

Ephesians IV

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The practical ways of building up the glorious church are recorded from chapter two to chapter 6:10. 6:10-20 is the conclusion of Ephesians. Paul speaks of how to become the glorious church from 2:1-3:13. It comes down to nailing down **the five things on the cross**: trespasses and sin, the world, the prince of the power of the air, the lust of flesh, and the Law.

We have looked at four things so far. **Paul speaks about the Law from 2:11 to 3:13.** The final piece to nail down to the cross is the Law. From Romans messages we know that Satan fishes the self through the secular world. The bait of the secular world is the Law. If the believers' Christian walk is not by grace, the church naturally becomes legalistic because of the Law. C.S. Lewis writes in his book that as long as the believers are heading to the hell because of their religious life, help them to be more successful in their religious life. This is the strategy Satan is directing the evil spirits. "Give them enough money. Give them enough power. Let them enjoy enough and pursue what is elegant. Help them to do that."

Therefore, I preach to the congregation that it is not the will of God for the believers to be under the influence from anything that is not eternal. Is money eternal? No, it is not eternal. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then He will add all these things." Jesus proclaimed it not to the riches at that time but to the poor who would starve to death if they don't eat fast. Jesus was speaking to the poor that if the goal of their life is for the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, then they don't have to worry about it. Instead of seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness first we are seeking what is limited and we allow it to affect us. That's not the will of God for the believers. How much the elegant bait, Law, has seized the churches in Korea! The strongest work of Satan in Korean churches is through the spirit of Legalism which turns the church into the center of religious life. They call upon the Lord with their mouth but they don't really mean it. It is the same as calling upon the name of Buddha. It does not make any difference. They have Bible in hands but if anything such as "magical book" bestows blessings on them, they will treat it like truth. That's how the believers are in this age. That's the reason they skip the worship service on Sundays and refuse to take a loss for the sake of God. It is the same for pastors, too. They don't lay down their life. I say this in Zoe Ministry Network, "We pastor to die not to live. Christianity is life not religion."

Paul speaks of the Law from 2:11 to 3:13. As we can see in the text, the constituent of the Ephesian Church is mostly proselytes. Since proselytes are big majority, it is not significant to address the Jew's commands, Law and Legalism. Paul explains it a different way.

So, what is the Law as Paul explains in Ephesians? Paul defines the Law as one's own effort to live his life. Paul addresses the gentiles in the world who live by the Law and reproofs them. For the Jews to live by the Law is legalism, but it is not for the Christians. Jewish Christians at that time contended believers to live by the Law. However, proselytes did not respond well to them. What is the Law to the proselytes? As Paul addresses this issue he puts a degree of emphasis on the Law. Paul uses "we," "both," and "the two" repeatedly to point out the separation of man from God, the separation of proselytes from Jewish Christians, and the separation of new man from old man in us. **Paul is using "we" to signify those three meanings.**

As we have seen in Galatians **the legalism is one's own effort to live his life without the grace of God and not living by the things of God.** As the worldliness enters many fail to live with the authority of the heir and live as a hired hand. Church is supposed to live by grace and enjoy life. However, over 90% of your 24 hour is used to train in the reason and rationality of the world and the Christian walk is infected by the legalism. People momentarily seek the Lord during the worship service but most of them lost any will to seek God because their souls are hardened by reason and rationality filled with legalism as they live in the world. They say, "We must encounter

God,” but deep inside they cannot encounter Him. Some people want to deny this. Why? Because they will only die if they encounter God, so they don't want to encounter Him. They know they can't skip worship service, so they come for an hour. That is today's church filled with the legalism. In another word, the worldliness is legalism in our case. The world is about what we do. It emphasizes on the deeds. You get return as much as you pay the price. Isn't that the world? It is the same with the Jews about the legalism. They become righteous or justified as much as they obey the Law. According to Romans 3 the Law is about doing things to become righteous.

