

# In, By, and With His Grace

Անոր Շնորհքին Մէջ, Անոր Շնորհքով

Ephesians 1:1,2

Welcome to Rally Sunday. We introduce a major theme each year.

- **Get out of the Boat** was my theme in 2017
- **Connected with God and Each Other** in 2018
- **Living Right-Side Up in an Upside-Down World** in 2019
- **Be Still and Know that I Am God** in 2020
- **Nothing Greater... Nothing More...** in 2021
- **Lord, Make us ONE in CHRIST** in 2022

We introduce those themes by going over books from the Bible. Ruth, Jonah, James, John, Mark, 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians, Life of Joseph (Genesis), The Beatitudes (Matthew), The Lord's prayer (Matthew), Philipians, and Acts....

We won't finish these themes. We won't graduate from these classes. We will keep studying God's Word and we will continue learning and allowing the Spirit of God to transform our lives.

This year, in 2023-2024 we would like to introduce this theme:

## **In, By, and With His Grace.**

Անոր Շնորհքին Մէջ, Անոր Շնորհքով

**IN His Grace**—We can be confident. We are a MASTERPIECE. That is how God sees us.

**BY His Grace**—We have been SAVED. We can't earn it.

**WITH His Grace**—We strive to LIVE, LOVE, and LEARN to be MORE LIKE JESUS.

This topic is based on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians.

- We ended our Acts series in chapter 19 where Paul was in **Ephesus**.
- He baptized 12 disciples who received the Holy Spirit.
- His preaching and teaching for 2 ½ years was not in vain, we read:.

**“all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.”** (Acts 19:10 NIV11)

- By the way, the Spirit of God did not allow Paul to visit this city in his second missionary Journey. Then Paul in his third journey God, opened the door. It was not an easy city.

Where is Ephesus?

Asia Minor, currently Turkey. Ephesus was an important city, a city of business. “The center point of the city of Ephesus in the ancient world was its magnificent temple dedicated to the goddess **Diana**, or **Artemis**. This temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The city of Ephesus was one of the five largest cities in the Roman Empire at that time, being the capital of the province of Asia under the Roman government. It was also a very important commercial center for the Roman Empire.”<sup>1</sup>

Paul’s preaching was so effective, so many turned to Jesus. So many magicians and people who used sorcery for business, burned their books and items. Yet, others who did not this new WAY, new movement, they opposed and wanted their voice to be heard. **There was a riot.** It created a problem.

Think this way: today take the Gospel to Las Vegas. The owners of the casinos and sex-related businesses will not be too happy. (By the way, the Gospel is preached in Las Vegas). If they receive the message of the Gospel seriously, it will affect their economy.

-It happened the same in Ephesus.

**<sup>24</sup> A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. <sup>25</sup> He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: “You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. <sup>26</sup> And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. <sup>27</sup> There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.**

**<sup>28</sup> When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’” (Acts 19:24-28 NIV11)**

There was an uproar against Paul and his disciples. This new WAY, this new movement it not good for our economy.

**How sad is this phenomenon.**

And until today, this is true in our lives. We sacrifice the truth when it hits our pocket.

**Illustration:** Why no one interested to solve the Nagorno Karabagh (Artsakh) disaster with Azerbaijan. People of Artsakh are being starved to death. So many countries, including our country, can stop it. Yet, it conflicts with oil business. Therefore, the truth can be compromised and sacrificed.

Let us go back to Ephesus, I will not go in detail to what happened in Ephesus in chapter 19 (please read it on your own).

**But God** is stronger than those businessmen; and Paul wrote this wonderful letter addressed to the believers of this city.

John Stott summarizes this letter saying:

“Ephesians is today the most contemporary book in the Bible, since it promises community in a world of disunity, reconciliation in place of alienation and peace instead of war.”<sup>2</sup>

How do we have those important values?

Union with Christ.

To be IN Christ. To Be IN His Grace.

“All the privileges of life are found *in union with Christ* and conveyed by the *Spirit*.”

