

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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Sermon Title: The Revival Found in Ephesians Chapter One, Ephesians 1

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INTRODUCTION: The three main points to today's sermon are:

1. Things happen in the spiritual realm we cannot understand.
2. Hearing and believing are necessary to know Jesus Christ.
3. God does not create things with the sole purpose of destroying them.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:1-3 ¹*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:* ²*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* ³*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*

I want to point out to you this morning Paul opens his letter with a salutation of grace. Paul understood grace probably more than just about anyone. Before his conversion, he murdered Christians and thought he was doing the right thing. It's hard to think of the apostle as a Middle Eastern terrorist, but that's what he was.

First, THINGS HAPPEN IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:4-10 ⁴*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love* ⁵*he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—* ⁶*to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.* ⁷*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace* ⁸*that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding,* ⁹*he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,* ¹⁰*to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.*

EXPLANATION: We have several mysteries here, but I want to call your attention to these four:

- (A) The mystery of choosing us before the creation of the world — think about that. He knew us before the creation of the world. He knows about future generations. Think about it. He knows your great-great-great-great grandchildren.
- (B) The mystery of predestining us for adoption — you see, spiritually speaking, we were born into the wrong family, and we need to be adopted out of it. We were born into the family of the first Adam, and we need to be adopted into the family of the second Adam.
- (C) The mystery of redemption through the blood of Jesus — this is the biggest mystery of all. Why are we redeemed through the blood of Jesus? That’s a good question, and there is the answer: Because he loves us and knows we cannot redeem ourselves. The scripture says he has lavished the riches of God’s grace on us. The Greek word for lavish means: to go beyond the expected measure.
- (D) And then, another mystery — the future unity of all things *in heaven* and *on earth* in Christ.

All of these mysteries could be many sermons and books in and of themselves. I believe in order to come to faith in Jesus; a person must be humble enough to accept the unexplainable mysteries of it all. We can ponder, discuss, debate, and study. And, these are things we should do. But, ultimately, there is much we cannot understand, and we have to settle with accepting the mystery.

ILLUSTRATION: Missionaries tell us in many places of the world, evangelism is strong and it’s easy to preach for converts. Perhaps it’s because these people groups are more likely to accept the mystery of it all compared to our western minds, which demand explanation and understanding.

APPLICATION: Perhaps you’re listening today, and your skeptical mind has dominated your thinking. Perhaps your skeptical mind has put you in a sort of mental checkmate, and you’ve come to believe the lie that if you do not understand it, it cannot be. You might be smug in your skepticism, but a true skeptic will be skeptic of his own skepticism.

Second, HEARING AND BELIEVING ARE NECESSARY TO KNOW CHRIST.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:11-13 ¹¹*In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,* ¹²*in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.* ¹³*And you also were included in Christ **when you heard** the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. **When you believed**, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,*

Part of the mystery we cannot understand is predestination. I believe in predestination because this scripture talks about it. Many people have taken this whole predestination thing and created their own theology. I understand several years ago, this church was force fed this teaching until you couldn't take it anymore.

The teachers of this false theology tell us God chose some, before birth, to be saved and some to be damned. For those not chosen, there is nothing they can do to come out of that state. Listen to me **clearly** when I tell you this is **heresy**. It is against the creative nature of God—to create something in order to destroy it.

ILLUSTRATION: Last week, my son Matt and I took a father-son trip. I've taken trips with each of my kids individually. I thought it would be fun to do some drawings and paintings. I've not done anything like that in perhaps, thirty years. Matt and I took several small canvasses, acrylic paints, and paintbrushes. We took along some watercolors, too. I started several paintings, which were terrible, so I scrapped them. Watercolors are unforgiving. Once you've messed up, you can't really start over. Since I failed at watercolors, I decided to try acrylics. I did an elementary-looking painting of a beach and water. When the paint dried, it looked so pitiful I painted over it and started over.