Paul speaks of gentiles' lifestyle of legalism in the world and the evil influence of worldliness. The evil influence of worldliness is crucified on the cross. The conclusion of Paul is that you have been redeemed from the curse of the Law, so don't put on the yoke of Law again. The legalism of the gentiles is to live by the worldliness. The previous lifestyle of the gentiles before the conversion as they were not the children of God was the legalism. We can't bring that into the church. Paul is saying, “Pay the price for the worldliness that has taken over your body on the cross and destroy the legalism.” **Paul's focus is on the proselytes rather than the Jews and he is speaking out against the legalism of proselytes.** The critical weakness of churches in this age is legalism and syncretism. When you look at closely legalism and syncretism, they go together. Legalism can be observed in two ways. One is exclusiveness. They praise God and shout “holy, holy, holy” with their mouth but they have their own way of life deep inside of them. This leads to the next point. The believers of this age have worldliness in them no matter of their Christian walk. It is evidenced by the numerous examples of elders who have mistresses and run bars. Believers live a corrupted life that we are shamed to bring them up. This is syncretism.

Paul speaks in verse 11, “Therefore remember” and it goes with what author of Hebrews says in 2:1, “For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.” He also says in verse 12:2, “fixing our eyes on Jesus.” So, where do we focus? “Formerly you were the gentiles in the flesh.” From the perspective of Jews gentiles are people bound to be the firewood/fuel for hell. “Gentiles in the flesh” means that they have totally lost the relationship with God. Of course, the Law itself is not a curse: however, living by legalism cannot forge a relationship with God. One living by legalism may vaguely be aware of God, but his prayer seems to pray to God who is 5 million light years away. It will take 5 million light years to receive an answer from God. This is the characteristic of legalism. Gentile is cut off from God in terms of relationship. Gentiles are called “Uncircumcision by the so-called Circumcision which is performed in the flesh by human hands.” Circumcision is a mark of a child of God. Without it one does not have any relationship with God. The characteristic of the gentiles' legalism is that they don't live with a confirmation of God. They sometimes think it is God in certain circumstance and it is not God in other circumstance. Legalism is unclear about God.

Let's look at **verse 12 “remember that you were at that time separate from Christ.”** Of course, gentiles were separated from Christ and they did not have relationship with Christ. “Separate from Christ” means they were under the wrath of God. Suppose there is fire in the field. The Indians are about to be burned to death. How can they survive? By burning the place where they are. In order to escape from the wrath of fire, they have to be in the place that's already burnt. That's how they can be liberated from the wrath of fire. Likewise God comes to the world as God of wrath. The only way to escape from the wrath of God is to be in Jesus Christ. Legalism deserves the wrath of God. Why? Because it advocates the righteousness by action.

Now let's look at **“excluded from the commonwealth of Israel.”** What that means is they were not chosen by God. The legalism of gentiles has nothing to do with God. “They were excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise.” They also don't have the covenant of God. They don't have goal in life, so they live in uncertainty. Next, “having no hope and without God in the world.” It is obvious they have no hope because they do not have goal/covenant. Legalism naturally promotes one's own way of life: therefore, there is no room for

God in one's life. Once one becomes legalistic and he even speaks of God with his own mouth, he will accept anything if it can bless him. The blessing does not have to come from Bible or God. They don't really care about where the blessing comes from.

In **verse 13 Paul says, "But now Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."** They had nothing to do with God before, but by the blood of Jesus Christ the gentiles who used to live by the legalism as outsiders not only have been brought near to God but they have become one with Him. When we live by grace and pray in the grace of God, we know God hears our prayers, immediately answers us, and already knows about what we pray about. "Believe you have already received" comes to us so closely. Furthermore, we have fear of God when we sin because we have strong belief that we are in His sight and God is watching us. However, for people with legalism God seems like 5 million light years away. They don't have any awareness of God because they think He is so far away, so they don't have any fear when they commit sin. Legalistic people feel that God is far distant. Neither do they sense the presence of God nor the watching eyes of God which further result in more sin. However, we have been brought near God by the blood of Jesus Christ. Exodus 25:22 God says, "There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat." The key word is *hilasterion* in Greek. When God says, "I will meet with you," the blood is sprinkled over the mercy seat and that's how people met the Lord. Now, we do not meet the Lord in the Court of Gentiles because of the blood of Jesus Christ. God meets us in the holy of holy where mercy seat is located and the cherubim as well. What an amazing grace? Only the high priest enters the holy of holy once a year on the Day of Atonement to atone for his sins and the sins of Israel. Now, we can enter *hilasterion* and live there. How great is that? It is ordinary to have Christian walk in the mercy seat. Our Lord unified the division of gentiles and made it one and how can we still live in the Court of Gentiles? We were all formerly far away from God due to legalism but we are brought near God by the blood of Jesus.

