

Paul's Prison Epistles

Lesson 3

Paul and the Ephesians

Faculty Forum



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Forum

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Lesson Three: Paul and the Ephesians

Forum

With
Dr. Reggie Kidd

Students
Larry Gwaltney
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Question 1:

Why do some people question Paul's authorship of Ephesians?

Student: Reggie, we do have an account, written by Luke of Paul's ministry to the Ephesians yet some people question Paul's authorship of the book of Ephesians. Why do they do that? It strikes me as odd.

Dr. Kidd: Well, when you read Ephesians you realize that some things are a little bit different here than the way Paul customarily expresses himself. The language is more elevated. Sometimes people call it more full. For instance, in Ephesians 1:19, Paul piles up four different words for power. And if you just read the Greek and kind of get used to the way Paul expresses himself in say, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans and you read Ephesians, it just feels a little different, a little bit more elevated, and a little more exalted. Then you notice that sometimes he'll use a similar word, or the same words, only they mean something a little bit different. Like in Colossians, he talks about the mystery as being Christ and in Ephesians mystery is Jew and Gentile being brought together.

Some ideas that seem kind of important to him in the early letters have changed. Like in the early letters, every time he uses the word "works" in the plural, he means works of the law as some sort of attempt to establish a relationship with God. Well, all of the sudden now in Ephesians, "works" in the plural gets used for what we do on the far side of salvation. In the early letters, when he talks about gifts he seems to be talking more about function in the church. And here in Ephesians, when he talks about gifts it's more about people who are gifted for an office to help other people serve. And in the earlier letters, it's clear that he thinks relationships ought to be worked out in a godly way. But here in Ephesians, he's talking about ordered patterned relationships along with Colossians: fathers and children, masters and slaves, husbands and wives. And so, some folks just feel that there's just a different hand, a different mind in view here that's in play. Now, as far as I'm concerned, it's to the very extent that you notice the differences. It's a little harder for me to imagine how somebody trying to pretend to be Paul would be so different. And how much easier it would be for Paul himself to unselfconsciously to express himself differently, to speak to a particular situation.

Question 2:

In what ways is Ephesians similar to Paul's other writings?

Student: So Reggie, you talk about a lot of the differences but surely there are similarities. In what ways is the book of Ephesians similar to a lot of Paul's writings in doctrine and language?

Dr. Kidd: Well, I think that's a great question, Rob. I think, on close examination, what you wind up appreciating is that Paul is taking an opportunity to express some things that are latent in the earlier letters that he just hasn't had much time to develop. The whole thing about Christ's dominion over the powers that he reflects on pointedly in Colossians and then expands here in Ephesians, it's the same view of things that you have in Romans 8, where it talks about there is nothing that could separate us from the love of God in Christ, which includes the powers that are out there. The whole idea of salvation by grace through faith is the same. Christ's work of atonement is the basis for our life with God through his blood, Ephesians 1:7. The fact that we don't get a relationship through our works, but it's salvation through grace and faith. That's all one and the same. The whole project that is at the heart of Ephesians, of God bringing Jew and Gentile together in one new man at the cross, well, that is simply an explanation or explication or expounding of what he means in Romans 3:29-30 when he talks about there being only one God. There is not a God of the Jews and a God of the Gentile; there is only one God. And he's necessarily the God who brings salvation to both kinds of people, Jews and Gentile, the one through circumcision and the one.... Let me look that one up because it's such a great line. In Romans 3:29-30, he says, "Since there is one God who will justify the circumcision out of faith and the un-circumcision through faith." Same door, different ways to get through the door but it's the same door. In Ephesians, he has opportunity to develop that in a way that he hadn't developed it before.

Question 3:

Why is the authorship of Ephesians important?

Student: So, Reggie, why is the authorship of Ephesians so important if the doctrine is true?

Dr. Kidd: Well Rob, it wouldn't matter if it didn't claim to come from Paul. You know, the church accepted Hebrews without knowing who wrote it. A lot of people thought Paul did but in fact, we don't really know and we accept it because what it says is so compelling and powerful and true. In the case of Paul's letters, they come with his own personal imprimatur. They say, "Believe this because I, the apostle, delegate of God have said this stuff." And it's conceivable that the truth would be true whether he was lying about writing it or not, but you have a huge ethical problem. And for a long time, scholars kind of were trying to give these letters like Ephesians a pass and say, "Well, everybody

understood that the Holy Spirit's voice was what was really important and the human vessel wasn't that important. And everybody knew that this was just a literary device that somebody would use to honor somebody before them." But the more that we have looked at ancient literature, the more we have seen that that dog just ain't going to hunt. There was a tremendous concern for intellectual property in Paul's day and people especially when it came to letter writing. There were all kinds of ways that people would ensure they weren't misrepresented in writing. And Paul does himself in Galatians when he writes, "Well, see what big hands and letters I write" as he closes the letter to certify that if he had used an amanuensis for the text of the letter, that it was his. And the more recent scholars who dispute Paul's authorship, they're just more honest. They say whoever wrote this was involved in a propaganda war and they employed the noble lie. Sort of like the executive who tells his secretary, "Tell them I'm not in" even when they are in because "I have more important things to do." And honestly, that's the choice. Because the letter claims to be by Paul, it really is Paul or it's somebody who is disingenuously, dishonestly manipulating people into thinking that it's Paul. So, there's some rather large choices.

