

# THE GOSPEL CANNOT BE CHAINED

SEARCHING FOR GRACE  
IN PAUL'S PRISON LETTERS

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- Ephesians -

Mick Mooney

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This book is also available in paperback format on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

## FOREWORD

**This letter to the Ephesians** is one of four letters Paul wrote during his imprisonment in Rome, paraphrased, with a great deal of respect, in a way that highlights what I believe to be the heart of his message. I find it amazing that even in prison Paul still knew he was free; he still knew of a far greater reality that was his in Christ. The beauty of his message that lifts up and highlights God's love and grace in his prison letters touches my heart every time I read them. I hope it blesses your heart also. This letter has been taken from my book called: **'The Gospel Cannot Be Chained.'** It is a paraphrase and expression of my understanding of Paul's four prison letters.

Paul's letters reveal so much of his heart of love, his joy in God's grace, and his uncompromising faith in the redemptive work of Jesus. Paul has, in a spiritual way,

become one of my dearest friends; a wonderful brother in my own faith walk who has always encouraged me through his letters that I can truly live by the Spirit of God. Although I haven't yet met him personally, I certainly appreciate the letters he wrote to me, to you, and to all who are part of the body of Christ.

I didn't approach paraphrasing Paul's letters with the mindset that I was rewriting Scripture, but rather, respectfully attempting to clarify the heart of a dear friend who is no longer with us. The best way to read this book is in rest. Relax, and read it as if you are reading a few letters from a dear brother in Christ who is writing you a personal letter to remind you of the wonderful reality of God's grace.

As this is not a Bible, but rather a modern expression of four letters from a friend, I have not formatted it in the way modern Bibles format Paul's letters. There are no verses or chapters. The best way to read these letters is in one sitting, as you would with any letter you received from a friend today.

I hope that through reading my interpretation of Paul's letters it helps highlight for you his message of love and grace in whatever Bible translation you normally read.

Blue skies,  
Mick Mooney

# **THE GOSPEL CANNOT BE CHAINED**

## EPHESIANS

Paul, a man transformed by grace, born again in love and set apart, according to God's plan, to proclaim the divine message of new life for all. To my faith-filled brothers and sisters in Ephesus: grace and peace to you, given freely to us all by our beloved Father in heaven.

How wonderful our God is; how amazing his grace! Indeed, our hearts can't help but praise him. God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, has truly blessed us beyond measure. For a man can earn money in order to buy things of luxury, but he cannot earn the peace of God; and what no man can earn, God has freely given us. What man could ever earn the joy of God? What man could ever earn the rest of God? No man can earn these heavenly blessings, and yet, through our faith in Jesus, God has freely given us all of them as a gift.

Oh, how he loves us. Just as the cross was planned by God before the creation of the world, so was his decision to reveal the depths of his love to all who would accept his Son. It does our hearts good to remember that God's plan has its foundations in eternity and the good news of his grace was a message stirring in his heart before time was even created. Oh, how amazing our God is! Before he began creating the universe he had already finished planning our eternal salvation; a way that all of us could be made holy, dearly loved and without blame in his sight – a gift that lasts forever. Brothers and sisters, we have good reason to rejoice, for through Jesus we have been made 'new' in God's eyes. We will never again be seen in our faults, but rather, forever seen in his grace. For, according to natural law, we were all born once through the body of our earthly mothers, but now, through divine grace, we have been born again through the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, not as children of men, but as children of God. Hallelujah.

This abundant provision of grace has not been given to us without cost, on the contrary, it cost the Son of God his life. Jesus paid the full price for every blessing upon the cross, and that is why we now freely receive all the benefits that God gives to his children. From God's perspective, all his blessings

belong to us, because Jesus paid for all of them on our behalf. Jesus earned all the blessings, and then, as a perfect picture of his love for us, desired that the payment for his work would be credited to our account. How deep is his love for us that he would do such a thing? We receive everything, because we are now living in the one who paid for everything; not by our works, but by the working of his grace. We are forgiven of sins, redeemed from brokenness, and established in his love through the blood of Jesus, spilt upon the cross for us. My fellow brothers and sisters, how great is Christ's love for us? He did not withhold anything, but gave himself up freely, so that God could pour his grace upon all of us without restriction. This is not an act God does hastily; rather, he gives us an abundance of his grace with all divine wisdom and understanding. Worldly wisdom demands works, but God's wisdom offers grace – it isn't a risk to God; it is the power of God!

It now gives God great pleasure to make known to us the mystery of his will, his eternal purpose that has been stirring in his heart from the beginning: *that we can rest in his Son*. What a revelation! God doesn't want to give mankind a burden to carry, but a place to rest. This is not merely a theoretical statement; it is an ever expanding revel-

ation. Indeed, we, as the firstfruits, have already entered into this rest, and, in the fulfillment of the ages, all things in heaven and on earth will also be made new and enter into his rest, making all things one in perfect unity under his loving care.

