

EPHESIANS: GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR OUR SPIRITUAL MATURITY
EPHESIANS INTRODUCTION PART 2 & EPHESIANS 1:1
2ND STREET COMMUNITY CHURCH
MOTHER'S DAY | SUNDAY, 9 MAY 2010
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www.2ndstreet.org

Last Sunday we began a 22-Sunday journey through *The New Testament* book of ***EPHESIANS*** ... Paul's second most densely constructed, and theologically-layered doctrinal letter, after the one he wrote to the ***ROMANS***. This morning we're going to do some more introductory study of the book of ***EPHESIANS***, and then get into ***EPHESIANS 1:1***, because doing this will help give us a big-picture understanding of Paul's intent, before we dive more deeply into his words.

Written in about 62 A.D., while Paul was in prison in Rome, ***EPHESIANS*** was penned about 30 years following the death, resurrection, and return to heaven of Jesus Christ. The Early Church was growing and maturing, and it needed this kind of theological instruction to stay on target with Jesus Christ as their head - and to equip them to make sure that knowing Him, worshiping Him, following Him, and ministering in His name became their highest aim, goal, and priority.

EPHESIANS is one of a group of four letters Paul wrote and sent out during this first Roman imprisonment, a group that also includes ***PHILIPPIANS***, ***COLOSSIANS***, and the slim, very personal letter of ***PHILEMON***. Paul's first imprisonment by the Romans happened in 58 A.D., but he served his jail time in Caesarea, 40 miles NE of Jerusalem on the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea ... and during the two years he was in prison there, he defended himself in court three times (cf., ***ACTS 24-26***).

Paul, was born a Jew, but he was also a Roman citizen - and eventually he asked to appeal his case to Caesar himself, and in the fall of 60 A.D. he was taken to Rome to do just that. As Paul and the other prisoners traveled to Crete, he warned the Roman Centurion named Julius traveling with them to not sail then, because September and October were the most dangerous months to travel on the Mediterranean. But Julius didn't listen, and their ship wrecked off the Island of Malta.

Everyone on the ship either swam or grabbed onto wreckage from the ship and made it to Malta - and not one person was lost. After staying on Malta for three months, they finally set sail for Rome again, and eventually arrived at the Italian port city of Puteoli (cf., ***ACTS 28:13***) and walked the rest of the way to Rome, where Paul remained under house arrest - with just one guard watching him for two years, during which time he was allowed to have visitors, preach the gospel, make converts, and teach the Word, turning ***CONVERTS*** into ***DISCIPLES***. And it was during this time that Paul wrote the four letters of ***EPHESIANS***, ***PHILIPPIANS***, ***COLOSSIANS***, and ***PHILEMON***.

In 63 A.D. Paul was freed from prison in Rome, traveled to Crete and then Macedonia, and spent the next three years fulfilling the dream he first expressed in ***ROMANS 15:28*** ... traveling and ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Spain and Britain. Four years later, in 67 A.D., Paul is arrested again and sent to Rome, where he wrote the letter of ***SECOND TIMOTHY***, to Timothy, who had been like a son to him, who

was, at that time, the pastor of the church at Ephesus. This was the last letter Paul would write before dying a martyr's death in June of 68 A.D.

Paul was martyred under the first persecution of Emperor Nero, and it's through the testimony of the 3rd Century pastor, bishop, and martyr named Abdias, that we're first told the story of how Paul died. Abdias was the Early Church Fathers who began the church in Syria, which is now called the Syriac Orthodox Church ... and *St. Ignatius of Antioch Orthodox Church* in Portland, is a Syriac Orthodox congregation.

Paul's martyrdom was neither elaborate, nor was it carried out in front of a large crowd. Nero had simply had enough of Paul and the influence his presence, and his writings were making throughout the part of the world under Roman rule - and so one day Nero sent two of his guards to Paul. And when the guards told Paul that they'd been instructed to execute him, Paul prayed for them, and told them that it was his hope that after his death, that they'd come into relationship with Jesus Christ. When Paul was done praying, the two guards Paul out of the city to a place only referred by Abdias to as "*the place of execution*", where he was beheaded. Let's go back to the dates of Paul's three missionary journeys I shared with you last Sunday.