Question 4:

Why would someone forge a letter in Paul's name?

Student: You use the term "propaganda war." Why would people forge or try to forge Paul's name?

Dr. Kidd: Well, we do have documents that come from the second century that show that there were different spins on Paul and taken him in a direction of teaching that was against the domestic order. And I'm thinking in particular of the Acts of Paul and Thecla, where Thecla was... we don't know if she was a historical figure or not, she may have been. But the account that written about her at the end of the second century portrays Paul as teaching that is you want to get to heaven you can't have sex, so you can't get married. And so, Thecla comes under this teaching and baptizes herself and all kinds of crazy things happen. So, some scholars think that in order to make Paul more conservative than he actually was some people wrote documents like Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, to make Paul into this... more of a social conservative than he actually was. So, there were false teachers out there.

And you see this in 2 Timothy where some people are saying that the resurrection has already come. And 2 Peter and Jude are writing against false teachers who were often giving really confusing teaching about the way we live as well as the work of Christ. And John had to face the same thing too. It's says there antichrists are already out there and they are not really from us. So, the apostles had to deal with people who were spinning the faith in directions they were wanting to go. So, I can understand why people would think that after the age of the apostles others would come along and try to argue for the more orthodox line in the name of the apostles. The problem is one of well, in the first place, of ethics, proclaiming to speak on behalf of the one who Paul calls in Titus, the

“un-lying” God, only telling lies. And then the other thing is, you are not centuries after the fact. You are writing to people who are probably still living, who would know and be able to tell what is true from what is false.

So, the scenario that has writers being able to pass off things as actually being Paul's when they are not Paul's is just not really very plausible. I think we're back to the best explanation of the fact that letters like Ephesians read so much like Paul that, if they didn't have a name attached to them, the church probably would have thought that it was Paul. They are so close that they sound so much like him and there are such subtle differences that it's more plausible that the differences are there because Paul wrote them without having to try to sound like himself.

Question 5:

Did Paul really write this letter to the Ephesians? If not, what difference does it make?

Student: Reggie, some bibles, in chapter 1, verse 1 of Ephesians, note that the words “in Ephesus” don't appear in all the manuscripts. And what I was wondering is how does this affect our confidence in the first place that it really was written to them? And another question that falls under that: how does this affect our interpretation if that is an issue?

Dr. Kidd: That's a great question, Larry, and it's a good chance to go back and just try to crystalize one of the points we tried to make in the lesson. In the lesson, we did note that in some of the very early manuscripts the “in Ephesus” isn't in there. And it's all so clear that Paul is writing in part to people he didn't know. And it struck a lot of scholars as being odd that Paul, who had been in Ephesus for three years, writes to people as though he didn't know them, and that's one of the reasons why some scholars speculate that Paul didn't write it.

But one of the things that we talked about in the lesson was the likelihood that Paul did write the letter primarily to Ephesus because Ephesus was sort of the mother church of a bunch of churches that got started in the surrounding Lycos Valley and Colossae was one of those, and the church at Laodicea would have been one of those, and it looks like there was one in Hierapolis and those churches were just a few miles from each other. So, the likelihood is that the letter circulated beyond Ephesus, and Paul intended it to circulate beyond Ephesus. And it would have been natural for the “in Ephesus” to have been dropped in the copies that circulate beyond Ephesus even though it was applying to those churches as well.

Question 6:
**Does this letter address local problems in Ephesus,
or only in the wider community?**

Student: Well Reggie, we know that Paul didn't have any difficulties in writing to people that he had never met. So, I'm curious, how much of the letter is actually written to address problems in Ephesus, or do we have a sense of how much of it is written to maybe a wider audience than just that city?

Dr. Kidd: Well, Ephesus, Rob, or the letter to the Ephesians is a great example of how Paul can be very specific to a particular situation and global at the same time. Here in this letter, when he talks about the church he's not just talking about a local congregation like he writes the letter to the churches of Galatia. Here he's talking about the church universal and what its significance is. And he talks in Ephesians, at the end of Ephesians 2, about how there had been this foundation-laying work of the apostles and the prophets. Then how there is this edifice that is building that is beyond the particularities of any specific local church.

And the whole way that he paints the work of the ministry of the gospel in the church where Christ is giving gifts to church officers so that they can equip the church, or church members, for their work of service so that the bride can be built. And the bride of Christ is this larger conception of the church, sort of more the church universal. And the way that he addresses larger patterned relationships, family relationships: husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves, and talks in a more general fashion, like in 1 Corinthians when he talks about worship, he is talking about the nitty-gritty of how he wants them to relate to each other specifically in Corinth. You know, they have these divisions among themselves where the poor are not getting to the table at the same time as everyone else and not therefore rightly discerning the body. They are breaking the body of Christ up and the Lord is slamming people and people are using their spiritual gifts to exalt themselves rather than each other. And he's telling them in terms that they need to understand in that particular situation that you need to edify each other.

