced by the church leaders at Jerusalem. It was purposed in himself.

So we see a God of eternal purposes in chapter three and in verse eleven we read this according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God's purpose God's eternal purpose God's purpose in Christ. In chapter one of verse nineteen he speaks of the exceeding greatness of his power to us which believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

[16 : 26] So that when we look at what happened at Ephesus when we look at what has happened in succeeding generations when we look at what happens in every true conversion all must be recognized as proceeding from the purpose of God and the power of God.

Now that to me is a great comfort and a great consolation and a great encouragement. History is there. Reality is there.

These things have happened in the past and God has not failed in his purpose and God is not diminished in his power in any respect so that this comes out of it.

But something else comes out of it too and you find it particularly in chapter 2 verses 4 and 5. God who is rich in mercy with his great love wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in sins has quickened us together with Christ by grace are ye saved.

And there are three important matters there which we may well take comfort and consolation from whether in a personal way in our own soul's need or whether as we look at the situation around us today and those three great principles are God's mercy his love and his grace God's mercy God's love and his grace God who is rich in mercy God who is rich in mercy with his great love wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in sins by grace are ye saved the matter proceeds from God it is through the power of God and it proceeds from the mercy of God and from the love of

[18 : 37] God and from the grace of God so thankful I am that I was brought up on such a word is this by grace I am saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God what happened at Ephesus what happened at Corinth what happened in those early days or what has happened since and what has happened in the case of every poor sinner who has been brought to Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit it is all of grace it is all of mercy it proceeds from the divine love we love him because he first loved us here it is love not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins these saints these faithful in

Christ Jesus they were and made what they were by infinite mercy love and grace God who is rich in mercy again I would notice the means that God used his means and his method in chapter 1 and in verse 13 it speaks of the gospel of your salvation the gospel of your salvation and whom he also trusted after he heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation in chapter 3 and in verse 8 he speaks of preaching unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ the unsearchable riches of Christ excuse me this is

God's means this is God's method this is how God works in that chapter that we read together in the Acts of the Apostles and in the 19th chapter Paul comes to them and how does he deal with the situation that confronts him there by the grace of God he follows that line which he himself laid down he determined to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and him crucified he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for the space of three months disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God when divers were hardened and believed not but spake evil of the way before the multitude departed from them and separated the disciples disputing daily in the school of one

Tyrannus and this continued by the space of two years so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus both Jews and Greeks never underestimate the power of the gospel my friend never underestimate the power of the word of truth the preaching of the cross that to them that perish is foolishness in the next chapter in chapter 20 he speaks of his ministry there he says I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God he says I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God preaching is much despised in this day and age it's been set aside many so called services are nothing more than entertainment nothing more than trying to please oh if we could just attract them and get them to listen to something then we'll preach a little gospel to them once we've got them listening to the music once we've got them amused once we've got them into the place any means we'll do get them into the building entertain them and then just get in a little word at the end it's not what

Paul did it months years in the school of Tyrannus in the synagogue house to house wherever he went preaching preaching preaching I think it was Latimer who once said when the devil gets into the church in comes the music and out goes the preaching another great preacher of the last century once said this God sent me to feed the sheep and not to entertain the goats how true that is the days in which we live the foolishness of preaching is set aside but I see in scripture no other method no other way the Lord Jesus said I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me but together with that preaching was the work of the Holy Spirit it is evident that when he came to Ephesus they did not understand anything of the person and work of the

[24 : 32] Holy Spirit and Paul was graciously helped to enlighten them and to show them the necessity of that power in this first chapter of the epistle he says in whom ye also trusted after ye heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation in whom also after ye believed he was sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise so that the work of the Holy Spirit is seen as a vital part of God's means and methods the eternal purpose of God in his predestinating purposes in his electing love the mercy the love the grace of God from which salvation proceeds the word of God and the preaching of the gospel oh what power there is the sword of the spirit the word of the living

God quick and powerful sharper than any two edged sword you know the devil hates the scriptures the devil hates the gospel of the blood of Jesus Christ but this is God's way there are one in the moments that remain to show you what took place what they were what they were you see our articles state that we believe that the grace of God produces a real change in a man produces a real change in a man now this change is not just something social it is not just something moral it is not just that he has a different outlook on life though obviously he will have an outlook on life and his moral life will be affected it goes deeper than that let us look at a moment and see what here is described as what they were in chapter 2 and in verse 2 it says where in time past where in time past

I hope there's no one in this chapel who is not still living in what Paul here describes as in time past what they were in time past you see we walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience the course of this world that is the way the world goes the way that is popular the broad road that leadeth unto destruction that was the way they took as they indulged in their idolatry as they indulged in their sensuality as they indulged in all their evil practices the course of this world what course am I in what course are you in are we following the course and the track and the path of this world among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind and were by nature the children of wrath described as children of disobedience a little later in the epistle course of this world children of wrath dead in trespasses and in sins ye have he quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sins what they were they were described as being without

God and without hope in the world having no hope and without God in the world I can think of no more terrible condition to be in than that and if you don't think of anything else when you leave this chapel remember this that to be in this condition is a solemn place to be having no hope and without God in the world can you imagine it are you there are you still there no hope without God in the world what they were he says in another place ye were darkness not just in darkness ye were darkness that was their condition the lives they lived the things they were involved with we read a little about them those who were following what today is called the occult those who ultimately brought their books those who were taken up with all the dark mysteries of satanic things they were dead without