1. 44-46 A.D., Paul's first missionary journey
2. 49-50 A.D., Paul's second missionary journey
3. 53-57 A.D., Paul's third missionary journey

During Paul's second missionary journey, he wrote his first two letters, **FIRST & SECOND THESSALONIANS**, both of which focus on end-times theology, commonly referred to as **eschatology** ... a word that comes from two Greek words, "eschatos" meaning "last" and "ology" meaning "the study of." So **eschatology** means "the study of last things" and it was first referred to as this by Christians in 1550 A.D.

During Paul's third missionary journey, he wrote the books of **FIRST & SECOND CORINTHIANS**, **GALATIANS**, and **ROMANS**, covering a wide variety of themes, that ultimately all revolve around coming into relationship with Jesus Christ, and how to grow up into, and take on more of the character of Jesus Christ, so that we can then live out the will of God with greater consistency and integrity.

As I mentioned several minutes ago, during his second imprisonment in Rome, Paul wrote the letters of **FIRST & SECOND TIMOTHY**, and **TITUS**, which are commonly referred to as Paul's "**PASTORAL EPISTLES**" because they're written to pastors, offering counsel, understanding, and wisdom about how to grow, organize, disciple, and shepherd a local church Body. In all, the Apostle Paul wrote thirteen of the twenty-seven books in *The New Testament*, or almost half of them.

In nearly all the letters Paul wrote, whether they were to a church body, or to an individual pastor, he dealt with a problem that was going on in the church, or that the pastor was encountering, and each time, he offered corrective counsel about how to move away from error and toward truth. The one exception to this rule of thumb is the letter **PAUL** wrote to the church at Ephesus ... which apparently, at this point in time was a solid, faithful, growing, and maturing flock (cf., **EPHESIANS 1:15**).

How awesome that in this one letter Paul was able to offer only encouragement and not correction. This big difference between this one letter and all the others Paul wrote, and because in some of the earliest manuscripts we have for EPHESIANS, the words “at Ephesus” in v. 1 aren’t found ... these two things have caused some Bible scholars to doubt that it was Paul’s intent to write and send this letter specifically to the church at Ephesus.

And yet in the end, this debate is meaningless, because all of Paul’s letters were eventually copied and sent around from church to church. And every one of them have truth that can be taught, understood, and applied to anyone seeking to know more about Jesus Christ, and who want to learn how to follow Him more closely.

Maybe you’ve noticed this before - but the two books of EPHESIANS and COLOSSIANS have many parallels - sharing a basic structure, as well as many of the exact same phrases and words. Because of this fact, from time-to-time throughout our study of EPHESIANS, we’ll look back and forth between these two books. But with all their similarities, EPHESIANS and COLOSSIANS quite different in the main truths the Apostle Paul wants us to see about the church.

- EPHESIANS focuses on the **Body of Jesus Christ itself, the church.**
- COLOSSIANS focuses on the **Head of the Body, Jesus Christ.**

The book of EPHESIANS, like the other epistles Paul wrote while he was in prison, can be easily divided into two equal halves. In EPHESIANS 1-3 Paul teaches us doctrine about who Christians are in Jesus Christ, which is often referred to as **POSITIONAL TRUTH**. Paul tells us who Jesus Christ is, what His purposes are for us as His followers, and how He wants His presence, power, and righteousness to be alive and working in us, and through us. This is **POSITIONAL TRUTH**.

Then in EPHESIANS 4-6 Paul teaches us **HOW TO APPLY** this **POSITIONAL TRUTH** in the day-to-day stuff of life ... in what is often referred to as **TEMPORAL TRUTH**. I mean, it’s great, for instance, that you and I as Christians are “**the righteousness of God in Christ**” ... which is **POSITIONAL TRUTH** ... but this truth can’t remain a “pie-in-the-sky” theological concept ... it has to become a truth that gets lived out in the practical circumstances of life that we find ourselves dealing with every day ... and this is **TEMPORAL TRUTH**.

The **righteousness of God in Christ** still has to wash the dishes, and go to work, and pay bills, and get along with people. So theology that doesn’t have a down-to-earth application isn’t worth much. Paul knew that, and so in the book of EPHESIANS, he teaches us both **POSITIONAL TRUTH** and **TEMPORAL TRUTH**.

- **POSITIONAL TRUTH** has to do with who we are in Jesus Christ.
- **TEMPORAL TRUTH** has to do with how we live out our faith in Jesus Christ the day-to-day circumstances of life.

In EPHESIANS 4-6 Paul teaches us how to live out our life in Christ as husband, wives, family members, employees, students, and as people who are committed to being the presence, the voice, the hands, the feet, and the ears of Jesus Christ in the world.