You know, those are principles that it's pretty easy to infer for everybody. But he's really addressing that particular situation. Here in Ephesus, he is talking about worship in this larger sense of coming together to let the word of Christ... It's easy to blend Ephesians 5 with Colossians 3 because in both of these cases he is extrapolating about the nature and shape of worship, where the Word of Christ dwells richly among us. And we teach and instruct one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and where thanksgiving is in our hearts. The whole thing on spiritual warfare is just, he's painting across this broad canvas and I think he intends for this letter in particular, kind of inspired by the juices that got flowing as he wrote the letter to the Colossians, to help the church however long history goes, wherever God raises up the church, here is what our life together should be like. That's one of the things that make Ephesians so exciting and it's

so very popular — is that the right word — so powerful in the church, so special to people over the ages, and we kind of sense, oh yeah, he is talking to all of us here.

Question 7:

Why should a Gentile be excited about a Jewish Messiah?

Student: Now, Reggie, in the lesson you unpack this whole kingdom motif. Now, what I am curious about though is, to a Gentile what would be exciting to them about a Jewish Messiah reigning over the world?

Dr. Kidd: One of the things we see happening in the first century is that Jewish synagogues have been dispersed all over the Mediterranean basin. And they were in these synagogues telling Israel's story and Gentiles who had attached themselves to the synagogues would understand that at some point Israel's story turns to the nations. The promise in Genesis 12 had been that it would be through Abraham that the nations would bless themselves. And that's one of the things that Paul got was that with the resurrection of Jesus Christ the kingdom had come into this new phase in which that which the prophets had promised was happening, that the Gentiles would be attaching themselves to the kingdom of God. Images like Psalms 72 that the rulers from far nations bringing their tribute. We mentioned in this lesson how Psalm 22, where all the families of the earth are proclaiming God's name and worshipping Him.

So, Gentiles, as they come to understand Israel's story and understanding that Israel's story ultimately involves the nations, would see themselves as now a part of this great story through Jesus the Messiah. And Paul puts it in terms of now Jew and Gentile being fellow citizens, there being this peoplehood that were made up of people who were near, Jews, and people who were far off. And that's why we talk about inheritance now being shared and that's not just an Israelite concept but now it's a kingdom concept that involves Gentiles who are co-heirs along with Jews of the promises of God.

Question 8:

Do God's promises to Old Testament Israel apply to the church?

Student: You guys will forgive me a little bit here, I'm going to get a little personal here because in listening to what you were saying in answering his question, I'm remembering years back when I was in church being taught by pastors and high school teachers that Israel is not the church and do not confuse the promises of both. You have a distinct timeline for the two groups. And is it appropriate for Gentiles, for instance, now to come and make these claims that these promises are now our promises?

Dr. Kidd: Well, in fact, that seems to be exactly what Paul has done. It goes back at least to the whole idea of Gentiles now being children of Abraham. “Father Abraham had many sons, many sons had Father Abraham, I am one of them and so are you. So let’s just praise the Lord.” By definition, those of us who have trusted Christ, as Paul’s concerned, are all sons of Abraham. His argument in Romans 11 about the branches that are natural to the olive tree and those who are grafted in makes sense if there is only one olive tree that is this sort of mega-Israel. That it doesn’t matter whether you are Israelite by birth or Israelite by faith, if you belong to Christ you belong to the true Israel of God. And what drives Paul is the appropriation of promises made to Israel that are now fulfilled to everybody who belongs to the one true Israelite, Jesus Christ.

Paul, even in Romans 10, takes promises that Hosea had made very specifically to Israel and only to Israel that the one who was not loved will be loved, those who are not my people will be my people. In Hosea, the prophet was talking about God’s reclaiming Israelites who had apostatized. But Paul applies those promises; he sees those promises being fulfilled in the gospel going out to Gentiles. So, Paul doesn’t honor the distinction between Israel and the church. He believes that Israel has been reconfigured around Jesus the one true Son of Israel, and now everybody who belongs to Jesus Christ belongs to the Israel that matters. Which is why he can tell the Colossians, who are Gentiles, “You have been circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands and you have been buried in Christ with his baptism and raised with him.”

Question 9:

Have significant distinctions between Jews and Gentiles been eliminated?

Student: Have the distinctions now been eliminated between the Jew and Gentile?

Dr. Kidd: Yes, and that’s why he says to the Galatians, “Everyone who has been baptized in Christ Jesus belongs to the covenant people.” And so, the covenant has been reconfigured, and it’s a new covenant. It’s the old covenant that’s really now come into its own.

Question 10:

In what ways is the modern church one body?

Student: Now, Reggie, in the letter Paul insists that the church is one body. Now, we can look around and see so many different denominations and ways to view Scripture. In what way, really, is the church one body?