Paul goes on and speaks in **verse 14, "For He Himself is our peace."** Peace is shalom which means a complete victory. Like in verse 6 "And raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus," **we can't be seated in the heavenly places without the complete victory.** There can be no peace by the Law. Law is a complaint of sin. Consequently, anxiety, worry, unrest and uncertainty come after. However, Law is abolished and we live by grace, so we have a complete victory with God. This is peace. Jesus "made both groups into one." The separated gentiles and Jews have become one. The separated Court of Gentiles and Court of Jews have become one. The old man that was separated from God is dead and the new man is formed who in turn is united with God as one. Break down the legalism on the cross. Church should thoroughly live by grace. Church members are supposed to come to church filthy and messy, so they can't stay the way they come. How can so dirty and filthy people with so many wounds inside love one another when they come to church? Because they are all covered with grace just like snow covers the earth. It is all white but what happens when snow melts away? All the garbage is revealed. It is the same with church. When the grace is gone, everyone is shocked "I didn't know you were this dirty!" When the Law enters us and grace is gone, everyone starts seeing how dirty and messy others are. Grace is living by God's provision. We need to have Christian walk in the church in which the Holy Spirit reigns according to the principles in the Ephesian Church and believers live by His provisions and wait for God's time. **Paul has multiple meanings in "two" in verse 14.** Jesus "broke down the barrier of the diving wall." Legalism builds up the barrier between man and God. Jesus broke down the barrier on the cross. Legalism naturally brings accusation and condemnation to God without exception. It is like building up barriers everyday which makes you feel distant from God. You can't have relationship with God. Jesus completely abolished this characteristic of legalism.

Accusation of sin is the characteristic of legalism. Therefore, if we do not live by grace, it is only a matter of time before we have enmity against God. Paul speaks in **verse 15, "By abolishing in**

His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace.” Who are the “two?” They are gentiles and Jews, Court of Gentiles and court of Tabernacle of God, and God and us. Who is “one new man?” Through the Cross Jesus removed the barrier and forged a new man unifying the two who in turn reconciled with God. There is no other way to escape from the wrath of God but through the grace of God, cross. God has given us all these things by His grace and shall we continue to live by the legalism? In Romans 8: 13 Paul speaks, “For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die.” “According to the flesh” means can be several but Paul means that it is living a self-centered life.

If you want to resolve this, please listen to the exposition of Galatians. When the gospel of God becomes legalism and syncretism, it will naturally become a different gospel. In Galatians we see Paul curses that whoever preaches a different gospel, let him come down with AIDS. What is a different gospel? Pastor will preach a different gospel when he is tainted with legalism and syncretism. He is a servant of God. We are talking about the church of God. We are also talking about Jesus Christ. Yet, a different gospel comes out. From the perspective of God a heresy is not the object of God’s wrath. I am addressing the church of God and it does not preach the word of God, but rather it injects the Jesus vaccine to the congregation. It preaches Jesus who is dead just enough that it refuses the real Jesus Christ. Such churches are the object of God’s wrath. Why does the church preach a different gospel? Because legalism has infiltrated the church. If not by grace, we can’t preach the gospel even if we want to preach it. We hear the messages on the topics of self-effort, mind-control, well being, and give-your-best-shot you will succeed. There are so many sermons like them. In America and Korea we see the new trend of positive mind set. That is not the gospel. The fact that books and sermons like that are appealing to reason and rationality of believers is the evidence that the churches are becoming legalistic. The sermon of grace is rather difficult to hear at the beginning. It is bitter in the mouth but it is sweet in the stomach. There is not a moment we can choose anything beside God. If the nature of man chooses anything but God, man will immediately become legalistic. That is the curse of Adam. If the pastor does not live by grace, it is only a matter of time the church will become legalistic. Nail your ways, your attitude of “this is my church,” and your experiences on the cross and be renewed. Paul spoke to Timothy in 1 Tim 4:15 “be absorbed in them so that your progress may be evident to all.” We are also supposed to reveal our progress and renewal as we live by grace and let the church fly high.