And so the book of EPHESIANS is theologically deep, and yet it's simple and extremely practical when it comes to its application.



In the 1st Century, at 250,000 people, Ephesus was the second largest city in the known world. It doesn't still exist as a city today, but here's a map of where Ephesus was located when the church there received this letter from the Apostle Paul. Ephesus was partially destroyed by an earthquake in 614 A.D., but then in the 15th Century, following centuries of wars, destruction and rebuilding, Ephesus was completely abandoned by the Ottomans and the Turks, and most of it's remaining inhabitants moved to the nearby city of Ayasulug. SECOND SAMUEL 1:19 is right, "Oh, how the mighty are fallen." (KING JAMES VERSION)

Paul's friends Tychicus and Onesimus delivered the letters of EPHESIANS and COLOSSIANS to these two churches. The city of Ephesus was a seaport town on the SE shores of the Aegean Sea, and because of its location, was one of the major locations of commerce and trade. And like all such cities, with people from many different cultures, religions, and races, moving in and out of it all the time, Ephesus also became a major source of sexual immorality. In fact, Ephesus was most often associated in people's minds with the worship of Diana, the goddess of fertility.

Diana was a goddess who was worshipped by people all over the known world in Paul's day. And even though there were many other cultural and athletic facilities and attractions in Ephesus, the Temple of Diana trumped them all. Diana worship involved sexual orgies - and because "personal pleasure" was a virtue in Greek culture, sex outside of marriage was a common and completely acceptable practice by nearly everyone in the city.

Because Ephesus was the center for the worship of Diana, do you see why Paul writes in EPHESIANS 4-5 about sexual immorality and adultery ... and why he offers so much practical wisdom about how God's plans for human sexuality and marriage are so different than what the world espouses? Can you see why Ephesus was a place that really needed to have a Christian church planted ... and why, at the same time, it would have been perceived by the faint of heart and the weak of faith as a difficult, if not impossible place to launch a new flock?

I have a feeling that planting a church in Ephesus would be a lot like going to Las Vegas to start a church ... heading right into the heart of where the sex trade industry was thriving and opening up a storefront church for prostitutes and their clients.

Here's a reproduction of what the Temple of Diana looked like in Paul's day ... this is a ½ scale miniature built on a site in Turkey that's standing today. And then here's a photo of what the actual ruins of the Temple of Diana looks like now ...

REPRODUCTION TEMPLE OF DIANA



ACTUAL TEMPLE OF DIANA RUINS



Last Sunday we scratched the surface of **ACTS 18-19** - looking into the events leading up to Paul's planting of this church in Ephesus. But when you read through all of **ACTS 19** you'll find the whole story of Paul's discernment and courage, and then the outpouring of God's supernatural presence in the lives of the people who were responding to Him, reaching out to Him, and turning their lives over to Him.

And if there's ever a time when we need to know God's discernment, power, wisdom, courage, and stamina, it's when we're fully-surrendered to ***DOING GOD'S WILL GOD'S WAY*** ... because it's in this exact place that Satan turns up the heat of both ***temptation*** and ***persecution***, and where you and I find out who we're really depending on for our vision and for our strength. And I see our **FIRST FAITH LESSON** for us here this morning ...

FAITH LESSON

It's one thing to have God *reveal* His will for us, but it's a whole 'nother thing to have God *confirm* His will for us. And we need both to happen. Our willingness to do God's will, God's way, moves us from *revelation* to *confirmation*, from *our strength* to *God's strength*, and from hit-and-miss obedience to the discerning wisdom, consistent courage, and Holy Spirit stamina God wants us to experience as we serve Him.

Gang, God wants to teach us about discernment, and about living life, not in our own strength and wisdom, but in His Spirit - so we can have His power and His authority over Satan and his plans, strategies, and distractions? 16th and 17t Century British statesman, author, scientist, lawyer, and author, Sir Francis Bacon once wrote ...

“Some books are to be tasted, others are to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.” - Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Paul’s letter to the **EPHESIANS** is this third kind of book. And that’s why we’ll do it justice, and allow ourselves to chew and digest it, by studying it verse-by-verse over the coming months. Here’s a basic outline of the book of **EPHESIANS** broken up into the two parts I told you about earlier ...

PART 1: EPHESIANS 1-2-3 | POSITIONAL TRUTH ...