Dr. Kidd: Well, Rob, that's a good and it's a painful question and yet it's a hopeful question. Paul points to the one head of the church and I think we have to believe that there is a way that he, the Lord, has of standing above all the divisions we see and somehow seeing it all as being his bride. Different facets of the church seem to be given the ability to reflect different aspects of his truth and his being. That being said, it's still a sad thing. I don't think that Paul and the other apostles, for that matter, envisioned there being separate churches. Paul really resisted that idea in 1 Corinthians when he just said, "You got a Peter party and a Paul party and you've got a Jesus party." And he was so much against this centrifugal energy that we have seen characterizing the church over the centuries. And I think when the Lord comes back again there's going to be a lot of repenting and tears over our not being able to figure out how to obey the teaching that there's one Lord, one baptism, one faith.

Again, that being said because we live in an "already and not yet" situation, a situation in which the Lord simply does not seem to have given the ability for all who name his name to come into agreement on everything. Some of the issues are fairly minor like, you know, grape juice or wine. And others are fairly major, like when a believer decides, who is really in charge God or the believer? And it's almost like there is this divine, mysterious logic that is just above all of our logics and there is just this sinful propensity within all of us that the closer you get to really realizing how spectacular one part of God's truth is, you are a hair's breadth away from heresy. And it's almost like he's created the church to have people who overstress the other side of the truth to be points of accountability to all of us.

And Paul gave us chapters like Romans 14 and 15, where he said in the face of issues that we can get a lot of energy over, that we need to learn to appreciate that you and I are going to disagree on some things and I need to respect the fact that you are his servant and not my servant. You answer to him and not only that, I believe that he will enable you to stand on the last day and not only that but somehow our whole hermeneutic, our whole approach to Scripture is supposed to take into account the idea that there can be a oneness of mind and a oneness of voice that still leaves one another to be able to have the responsibility to figure some things out and come to some different conclusions. But we don't have the option of not loving one another. And we don't have the option of not seeing the blood of Christ as being of stronger bond than our different persuasions on some issues.

Question 11: **Does God love diversity?**

Student: How would you respond to the typical argument then that God loves diversity, so he loves all these different types of churches that are out there?

Dr. Kidd: Well, I think given the “already, not yet” situation that we’re in, I think that some of that has to be true. I think that he allows the church to be accommodated to different people-groups preferences, wirings, things that he himself has placed in them by common grace. You know, the “Appalachian Bubba” who sings Amazing Grace is sort of counterpart to the Northern-European high-church cathedral worshipper who is singing Bach. And it’s like there is a fullness to his being that it’s hard to imagine any church fully embodying. So, I think we have to entertain the possibility that he delights somewhat, not just in allowing individuals to reflect his image in wildly different ways but he is going to let some churches reflect his wildly divergent personality. I mean, he is transcendent and he is eminent, and he is high and he is low, he is just and holy, and he is tender and compassionate.

You know there are certain aspects of the faith that are heady, and there are certain aspects of the faith that are really touchy-feely, and there are certain aspects that are like, let’s go get ‘em! And the fact of the matter is, as church history has gone on, we have seen churches take on different aspects of who God is and, man, it would be nice if every church could be equal parts but that just isn’t the way it is. And I think, Scripture is given to us in such a way that we need to continue to lean into, pray for, work for, there being a oneness of the actual expression of the church as possible. But then recognize that between now and when the Lord comes back again, there are going to be limits to how much we can actually accomplish that. But the challenge is not just to let ourselves sort of circle the wagons and get in our own little comfort-zone and just stay there and look askance at everyone who is different from us. Then what we need to do is, I think, is to move as boldly and humbly as we can towards one another instead of away from each other.

Student: Reggie, this is less a question, I think, than just my own observations but we don’t have to reconcile ourselves to always assume that we will always have denominationalism and always these divisions. In church history, there were widely divergent looks and understandings of Christ’s person and his work. And a lot of that came together. Sometimes it took centuries but eventually the churches resolved some differences and there’s no reason why we can’t be optimistic, I think, in looking years down the road that we have more agreement than we have right now. And we don’t have to just assume that these disagreements are always going to exist.

Dr. Kidd: I hope you are right. And the point, I think, is to move towards each other and to go to the centripetal dynamic of the gospel as Paul teaches: one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

Question 12:

Did Paul downplay the idea of the kingdom of God for Gentile readers in Ephesians?

Student: Reggie, in just a cursory reading of Ephesians it seems — and this is maybe true of all Paul's writings — is that he doesn't use the language explicitly the kingdom of God or in the same way or as much as Jesus does. Does this mean that the idea is being deliberately downplayed, let's say, for Gentile audiences? Or is it different somehow?

Dr. Kidd: I think for Paul, the idea of the kingdom of God that he brought over from Jesus is so full that he wants to unpack it for people. And it is important to know that when Paul's friend and traveling companion, Luke summarized Paul's ministry in the very last verse of Acts, he has Paul in prison and what he is talking about is the kingdom of God. And what I think Paul is trying to do is put feet on the concept. And that's why we talked about in the lesson the different aspect of Jesus' lordship. Remember how at the end of chapter 1 of Ephesians, Paul talks about how God had raised Jesus up from the dead and placed him above all rule, and power, and authority. And given him like total charge of the cosmos and then I think what Paul wants to do is to help people understand just what that means for them and what their place in that is.