God without hope in the world then what miracles God can do what miracles God can do that the gospel came to search the preached word and something happened what happened did Paul go and give them same advice did he start beginning to show them a little bit of what education could do for them I'm amazed at what the so-called missionaries are involved in in these days you know are not against mission please don't misunderstand me I would that there were more going forth into dark and distant places with the gospel but not merely to begin to help with agriculture and get involved with this and that and the other Paul didn't do any of that did he he went with the gospel and something happened quickened you have he quickened who were dead saved by grace are he saved something happened in their lives and in their hearts and their souls and their spirits which is so described they were saved they had once been alienated they were made nigh they were reconciled by the blood of the

[31 : 40] Lord Jesus Christ now in Christ Jesus you sometimes were made nigh by the blood of Christ what they were what made the difference the quickening saving power of God it is likened unto the resurrection he speaks of those who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead there is an approach to the gospel today that suggests that we must appeal to natural faith natural faith there is no such thing saving faith is God given it is a principle imparted by the Holy Spirit quicken souls and make them cry Jesus save me or I die the gospel that Paul preached was a gospel that was preached in its simplicity but in the power of the

Holy Spirit and God wrought miracles of grace according to his purpose his love and his mercy but it happened it happened and it has happened many times sins and the same God is on the throne and the same precious Jesus is at the Father's right hand and the same blood that availed for sinners in the past avails still and he shall see of the travel of his soul and be satisfied but now what they were but what they are now in verse 13 of chapter 2 now in Christ Jesus now in Christ Jesus that is one of the vital statements of this epistle in Christ Jesus now in Christ

Jesus once they were alienated once they were far off but now in Christ Jesus he has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus in the dispensation of the fullness of tithes he's going to gather together and one all things in Christ that's why he calls them saints that's why he speaks of the faithful in Christ Jesus you are only in one of two places my friend you are either without God without hope in the world or you are in Christ Jesus now in

Christ Jesus are you in Christ Jesus am I in Christ Jesus the saints and to the faithful in Christ Jesus to be in Christ Jesus is to be in him as a member of a body about six times in this epistle Paul refers to the body of Christ the church which is his body the fullness of him that filleth all in all am I a member of the body am I a fellow citizen with the saints am I one of that family that household that he describes a whole family in heaven and in earth that is the standing of the saints they are in

Christ Jesus there is a building here described all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord in whom ye also are built together for habitation of God through the spirit are you in the building on the foundation a living stone that Peter describes plucked from the pit of nature taken fashioned for laid in the very walls as it were of the temple of God this is salvation this is salvation it's not just agreeing to a set of articles however sound they may be it's not being baptized by water however spiritual that ordinance of baptismal immersion may be it is being in

[37 : 05] Christ Jesus once in him in him forever says the hymn writer how true and how blessed that is thus the eternal covenant stands who can pluck them from the strength of Israel's hands what they were what they are now in Christ Jesus through divine grace and the quickening power of the Holy Spirit what they have what they possess redemption and the forgiveness of sins in whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins we stand at the very heart of it we stand at the very heart of it redemption and the forgiveness of sins are you a blood bought sinner you know we preach the doctrine of what is called the limited atonement or particular redemption it is a very scriptural straightforward doctrine it states that all those for whom he died he will surely bring and he will not lose one of them redemption the redeemed the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion there is a period known to God when all the sheep redeemed by blood shall leave the hateful ways of sin turn to the fold and enter in what a blessed theme it is redemption isn't it redeemed with Jesus blood redeemed the forgiveness of sins have you found pardon have you found mercy has the precious blood been applied to your heart are your sins blotted out nailed to the cross it lies at the heart of it doesn't it what think ye of Christ is he your sin bearer your suffering saviour your dying substitute these dear sinners knew it they knew it then they knew it in many a time since when the gospel has been preached and it's the need of sinners still in the day in which we live they had the earnest of the spirit they'd been sealed the power of divine grace had come upon their hearts they felt the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit do you love him

Lord it is my chief complaint that my love is cold and faint yet I love thee and adore oh for great to love thee more could you stand with Peter and say Lord thou knowest all things thou knowest that I love thee they had access to God access to God through the gracious mediator by him we have access by one spirit unto the Father the throne of grace is a blessed time to be place to be my friends I felt it a little in the prayer meeting this morning it turned in a little while for the prayer meeting you know to realise again the liberty we have by grace to come to the throne of heavenly grace these saints these faithful in Christ Jesus had access unto God they had an inheritance an inheritance laid out in heaven have you got an inheritance treasure in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation oh to have our affection set on things above we have just heard of one who has been taken away from earthly scenes one who lived down in our part of the country dear

Mrs. King think of it another gone home absent from the body present with the Lord with Christ which is far better we ought to spend more time meditating upon these things my friend we're too earthbound aren't we we're looking down here all the time my soul cleaveth unto the dust says the psalmist quicken me oh they had much to be thankful for they were thus described what they would be what they would be from the depth of degradation and sin and idolatry of Ephesus they came through the power of the gospel they came to saving faith through grace Paul was able to write to them that they might know the love of God that passeth knowledge they were given gracious exhortations how to walk and how to live in this life and would heed them

I have no doubt not in a legal way but through the constraints of love that they anticipated one day to be the very bride of Christ to be presented unto himself without spot wrinkle blemish or any such thing John says we know not how we shall appear but when he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is oh may God in his mercy show us more of these things oh to be among the saints to be among the faithful in Christ Jesus and to remember too that what God has done in the past he can still do now may the Lord give us hearts to pray that he would rend the heavens and come down amen were don't who guys fill out so go who know how is

Ooo better it all of are and all necessary and have to hear