<u>EPHESIANS 1</u>	GOD THE FATHER, THE PLANNER AND ARCHITECT
<u>EPHESIANS 2</u>	GOD THE SON, JESUS CHRIST, THE BUILDER AND DOER
<u>EPHESIANS 3</u>	GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE REVEALER AND EMPOWERER

The Trinity, or the Triunity, as I prefer to call the Godhead, is the three persons of God, Who are **ONE IN NATURE**, but **THREE IN PERSONALITY AND EXPRESSION**. We almost take this important doctrine for granted because it’s so well known to us today - but we shouldn’t make the mistake of overlooking it’s importance, or miss, in our study of the Bible, how this foundational doctrine of the Christian church first began being taught within the writings of Paul, Peter, John, and the authors of the Gospels.

This important, cornerstone doctrine of the Christian faith was just beginning to be articulated and built into the bedrock of the church when Paul wrote **EPHESIANS**, and so he dedicates these first three chapters of **EPHESIANS** to it focusing on it.

GOD THE FATHER, THE PLANNER AND ARCHITECT ...

God the Father is the first member of the Triunity, the One in charge of orchestrating and planning God’s will in everything. We see this in **CREATION** and in **SALVATION**; as God the Father planned all of **CREATION** and put together the plan of **SALVATION**.

GOD THE SON, JESUS CHRIST, THE BUILDER AND DOER ...

God’s Son, Jesus Christ is the second member of the Triunity, the One Who takes the plans of God the Father off the drafting table and puts them into practice. And again, we see this reality lived out in both **CREATION**, and in **SALVATION**; as Jesus Christ did the work of **CREATION**, and did the work of **SALVATION**.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE REVEALER AND EMPOWERER ...

God’s Holy Spirit is the third member of the Triunity, the One Who takes the **PLANS** of God the Father, and the **WORKS** of Jesus Christ the Son, and **REVEALS** them to us - teaching us how to live into them.

The Holy Spirit's role in revealing truth about God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son is like the billboard lights along the highway. The function of the lights is to make the billboard messages, without obscuring the message. Likewise, the Holy Spirit's ministry is unobtrusive and brings glory to Jesus (cf., JOHN 16:4).

PART 2: EPHESIANS 4-5-6 | TEMPORAL TRUTH ...

EPHESIANS 4 GOD'S PLAN FOR THE CHURCH
EPHESIANS 5 PUTTING GOD'S WORD TO USE IN OUR LIVES AND
OVERCOMING SIN ONE CHOICE AT A TIME
EPHESIANS 6 DEFEATING SATAN AND BEING A WITNESS FOR JESUS
CHRIST IN THE WORLD DAY-BY-DAY

What an amazing story the Apostle Paul presents to us in EPHESIANS. **GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR OUR SPIRITUAL MATURITY** ... how God pours out His heart into our hearts, and how He can then uses our changed, transformed, maturing lives in Jesus Christ to bring about change in the world.

So that's a bit of the timeline specifically surrounding the Apostle Paul and his life leading up to and then following when he wrote EPHESIANS ... and some of the introductory material about this letter called EPHESIANS. And I share all of this with you because in order to understand this important letter, it's critical to have more than just a passing acquaintance with the soil out of which it grew. EPHESIANS 1:1 ...

EPHESIANS 1:1a (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

^{1a} Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus ...

In Greek, Paul's name means "small" or "little". And I see a **SECOND FAITH LESSON** for us this morning in this short, little definition of Paul's name ...

FAITH LESSON

When *Saul* met Jesus Christ, God changed his name to *Paul*, and his religious pride and arrogance was replaced with spiritual humility and confidence, and Paul came to believe that he was "more than a conqueror" (cf., ROMANS 8:37), and that he "could do all things through Christ" (cf., PHILIPPIANS 4:13), and that he was only as "great" as the "Greater One" living in and ministering through him. Oh, God, teach us what Paul learned!

EPHESIANS 1:1 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus:

Paul, the small one, also refers to himself as what here in v. 1? As an apostle. I love how the two words "small" and "apostle" are joined together here in v. 1, because it's a great illustration of the two worlds you and I live in ... the **NATURAL** world and

the **SPIRITUAL** world. And the next phrase of **v. 1** just reiterates this same truth ... to the saints who are at Ephesus.

The folks Paul was writing this letter to were just plain, common, natural, people living in this unholy, unspiritual city of Ephesus ... and yet Paul calls them **saints**, meaning **holy ones**. Gang, listen to me ... **OUTWARDLY** you might be **small**, seemingly insignificant, and frail ... but **INWARDLY**, if you're choosing to live as faithful followers of Jesus Christ, you're a **saint**. We're all both **sinners** and **saints**. Do you see it?