And that's why we talked in the lesson about their having a citizenship that is no longer defined by this world but Jew and Gentile together being citizens, together of God's kingdom. The inheritance that you can have only because you are a citizen, the fact that God himself reserves the right to name, which is a function of being a king. And the whole call to spiritual warfare, it's a call to be a part of an army. Well, this isn't a private militia; this is joining the one who is defined in the Old Testament as the Lord of Hosts, Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of armies and he is establishing his rule and we are called to be a part of that. As well as the fact that Paul sees himself in prison as an ambassador, one who has been sent by a king to stake his claim on people around them.

And I think part of what Paul is doing, in a word, is to help people from their world and their different concepts of their duties of citizenship to their clan or their local municipality, or even if their Roman Citizens or if they're of Jewish heritage to recognize the claim of Jesus as the one to whom all dominion has been given impacts them in these different ways. So, it's very much kingdom stuff even though Paul doesn't use the language kingship directly as much.

Question 13:

Is the idea of the kingdom of God just a metaphor? How does it affect us today?

Student: It seems in his usage of the kingdom of God in the other letters and how it's referred to in Ephesians that sometimes he is using it as a metaphor and sometimes it's much stronger than that. Is

it just a metaphor? Is it stronger than that? And how important is the kingdom of God motif to me today?

Dr. Kidd: Well, for Paul, it means there is one who sits at the right hand of God the Father, ruling everything on your behalf. I mean, it's a cool thing he does here at the end of Ephesians 1, he says (paraphrase), "Christ has raised Jesus from the dead, made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly place, is far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and above every name's that's named not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him head over all things, for the church." He is the Lord and he has everything and he exercises his lordship in the interest of people like you and me. He is expending all his kingly energy on, to go to Ephesians 5, creating a context in which his bride, the church made up of you and me, can be radiant, can be glorious, can be clean, and holy. So, metaphor?

The way that he exercises his kingship now is invisible in that we do not see him visibly on the earth and yet he does exercise it by the power of the Holy Spirit and he exercises it as he brings together men and women from every race, nation, tribe, language, tongue into his people. And like in Ephesians 3:10, uses the church to put on display God's wisdom, and so as we are his people we become the showcase of his love, and of his wisdom, and of his power.

Question 14:

What is the relationship between spiritual gifts and church offices in Ephesians 4?

Student: Reggie, in chapter 4, this seems to be one of the few areas that they turn to talk about spiritual gifts but as I am looking at this, it seems like Paul is not talking about spiritual gifts the same way we normally discuss it. But he is talking more about offices for me there is a little bit of confusion there. Could you clear that up?

Dr. Kidd: It's a good question, Rob. It's helpful to think about what Paul does, say in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, where he is talking about people who have gifts of tongues, of healings, of administration, of liberality. And Paul wants to make clear that those gifts are given, not for your own sake but so that you can benefit the body, so that you can build the body up. The focus in Ephesians 4 is a little bit different. Here he talks about God has given the gifts of these offices: apostleship, pastor, teacher, a prophet to the church. And his point here is that those officers and those offices are given to the church so that the people who fill those offices can do one thing: to equip the saints for their work of ministry. So, you have this really lovely picture. It's Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 for each and every believer is given a gift of a certain gift mix. And what they need is people who have the wisdom and the teaching to help them figure out how to discern their gifts and how to use their gifts; how to have those gifts shaped and formed by the teaching. The apostles come and they establish the foundation and the prophets

provide content, and then pastors and teacher, their responsibility is to come along and nurture those who have those gifts and release them, empower them, and help them figure out how to use their gifts for the sake of the church.

So, I think you have here a wonderful picture of Paul's sense of what authority is all about. He's got Jesus Christ himself who has been raised from the dead and given that name that is above every name and he rules all things, not for himself but for the church at the end of Ephesians 1. And he is going to talk in Ephesians 5 about the way the bridegroom gives himself for the sake of the bride because it is her he wants to build up; it's her that he wants to beautify. And here he gives us a picture of those who were given authority in the church and a sense of what their authority is for. It's not for themselves but it's for the empowering and building up of people who will themselves be the ones who carry out the work of the ministry.

Question 15:

Do all church offices mentioned in Ephesians 4 still exist?

Student: Well, while we are talking about offices and officers, with very few exceptions most people today don't believe that the office of apostle exists. Why is that? And if that's the case, have other offices been dropped as well?

Dr. Kidd: Well, Larry, it's a great question. Reading Ephesians is a great time to get a little bit of clarity on that because it's here in Ephesians where in chapter 2 Paul is describing this great project of house building that God is all about. And the reason that people — and I would be among those — who think that the office of apostolate and the office of prophet no longer is going on in the church in the same way that it was going on back then is because of what Paul says here in Ephesians 2:20 that “The house is built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets; Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.” And he seems to have the idea of this foundational work that was done by the apostles among whom Paul would be numbered and the prophets. And I think, an implication of the fact that he talks about the apostles and prophets there is because he means not the Old Testament prophets but the New Testament prophets who were circulating and providing new revelation and new truth in Paul's own day.

