The Book of Ephesians – Introduction

1. We are going to enter a period of teaching, rather than preaching. There are lessons in the Book of Ephesians that speak to the turmoil in our hearts and in our streets. This book helps us move from where we are to where God needs us to be. I think you are going to be surprised.

2. Paul knew Ephesus well. He stayed there for some time after his 2nd missionary journey and lived there for 2yrs after his 3rd missionary journey.

3. Like almost all the cities in Paul's world, the city was dedicated to a main god with smaller, lesser gods, circling this god like planets circle the sun. This god was actually a goddess named Artemis (or Diana to the Romans). A silversmith named Demetrius made implements for the worship of Artemis as well as smaller silver items for sale to worshipers and tourists. When the story of Jesus began winning away those who had followed the story of Artemis, a riot ensued and Paul had to leave the area.

4. Lesson to be learned: we don't always win. Neither does God. He who is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance has had to watch a great many of his children choose another story. Sometimes, those different stories collide with the children of Jesus in ways that prove tragic to individuals and nations.

5. This is not like most of Paul's books in that it is not to a specific church. He deals with universal issues and doesn't do much in the way of addressing local matters. It is a very formal letter, not personal like most of his writings. In fact, the oldest manuscripts we have do not have a mention of Ephesus in verse one. It seems that this book was written to people Paul didn't know…and he had lived in Ephesus.

6. This is not a book written to one people at one time in history, but to all of us who follow Jesus regardless of where or when we might be…and that is very good news as you are about to see.

7. There are three distinct sections of this book: SEATED (Ephesians 1-3), STAND (Ephesians 4-6:9) and STAND (Ephesians 6:10ff). This is

a book that helps you see where you are – where you REALLY are – and how to move forward or stand as God requires. It is like lane assist, autopilot or GPS in that it constantly adjusts our thoughts, actions and atttidues…IF we know the book and IF we dwell in it deeply enough so that it, in turn, dwells in us.

8. After the local Christians burned their books of sorcery and witchcraft, a revival hit Ephesus that spread throughout Asia Minor, an area with a population of 8-15 million people. (what do we need to burn in our lives? What methods are we using to control our environment and the actions of others?)

9. Let's start with the longest sentence in the Bible. Paul starts this book with a single sentence that consists of 12 verses, 202 words, tied together by 32 prepositional phrases and genitive expressions.

10. Pay attention to the tenses Paul uses. Once you see what you are about to see, your life cannot but change and your attitude toward God cannot help but improve. [Eph. 1:3-14] (do not whip out this information and use it against the person in the funeral home planning a service or in the hospital parking lot waiting on news about their loved one. While THIS is reality, we do not rush it into the lives of hurting people who cannot see it yet)

11. However…this passage DOES apply to all of us all the time regardless of our feelings. These are facts and facts do, indeed, trump feelings. This morning, I want you to see where you are seated in Christ.

12. Verse 3 – has blessed…every spiritual blessing (no need to snack from the forbidden tree).

13. Verse 4 – Chosen (!!!) and will work in our lives to make us holy and blameless.

14. Verse 5 – predestined and adopted.

15. Verse 6 – accepted.

16. Verse 7 - we HAVE redemption. We ARE forgiven.

17. Verses 7-8 – grace HAS BEEN lavished on us. He HAS GIVEN us wisdom and understanding.

18. Verse 11 – chosen…again.

19. Verse 13 – included, marked and sealed.

20. And how certain is our salvation? As certain as the Spirit (v.14)

21. As we wrap up this lesson for today, please note the Trinitarian formula here. The Father works in vv.3-6, the Son in vv.7-12, and the Spirit in vv.13-14.

22. All of heaven has chosen and sealed you. All of heaven loves you and forgives you. You are already home with God, resident in His heart.