I'll say to you, "Good morning **saints!**" And you reply back to me, "Good morning **saint!**" And I'll say to you ... "Good morning **sinners!**" And you reply back to me, "Good morning **sinner!**" Paul was **OUTWARDLY** small, but **INWARDLY** he was anything but **small**, because he functioned in the **spiritual office** of an **apostle**.

The New Testament Greek word for **apostle** is **apostolos**, which simply means "sent one". An **apostle** is someone with a **specific mission ... being moved along by God toward a particular destination**. **HEBREWS 3:1** calls Jesus Christ an **apostle**.

HEBREWS 3:1 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

¹ Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.

The book of **HEBREWS** is the one book in *The New Testament* whose authorship is pretty well unestablished. But because of its vocabulary and the kind of instruction it offers to us about Jesus, it was more than likely written by a Jewish priest or by a member of the *Sanhedrin*, who'd become a follower of Jesus Christ. The *Sanhedrin* was the Jewish Ruling Counsel of 70 ... which was kind of like the Jewish Supreme Court. And here's what I hear the writer of **HEBREWS 3:1** saying ...

Jesus was an apostle sent from heaven to earth on a mission - and His mission was to make a way, through His death and resurrection, for human beings to come back into relationship and fellowship with God. And now that Jesus accomplished that mission, He sits at the right hand of God the Father in heaven as our mediator, making all of our prayers, our needs, and our requests known to God.

When we trace back the history of the word **apostle**, we find it's a military word, first used in the Phoenician navy to describe their highest-ranking officer. The Phoenicians were a dominant people-group in the Middle East from about 2,300-50 B.C. ... and they lived along the coastline of what is now modern-day Lebanon, Syria, and Israel.

So again, along with the word **apostle** meaning "sent one", it has at its root, the meaning of being "**the one of highest rank or authority**." Paul doesn't **RANK** most of the spiritual gifts, when he lists them in **ROMANS 12**, in **FIRST CORINTHIANS 12**, in **EPHESIANS 4**, and in **FIRST PETER 4**. In fact, he seems to go out of his way to make sure we understand that each of the several dozen spiritual gifts are equally given by the Holy Spirit and are to be valued equally among us as the Body of Christ.

But in two verses, in **EPHESIANS 4:11** and **FIRST CORINTHIANS 12:28** Paul does list, what at first, appear to be **spiritual gifts**, with an order of **RANKING**, or **PRIORITY**.

EPHESIANS 4:11; FIRST CORINTHIANS 12:28

(AN EXPANDED NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATION BY KENNETH WUEST)

4:11 And God Himself gave some, on the one hand, as apostles, and, on the other hand, as prophets, and still again some as bringers of good news, and finally, some as pastors who are also teachers ...

12:28 And God indeed placed some for His own use in the Church, first apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers;

But Paul isn't listing **spiritual gifts** within the Body of Christ in these verses, he's listing **spiritual offices**. What's the difference between these two?

1. **Spiritual gifts** are given by God to all Christians, and they need to be at very heart of describing a Christian's calling of how and where we will serve in the Body of Christ.

[Please, take our *Compass Seminar*, taught by Chuck Clarkson. It's held the last Sunday of every month and will help you discover your spiritual gifts, and more about your personality and your life's circumstances, and how God wants to use all three of these parts of who you are to serve Him to show you where and how He wants you to serve Him inside and outside the body of Christ.]

2. **Spiritual offices** are given to lead ministries within the Body of Christ, and are given to people whom God calls into vocational ministry.

EPHESIANS 4:11; FIRST CORINTHIANS 12:28

(AN EXPANDED NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATION BY KENNETH WUEST)

4:11 And God Himself gave some, on the one hand, as apostles, and, on the other hand, as prophets, and still again some as bringers of good news, and finally, some as pastors who are also teachers ...

12:28 And God indeed placed some for His own use in the Church, first apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers;

And in both of these lists of **spiritual offices**, Paul lists them in the order he does, even going so far to number them in **FIRST CORINTHIANS 12:28**, because he wants us to see them and understand them in their order of priority or importance within the Body of Christ. And what **spiritual offices** is listed and ranked first in both places? **Apostle**. Some Christians believe it was God's intent that the **spiritual office of apostle**, was only for the 1st Century - until the Gospel began to be spread around the world. But if you want to know if God is still calling people to be **apostles** today, just ask yourself these two questions ...