That seems to Paul to be a foundation laying work and then he goes on in verse 21, “In whom the whole structure is joined together and grows in the Holy Temple in the Lord.” And the inference that many of us have drawn from this passage is that there was a once and for all ministry of the apostles and the prophets in the first century to establish the basic Christians truth. Then all the rest of us come along afterwards and we build on that foundation but we don't re-do the foundation.

So, now the work of the apostolate goes on but it's based on the foundation that was once laid that doesn't have to be laid again. There is a prophetic ministry but it is different than

the work of the prophets in the first-century church. So, people can go around today and call themselves apostles as they are sent as missionaries or church planters. But this is apostle with a small “a” and not a capital “A.” And people go out as prophets. I mean, they get into the pulpit every week and carry on the ministry of the prophets to unpack the Word and apply it, proclaim it, but they are prophets with a small “p” and not a capital “P.”

Question 16:

Does Paul's instruction that wives submit to their husbands apply to every culture?

Student: Well, sooner or later we have to at least discuss a little bit the Scripture in Ephesians that talks about wives submitting to their husbands. And I guess the question that needs to be asked here, is this unchanging normative principle, or this just addressing a particular cultural issue of that day?

Dr. Kidd: Well, Larry, I think what's important is to see the picture of husband and wife for Paul as it reflects the relationship between Christ and his bride. Indeed, Paul does expect wives to reflect the church's responsiveness to her Lord, well, and to be responsive. But Paul's, I think his heartbeat, his real interest is in creating the picture of the husband as having the same sort of interest in his bride as Christ had in his bride. And Christ's authority, he exercises not for himself but for the bride that he loves, that he wants to be radiant, that he wants to be clean, that he wants to provide an environment for her to grow and flourish in. And I think it's telling that for Paul the husband's job is to be willing to die for his wife. And that's the way this passage speaks so strongly to me and I think in the picture that Paul is painting of authority, I think honestly he is much less concerned with the responsibility that wives have to live for their husbands and much more concerned with the responsibility of husbands to be ready to die for their wives and not see them as an extension of their own ego. But to see their wives as being the people they serve for their best interest.

Question 17:

Is the armor of God entirely defensive, or does it also have an offensive quality?

Student: Reggie, I have often heard people describe the armor of God as being just primarily defensive, and so I'm curious when Paul is writing this is he meaning these pieces of armor to be defensive, or is there any way in which we are to be on the offense in terms of spiritual warfare?

Dr. Kidd: Well, Rob, when Spartan mothers gave their sons their shield and said, son, either come back carrying this or come back being carried on it, they were meaning that if you dropped your shield and ran, you would come back without your shield and you would have been a coward. But if you come back being carried on it, you died nobly. And if you come back carrying it well, you come back because you won. The shield was a defensive protection but she gave it with the understanding that her son was going into war to go fight, to kill the enemy, and to conquer. And when Paul gives us these protections that would cover our head, our chest, and the rest of our body, he is equipping us so that we can go into battle to defeat the enemy. And so he gives us the sword of the Spirit that we use to conquer.

It goes all the way back to Jesus; the gates of Hell should not prevail against the church, meaning that we are going to go out and find the Lord bringing people from out of the dominion of darkness. Paul talks in Colossians 1 about how we have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved Son. And Paul saw himself going around the Mediterranean world taking people out from under the dominion of the one that he called the "god of this world, prince of the power of the air," and repositioning them in a new kingdom where there was light, where there was immortality, where there was life, where there was love. It's very much a positive battle that we fight.

Student: And just brings sharper reliefs, that other verse that Jesus says when he says the kingdom of Heaven is advancing forcefully and forceful men seize hold of it. Apparently, Paul was talking, using kingdom language but he was spinning it a little different way, but it's there nonetheless.

Dr. Kidd: Yes, he has called us into his army and he has promised to protect us as he goes about establishing his kingdom though our efforts may seem so feeble at times. But, he rules and he is going to rule. He's going to rule.

Question 18:

What is the main way we engage in spiritual warfare?

Student: So, what ways do you see us struggling not against flesh and blood? In what ways... because we talked about spiritual warfare, I mean, what is the prime way that we face spiritual warfare today?

Dr. Kidd: Prayer. I mean, one of the things that those of us who have been shaped by the secular West have the most difficulty with is understanding something that Paul understood very well and that is, our contention is not against fleshly powers. We have seen the church in one generation may be the church of the left and another generation may be the church of the right, who think it's all about politics. It's all about trying to establish public policy and to go into the marketplace, into the governmental spheres, and

seek to bring about the kingdom of God directly through some sort of political action. We need to be in the marketplace, we need to be in the public square, we need to be making our case. But we need to be a people who are primarily operating on our knees and appealing to the Lord of Hosts to fight his battles, to thwart the evil one, and to raise up, and to frustrate unrighteousness, and to establish justice. And you know, fathers and mothers need to work hard to raise their children in the fear and the admonition of the Lord. But they need to do it as priests who pray that the Lord will work out all of the contingencies in their kids' lives that they cannot control. And that the Lord would undergird their lives and that the Lord would be at work in their lives.