Paul says in verse 16, **“And might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.”** Every separate thing from God reconciles with the Lord through the cross and the two become one. The confusion is gone. **Verse 17 “and He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near;”** Who are “you who were far away?” They are gentiles. Who are “those who were near?” They are Jews. Whether we have Jews or gentiles, one thing is clear. If we are in the Cross, we have victory. Legalism is defeat. Living by legalism is being bound. If we live by legalism, there is no power. No matter how strong a man is if he does not have speed, he does not have power. We don’t want to be bound. Speed comes from the freedom. When the light of God’s glory shines upon us, it will reveal freedom and rich. Only in the grace of God we have freedom and rich.

In verse 18 we see the result/blessing of breaking down the legalism and replacing it with grace. “For through Him” refers to Jesus and “we both” refers to gentiles and Jews. So whether it is gentiles or Jews “we have our access in one Spirit to the Father.”

The first blessing is coming out to the Father. In Jewish sacrifice, they bring the sacrificial lamb to God and receive redemption of sin and restore the relationship with God. If not for Jesus Christ, we cannot come to God; especially it is impossible to enter the holy of holy. Coming to the presence of God is an occasion to receive something from Him. In the time of dynasty, a King

does not just call up his servant to see his face. Whenever one comes to the presence of King, he receives something from King. In the pauper & prince story, when the prince became a pauper, he gave a knight special privilege “you can always sit before me.” After he restored his kingship the knight came to the King and sat on the chair before him. The King told his servants, “Leave him alone. He has the right to sit before me.” Through Jesus Christ you have the right to come to the King. You have the special privilege to make your requests in the face of King. How special is such a privilege to submit your supplication to the King? How foolish is it that you have this special privilege and yet you do not use it? That’s what not praying is! Enter into the presence of God and the holy of holy every day!

Second, let’s look at **verse 19** “**So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household.**” Gentiles who used to live by legalism have now become a family of God through Jesus Christ. Since you have become a family of God, you now have the protection & love of the family. How grateful is that?

Third, let’s look at **verse 20 - 21** “**having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord.**” You have become the temple of God. One thing we want to take notice is that who became the foundation of the temple of God? Jesus Himself became the corner stone in you who is the Sanctuary. Cornerstone is the foundation of any building project. Jesus is the corner stone! Who is the land? Verse 20 indicates that apostles and prophets are the land. This is important revelation Paul received with regard to the doctrine of church. You believe in Jesus Christ and through your exemplary Christian walk in Jesus the church is established. However, if you don’t have the foundation of apostles and prophets, it is like you the right to use the land but you can’t register it with the authority in your name. The building is yours but the land is not registered with the government. How anxious can it be? Many theologians contend that apostles and prophets are dead, but without the authority of apostles and the spirit of prophets there is no foundation of church. This is correlated to the Ephesians 4:11, the four systems of office, that without them a church has only secured the building and not the land. That would make many people very uneasy! With the authority and system of apostles and prophets we can lay the foundation of Jesus Christ and build the temple of God. Without the revelation of Jesus Christ that comes through the apostle and prophets, church is like having the access to the building only. Such church would be anxious. Churches in this age must restore the functions of apostles and prophets. There were apostles and prophets in the early church without any doubt. In the Book of Acts we see apostle, prophet, evangelist, and teacher. Some may say, “Didn’t prophet die out in the Old Testament?” My response to that question is “Is the church in Book of Acts in Old Testament or New Testament?” Church must have apostle and prophet. When a church is established according to the system in Ephesians, many apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors/teachers will arise from the offices of believers. This is the foundation of church. Suppose an owner says, “I want my land back,” then we must either surrender the building to him or demolish it. That’s the reason church can’t be careless about the apostles and prophets.