With my pitiful paintings, even though I destroyed several canvasses and watercolor paper, I originally had no intention to create something for the sole purpose of destroying it.

EXPLANATION: We find no example in the Bible where God created anyone or anything with the sole purpose of destroying it. During the time of Noah, God

destroyed civilization by water, but he did it because mankind had become complete reprobates. And, God wanted a fresh start with a righteous man and his family. The sins of the people caused God to react the way he did. At other times, when people were destroyed, it was because of their sin.

Why am I so confident in what I am preaching to you? Go back to verse 13 and circle the phrase “when you heard” and “when you believed.” You have to hear and believe. It is possible to hear and not believe. I do not believe God forces people into hearing and believing. Again, we don’t have a Biblical record of such.

APPLICATION: How does hearing and believing relate to the mysteries I mentioned earlier? Here’s the answer: We *hear* the Gospel with its mysteries. We *believe* the Gospel with its mysteries, and we *trust* him with what we do not understand. Jesus meets us at our level of understanding. We all know what sin is, and we all know we are sinners. That’s all we need to know for God to begin moving in our lives — making us feel uncomfortable with our sin — convicting us that there is something missing from our lives — convicting us that we cannot do anything to make amends for our sin.

Third, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR DEPOSIT.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:14 [The Holy Spirit] ¹⁴ *who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession — to the praise of his glory.*NIV

The New American Standard Bible translates this verse, “who is given as a pledge of our inheritance.” The King James Bible translates it, “is the earnest of our inheritance.”

Think about it. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate deposit, pledge, and earnest!

EXPLANATION: In the day in which Paul wrote this letter, papyrus was a type of paper derived from water plants in Egypt and shipped all over the Mediterranean. The plural of papyrus is papyri. Legal documents scribed on papyri dated during the first century AD have a common word on them when there was a financial transaction: ar-hrab-ohn’ - arrhabōn [ἀρραβών], which is earnest money that

“represents *full security* backed by the purchaser who supplies sufficient proof they will *fulfill* the entire pledge (promise)” (Strong’s, word 728).

ILLUSTRATION: My first car was given to me by a woman who didn’t drive anymore. It was a gas guzzler, and I wanted something more economical. I found a 1980 Honda Civic and went to the bank. I was 19. The banker said I needed an \$800 deposit, so I sold the old gas guzzler for \$800 and took the money to the bank. I had never held so much money at one time. I watched as that \$800 went from my hands to his. You see, I was ensuring I had the ability to pay the rest of the loan.

APPLICATION: When you make a deposit, you are guaranteeing you will follow through. You’re demonstrating you’re serious about the transaction and have the means to pay off the loan. I might make a down payment on a car or a home, but that’s **nothing** compared to the deposit of the Holy Spirit. It’s not a deposit of money but of God’s promises. A deposit of the Holy Spirit guarantees our inheritance. And, Titus 1, Verse 2 tells us God cannot lie.

APPLICATION: Here’s the truth in this part of the message: The deposit for my eternal life has been paid by someone who cannot lie — someone who has my best interest at heart — someone who has literally sealed the deal with his irrevocable promise. The effort on my part is **to hear** and **to believe**.

The Apostle Paul closes with thanksgiving and a prayer, which I want to read, along with some comments.

SCRIPUTRE: Ephesians 1:15-23 ¹⁵ *For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people,* ¹⁶ *I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.* ¹⁷ *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. (Revelation helps us understand mysteries.)* ¹⁸ *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, (A lot of us don’t realize the hope and the need to be enlightened) the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,* ¹⁹ *and his incomparably great power for us who believe (Again, belief is key). That power is the same as the mighty strength* ²⁰ *he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,* ²¹ *far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked,*

not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,* ²³ *which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

CONCLUSION: I entitled this message “The Revival Found in Ephesians Chapter One.” If you read Chapter 1, study it, and meditate upon it, you’ll have personal revival in your soul!

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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