We need to work harder than we can possibly imagine in the church so that she can be radiant, and that she can be pure, so that she can be true, so that she can be a fellowship of love. But pastors need to be doing the bulk of their work on their knees. And it's really interesting that that's where Paul goes in this passage about spiritual warfare; he goes to prayer. "Take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for the saints."

And I'm really impressed with... as time has gone on, I've been impressed with the way the ancient church saw the church at worship as being primarily a church that's praying. Not just talking about what we think about the Bible, but seeing ourselves as being part of this heavenly worship that is going on where the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are magnified and glorified for who they are, and where we go as priests pleading the case of the rest of the world, the world that doesn't believe, the world that needs to know the living God. And where we come and we bear, on our hearts, the wounds, and the sicknesses, and the diseases of the world and place them before the throne of grace and ask him to help. There's spiritual warfare; there's where we conduct it primarily. We as a kingdom of priests are a point of contact between the God who is and his design for the world. I think primarily, the place where we fight spiritual warfare is on our knees in prayer.

Question 19:

Are praise and worship supposed to be primarily musical?

Student: I got the impression from the lesson that when it talks about praise and worship that we're primarily talking about something musical in nature. Is that right?

Dr. Kidd: Well, it's interesting, Larry, that when Paul comes to the matter of worship he does talk about singing. And I am kind of a song guy and I think there is a special way that truth becomes more lovely, and truth gets pressed more deeply into us when we learn to sing it. The ancient church had a saying: *lex orandi, lex credendi*; "the law of praying is the law of believing." You know, show me how you pray and I'll show you what you actually believe. Well, I would augment that with *lex conenede, lex credendi*; show me

what you sing and I'll show you what you believe. When we sing our faith it kind of goes into different places in our being. One of the things that the reformers did 500 years ago, when the singing had been taken away from the congregation and had become so elaborated, it had kind of become the work of the monks, is they gave song back to the congregation.

For Calvin, it was so important to get people singing the Psalms again that he started this project that eventuated in musical settings for all 150 Psalms. Luther spawned all kinds of hymn singing. But even Calvin, who didn't believe that we should really sing more than Scripture, he took the creed and had the creed set to music so that people could express the faith at... more in a way that their head and heart were brought together in the affirmation. Not just of propositions that were technically true but didn't necessarily affect their gut but that it would come from way down inside them.

And in point of fact, as the ancient church thought about song, they weren't thinking about just a mode of expression, they weren't thinking about just some warm-up to a sermon. They were thinking about the church at prayer. And to go back to our conversation earlier, when we gather for worship we are a kingdom of priests. We are that part of the world that God loves that recognizes who he is. We are the ones that bring creation's latent song and we bring the song that unbelievers cannot sing and we bring it and we express to God the love that this portion of his creation has for him. And so, our song is prayer. And for Paul, song is teaching as well. We help each other understand Scripture better when we sing Scripture and songs based on Scripture. And we help tell the story. Many of the Psalms are about declaring who God is, his fame, and his worth to the nations. And calling upon them to believe and obey.

So, even the singing, it's more than just song. It's God's people praying; it's God's people declaring and telling the story. But of course there is more to worship as well that Paul could have commented on that he comments on elsewhere, coming to the Lord's Table and being at the place where the whole design of redemption is reenacted. We touch, we taste, we see, we feel that God has strapped on the stuff of our humanity to our own existence and has come among us and has promised to redeem all the rest of creation.

I mean, I love what Paul does in Ephesians 3:10 where he talks about through the church "the manifold wisdom of God being made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places." And when we gather for worship, it's like I have this sense of the Father saying to the defeated demons and to the prince of the power of the air who has been dealt this deathblow and who now has to look on and say, "Look there are my people restored to life with me; restored in their relationships with one another. "Restored to life with me," Ephesians 2:1-10; "Restored in their relationship with one another," Ephesians 2:11 to the end of the chapter. "And now they're in relationship with me." But to go on further, worship for Paul, it's about singing... it's about singing but it's singing that really just is not warm-up to the sermon. It's a taking up the song of the redeemed in prayer and in teaching. It's coming together as a reconciled people but as you look elsewhere at Paul, in Romans 12:1-2, worship is just about the way that we live. It's 24

hours a day, 7 days a week, 365.25 days a year. It's everything that we do. It's presenting our bodies as living sacrifices.

And so, that's why Paul will talk from chapters 4, 5, and 6 about the way we live out oneness, the way we work out our gifts, the way that we expose the deeds of darkness. It's about the way we forgive one another the way Christ has forgiven us. It's about the way that husbands love their wives and wives respond to their husbands. It's about parents and children. It's about masters and slaves. It's about... Worship is the whole of the Christian life that comes together in this very focused expression week after week when we gather for worship. And it's all extremely important to Paul.

Question 20:

How does worship in the gathered church differ from other types of worship?

Student: You are talking about worship as the whole of the Christian life but it does seem that Paul views worship together as a body on the Lord's Day as a special event. How is that different than worship being every 365.25 days of our life?