Fourth, let’s look at **verse 22** “**in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.**” The sanctuary is the dwelling place. Paul is trying to emphasize that the Tribune God dwells in us. The authority of God that reigns in the whole universe, history of world and humanity has come upon us. The flashy high-tech airplane the President of United States of America flies in is called the Air Force One. When he flies in the helicopter, it becomes the Air Force One. What is your privilege of becoming the sanctuary of God? The glory of Tribune God has come inside you. **God who decides the history of the world and humanity has come inside you. Just understanding who you are is an incredible thing.**

When I met the Lord 18 years ago, I quit both drinking and smoking at once. It was not intentional. I could not stand the smell of cigarettes and alcohol. Just thinking of them made me sick in the stomach. In addition, all the nicotine that was in my body for the past 15 years came out through sweat glands all over my skin. When I encountered 1 Corinthians 3:1 and 6:19 “you are a temple of God,” it blew me away. “Am I really a temple of God?” I thought “how can I have a fireplace/chimney in my body? How can I pour the alcohol into it?” I could not imagine doing it. Ever since that day I did not want to even smell the cigarette smoke and alcohol. Even now when I smell the smoke of cigarette, I get dizzy. I hope you understand the fact that you are a temple of God. “I am a dwelling place of God! The glory of the Tribune God is working inside me! The authority that moves the nations and the world is in me!” How can we limit the Lord? Live according to God’s will and obey by letting go of your thought, way, and plan. “Speak to me oh Lord!” That’s the attitude we need. This is the blessing given to those who break down the legalism and receive the grace of God. You will become a dwelling place of God, a temple of God, a family member of God. You can draw near to God!

What is the evidence of revival taking place? It is the resistance against the world. It is the attitude of “we will not live up to the demands of the world!” Church in this time should reach the peak of resistance against the world. In Korea, the examination to become public officials is offered on Sundays. What hurts my heart is that one of the young adults in our church is passing up on the test. He passed up four times already. I believe God will bless him. I never said not to take the test. As a matter of fact I told him “go and take the test,” but he just does not take the test. I cry every time I think of him. What is he saying? “I will not live to the demand of the world!” We also have a deacon in our church who is in a certain position in public office and he makes a lot of money. It is customary to receive money from others and distribute to others. That comes with the job. However, it was painful for him to do it, so he told the boss to move him to a different position. People couldn’t understand it. He is now in a position that requires a hard work and he is so much happier. People say, “He is crazy!” He is saying, “I will not live my life according to the world!” I encourage my church members to become the highest tax payer. I also discourage them by saying things like this, “Do not make a dual account books. If you evade tax in your business, quit your business. If you run your business in honesty and go bankrupt, joyfully file for bankruptcy.” These things are taking place in our church. Our church members moreover do not engage in a business like a bar that the world favors. This is church!

Please take a look at how a church and its members, seized by the grace of God, live their life in this world. This is true revival! When our leaders mature and go into the politics, economy, society, and culture, we will hear the sounds of things breaking down. They may say, “Why are you so different? Why do you live like that?” Because we are the people of God. Such proclamation will rise up in all the dwelling places. We are in the Zoe Ministry to raise up such glorious church. The way to do that is doing away with the legalism and let the grace of God seize us. That’s the secret to stand tall as a glorious church. You can draw near to God. You are a child of God. Furthermore, you are a temple of God. You are a dwelling place covered by the glory of God who created all things. Who can say anything against us when we have God who moves the history of the world in us? Let’s make a commitment “I won’t live to meet the demands of the world!” I believe our vision of glorious Church of Ephesus will be fulfilled in all the churches in Zoe Ministry Network. I am not being an idealist of Christianity. This is the promise of God. Please do not treat this as a Christian ideal. This work of God will arise in us absolutely and the glorious church will arise to prepare for the end time. Let’s hold fast to the word and make a commitment “God, help me to break down the legalism and to live by Your grace!”