1. Do we still have “sent ones” today?
2. Do “saints” still need maturing today?

Yes, God is still calling people to be **apostles** today, and we commonly call them **missionaries**. **Missionaries** are **THE PIONEERS OF CHRISTIANITY** ... heading out into different regions of the world to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with people who are hungry for the truth, but who haven't been told the truth. And when people respond to the message of Jesus, they become **CONVERTS**, and then **missionaries**, who are also oftentimes gifted and called in the **spiritual office of pastor-teacher**, then teach and **DISCIPLE** these same people towards maturity in faith in Jesus Christ.

What a huge mistake we make when we look at **missionaries** who've spent years living and ministering in foreign countries as somehow being “low on the totem pole of Christian ministry.” Nothing could be further from the truth. As Paul instructs us in **EPHESIANS 4:11** and in **FIRST CORINTHIANS 12:28**, the **spiritual office of apostle/missionary** is the highest, most critical of all four of the **spiritual offices** ... **apostle** first, then **prophet**, then **evangelist**, and then **pastor-teachers**.

For you and me today, **missionaries** should be our greatest heroes. Not to worship, but to come alongside and support with our money, and with our encouragement, and with all the other gifts in life we have at our disposal. In fact, this morning, I would like to honor those of you here who have served a portion of your life, part of your growing-up life, or all of your adult life in the **spiritual office of a missionary**.

Short-term missionaries are great, and needed, but that's not what I'm talking about here this morning. I'm talking about people who were called to spend a portion of their lives overseas or here in the United States, reaching out with the Gospel to a group of people who needed to see and hear about Jesus Christ. If that describes you, would you please stand, so we can recognize you?

- ❖ Dick and Helen Cadd and their children in the Philippines ... along with their Jon, Carolyn, Steve, Yvonne, and LuAnn ... how many years Helen or Carolyn?
- ❖ Ruth Casto in Venezuela ... how many years Ruth?
- ❖ Ping-Yi Shih, a Taiwanese national sent to the USA to be a missionary to Asian students studying in the USA ... right now at George Fox University. Ping-Yi, who is part of 2nd Street returned to Taiwan this week for a month of vacation and raising more financial support.
- ❖ Johnny Kaye, 2nd Streeter, and the grandson of 2nd Street's Wini LeVeris, ministering in Rwanda this past year, and coming back home this week to attend GFU in the Fall.
- ❖ David and Tricia Howell ... in Ireland for two years now ... sent out from 2nd Street with Evangelical Friends Missions International.
- ❖ Harold Magee ... working with his wife Willie as missionaries with Wycliffe for many years after retiring from the Tektronics and other electronic gigs.
- ❖ Dave Hansen ... was born in Brazil, where his parents were missionaries for many years with the Conservative Baptists.

- ❖ Matt and Gayle Denham ... in Rwanda for three months now ... sent out from 2nd Street with Evangelical Friends Missions International.
- ❖ Marvin and Olive Mardock ... 2nd Streeters who served with OMS for years, in the USA and overseas.
- ❖ Tim Tsohantaridis ... a 2nd Streeter who grew up in Greece, not all that far from Ephesus, in the town of Thessaloniki who ministered in the USA and abroad.
- ❖ Fred Gregory, a 2nd Streeter with years of life and ministry in Viet Nam, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, and in many other countries and locations around the world. How many years Fred?
- ❖ Bill and Irene Cathers ... 2nd Streeters who ministered for many years in Ecuador.
- ❖ Others?

These people, not a single one of them, would ever ask us to thank them, or even have them stand up in our church and be recognized. But we recognize them because God recognizes them. So let's thank these folks for being **apostles**, **missionaries**, and **sent ones**, and for making a difference for the Kingdom of God by being obedient to saying "yes" to God when He brought His vision for their lives to them and invited them to participate with Him in it. And I see a **THIRD** and final **FAITH LESSON** for us here this morning ...

FAITH LESSON

God is calling us to use our spiritual gifts, and to operate in our spiritual offices, to help the Body of Jesus Christ mature and become all it can be.

1. *What is God saying to you?*
2. *What is God calling you to?*
3. *Where is God asking you to serve?*

God is speaking to you. Are you listening?

**NEXT SUNDAY ... 2ND STREETER LARRY STARK
TEACHING ON "GENEROSITY AND OUR LIFE OF FAITH"**

PLEASE COME PRAYING AND EXPECTING!