Dr. Kidd: Well, it's like we are dispersed for living out worship before him and then we are gathered to create this marvelous embodied expression. And there is a positive centrifugal force as he disperses us and sends us out, as he distributes us out into the world, into the marketplace, into the public square, to reflect his glory, his dominion. But then he calls us together because we need to be reminded. As he tells Timothy, "Remember Christ Jesus." We need to be reminded that this is really true. And the world according to Jesus in John 13 has the right to say, "Yeah, they really are my disciples on the basis on whether they love one another." And we come together to express our love for each other so that the world has a chance to be a... People from the world, we should be bringing people to this place where they will see love that they may not see any place else. Paul has that sense in 1 Corinthians 14 of the unbeliever coming among us and hearing God's oracles proclaimed, seeing people living together a kind of life that they know nothing about and saying, "Surely God is among them." So, there is a way in which there is crystallization, an embodiment. Just like God's love took of the flesh of his Son Jesus so that the invisible God could become visible and now Jesus becomes visible in the world in two ways: one, in the way that we live in the world and the way in which we gather and as an embodied people we say something about who he is in our life together. And you have to be together for that to happen, for us to be able to say, "The peace of the Lord be with you. And also with you."

Question 21:

How do we reconcile the individual and corporate aspects of the gospel?

Student: Reggie, the lesson suggests that the gospel is bigger than individual reconciliation. How do we reconcile the individual aspects with the corporate aspects and either one of them more important?

Dr. Kidd: Neither is more important. They belong together. It's the great thing about the gospel. I once had a sociology professor who said, "You know, the Old Testament is all about the people of God and the New Testament is about the individual." And I thought, well no, because it is in the Old Testament that Ezekiel says, "Don't think that you are going to be punished for anybody's sins but your own." And in the New Testament, it's as much about the bringing together of a people as it is as individuals getting saved. So, it's a false choice to think about the gospel being either individual or corporate or there being a priority to one or the other. The reality is: I am a son, you are a son, we are the bride. And there is no gospel without both of those. There is no gospel without individuals knowing the living God and there is no gospel without you and me being connected. It's a "both/and" or it's nothing.

Question 22:

What is the relationship between the gospel and the kingdom of God?

Student: Well, in listening to that, I think in my own experience the emphasis was always on the individual. I'm just thinking of my own past and the gospel was always just how somebody got saved.

Dr. Kidd: We're here to fix that.

Student: Well, that's good because that's going to bring us to the next question then. If the gospel is more than just me getting saved...?

Dr. Kidd: It is that.

Student: It is that. We're not denying that but if it's more than that then what is the relationship between the gospel and the kingdom of God? Are they synonymous? Are they two separate things?

Dr. Kidd: That's a great question. The kingdom is God's dominion. The kingdom is where God is totally absolutely in charge. Now, in the "already, the not yet," that's kind of a messy deal. He has reestablished his claim in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is *Christus Victor*. He is the one who has come into the situation of ungodliness, into the situation of rebellion and he has destroyed our greatest enemies: sin, and death, and the Devil. And he has promised in his resurrection... I mean, his resurrection is the promise that one day from sea to shining sea, from the height of heavens to the depths as far down as you can go, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

But in the meantime, there are vast sections of this creation that God has reclaimed that do not acknowledge his rule. That doesn't mean that God's not in charge. It means that we don't see the way he exercises his dominion. For now, Paul is still willing to talk about the Devil as being the god of this world. And as far as we can see there are vast areas of God's creation that are not under God's rule. That's because they're not visibly under God's rule, and he is allowing the drama of redemption where there is still the effects of the fall to be worked out.

The place where we are supposed to see graphically God's kingdom and his rule is the church. And that is, we are that part of the created order who have consciously, in the now, bowed the knee and said, "Jesus is Lord." We are supposed to be the place where his kingship is manifest and is palpable, and is something that you can touch and feel and sense. We are supposed to be the place where people see God's rule. Now, the fact of the matter is we are part of the "already and the not yet" as well because we are still sinners. We still carry around the old man, and we still only partially submit to his rule. But we're in the game and we're about seeking to be the focused embodiment of his kingdom in the church. And then, we have responsibilities as citizens, as participants in the marketplace, as family members of people who are not believers, to reflect kingdom values all around us. So, there's huge overlap but I think what we are trying to get at in the lesson is that the church is where the kingdom of God, for the now, is focused in an "already, not yet" situation.

Question 23:

What are some practical ways to build the kingdom of God?

Student: Okay, Reggie, so now I'm thickheaded. If you could give me some practical ways to build the kingdom of God, what would you say?

Dr. Kidd: Practical ways to build the kingdom of God? You build the kingdom of God most directly when you take that piece of turf, which is your primary stewardship, and that's you and put yourself daily under the dominion of the one who is Lord of Heaven and Earth, and exalt him as your ruler. And then from there, seek to live out his rule in the circle of relationships around you, as husband, as father, as student, as employee, or citizen and everywhere you go... But before "everywhere you go," I would give a priority to beyond your family, I would give a priority to building the kingdom by building the church, by being a loyal, faithful participant of a local church where the Word is preached, where the sacraments are ministered, where the poor are taken care of, where discipline... where fellow sinners have come to get healing and to get accountability. So, I would kind of build it out from there: you, your closest network of family, church and then everywhere that you are called to go.

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