Central topic of Ephesians. **Union with Christ Jesus.** “Ephesians presents a gospel of union with Christ more powerfully than any other New Testament letter.”<sup>3</sup>

- In Christ: “a phrase found **at least 35 times in Ephesians**, more than any other biblical book.” (1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19).<sup>4</sup>

- Jesus himself commanded us **to remain in HIM**. For it is impossible to be part of the body, being related to both the head and the members.<sup>5</sup>

### **-The book has two sections.**

The first three chapters are theology and doctrine. The last three chapters are application, how to walk with the Lord.

#### **Eph 1-3**

The Believer's Wealth

Our position

Being (Who We Are)

Identification with Christ

Our Calling

#### **Eph 4-6**

The Believer's Walk

Our Practice

Doing (How We Live)

Imitation of Christ

Our Conduct

Being  
Divine Sovereignty

Becoming  
Human Responsibility<sup>6</sup>

“The whole letter is combination of Christian doctrine and Christian duty, Christian faith and Christian life, what God has done through Christ and what we must be and do as result.”<sup>7</sup>

So today after the introduction, I will cover only two verses from chapter 1.

**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,  
To God’s holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:  
<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
(Eph 1:1,2 NIV11)**

**- Who is the author?**

Paul, and he is apostle of Christ. It gives authenticity of who he is. He is not the one of the original 12, yet God chose him to become an apostle of Jesus.

- It was His (God’s) will: **Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.**

It is not an accident that God chose him on the way of Damascus to have a personal encounter with Jesus.

**“He (God) who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, <sup>16</sup> was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles,” (Gal 1:15-16 ESV)**

- An important point, God set Paul apart even before his birth...

All believers, all disciples of Jesus have a calling from God. We are set apart to be God’s servants, ambassadors. What is your calling?

**-To whom does Paul write:**

**To God’s holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:**

To the believers of Ephesus. Some of the early manuscripts don’t have word Ephesus. “We may safely assume that the letter was a general letter to Gentile believers in southwestern Asia Minor and that it became identified with Ephesus as the most important city between Rome and Antioch.”<sup>8</sup>

**- Grace and Peace**

**<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Grace and Peace

Grace is an undeserved gift. It cannot be earned; it is something that is freely given.

Only from His Grace, which is a gift, we can receive the peace of Jesus in our lives. Don't seek peace anywhere else.

Paul in all his letters begins with Grace and ends with Grace

**Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Eph 1:2 NIV11)

**Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible (undying love). (6:24 ESV)**

- **Grace to you** Շնորհք ձեզի

- **Grace with you.** Շնորհք այն ամենուն հետ

All 13 letters of Paul have this format. Why? John Piper explains:

Paul opens the letter wishing: may the Grace be over you, as you read, may God's grace come over you.

Every time I preach, that is my desire, as you are here listening and engaging with me, may God's grace come over you.

Maybe you are wounded this week, you need His Grace.

Maybe you are celebrating something special, may the Grace be over you.

Maybe you are in trouble, and you need encouragement, may Grace be over you.

As we listen to his letter, and as we study his letter, may His Grace be over us. His love over us, his mercy over us...

And in the end, when we close, May His Grace go with you. You received the grace, go now and live In, By, and With His Grace. GO out...go to the mission filed...go you the same grace over you.

Take it out... go and share it...

This is my message to you

In, By, and With His Grace ....

1. R.C. Sproul, *You Will Be My Witness to the End of the Earth Acts* P292

2. John R.W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, P 2

3. Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary, Ephesians* P18

4. Article 49: Ephesians at a Glance Harold Willmington Liberty University, [hwillmington@liberty.edu](mailto:hwillmington@liberty.edu) ([https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1048&context=owners\\_manual#:~:text=The%20shortest%20definition%20of%20a,32%3B%206%3A19](https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1048&context=owners_manual#:~:text=The%20shortest%20definition%20of%20a,32%3B%206%3A19)).

5. John R.W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, P 7

6. Ken Boa, *Bible studies series on Ephesians*. <https://kenboa.org/series/walk-like-a-child-of-god/>

7. John R.W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, P 10

8. *ibid* p21