My dear friends, we can be certain that God doesn't give his rest to people based on their own accomplishments; on the contrary, we receive his rest through the perfect accomplishments of Christ. And now, through God's grace, we have been adopted by God himself; we have become his children and his treasured possession, not based on our flawed merits, but rather on the perfect, finished work of Christ. God planned it all before time began, and through faith in Jesus we have entered into the 'light' of that plan. God, who is now outworking everything according to the purpose of his will, has created a way so that we, who are the first to hope in Christ, can truly rest in him, know him, and boast in his love, to the praise of his glory.

How, I ask you, did we find ourselves in Christ, the one whom we find rest for our souls, salvation for our spirits and God's blessings in this life? Was it by our own efforts? Not at all! Rather, we were included in him when we heard the word of truth, the good news that through his life, sacrifice, death and resurrection we can now be included in his

resurrected life. Now that you believe, you can be assured that your life is marked as a child of God with the heavenly seal, the promised Holy Spirit, given to you, to comfort you, empower you, and remind you daily of this wonderful reality. Indeed, the day is coming when we will inherit the kingdom of heaven itself. We're not only going to heaven one day as servants; we will enter triumphantly, as sons and daughters. We won't simply be part of the kingdom of heaven; rather, together with Christ, we will own it! We now belong to God, and for that reason we will inherit all that is God's, and all this is by his will - Oh, how he loves us.

It is for this very reason that I write to you, to remind both you and I of the good news of Jesus. I want you to know how Christ has filled me with joy through the news of your new found faith in him and the love you now have for one other. Indeed, since I heard of your faith, I have not stopped thanking God. I'm telling you the truth. I am so blessed to know that you too have believed upon Christ and I joyfully welcome you into his family. I can testify, with great certainty, that you have been drawn wonderfully close to him. Indeed, in Christ not one of us is kept distant. Oh, may the eyes of your heart see this beautiful reality, for it is your born-again birthright in Christ Jesus. And, just as I thank God

for you all, I also pray that God would bless you beyond measure with the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in order that you may know him more intimately, for that is his desire. Yes, I pray that you may truly understand the depths of his love; for the foundation of our faith is firmly established in his unending love.

In love, God has given us his Holy Spirit, and that certainly is good news. His Spirit does not produce fear, hatred and bondage; on the contrary, it produces life, love and liberty. His Spirit created the universe. His Spirit raised Christ from the dead. His Spirit is powerful - wonderfully powerful! Gloriously powerful! It is this very same Spirit that is now living in you, and, through his grace, it is now at work in you.

My brothers and sisters in the Lord, stop and think about it: the very same power that was strong enough to raise Jesus from the dead, placing him at the Father's right hand in the heavens, is now dwelling in you. It is by this power that Jesus now reigns in glory. Nothing can compare to the power, authority, and dominion that Jesus now has. He is above every title that can be given; from eternity to eternity he reigns supreme - and we are in him. We have been united together as his body. And now, through our faith in him, God, in his wisdom, is

bringing to fulfillment his glorious plan of mankind's redemption.

Tell me, how does it feel to know the truth? To know that you are a brand new person, cleansed and made pure in every way in the eyes of your heavenly Father? It feels glorious, I know, for I experience this same wonderful reality. How different a life we now have. For in the past we walked in the ways of darkness, lost in the foolish things this world offers, and spending all we had to buy what only broke our hearts or burdened us with guilt and shame. All of us lived in this way at one time, and, to our thinking, it was all we could hope for; gratifying the cravings of our self-absorbed ego while following its desires and thoughts. We were no different from anyone, and, based on our own merits and deeds, deserved nothing good from God. But praise God that he does not give to us based on what we deserve, but rather, he gives to us based on the reality of his graceful and loving nature, expressed through what his Son has done on our behalf. It is because of his great love for us, despite our past misdeeds, that he has given us a new life; for the riches of his mercy are truly endless. Yes, it is by his grace, and only by his grace, that we could ever receive such a blessing.

I praise God that our 'bad works' didn't disqualify us, and our 'good works' didn't qualify us. His love towards us is not at all based on our past performance, whether good or bad, but rather, his divine acceptance of us is based on the finished work of his Son upon the cross. And now, having put our faith in Jesus, we have received a covenant relationship of grace: an intimate relationship with him based on his perfect love and faithfulness to us. We can rest and rejoice in the knowledge that it is not by our works we are saved, but rather, it is because God has a nature of grace.

We are now free in his love, alive in his life, and perfectly cleansed through his forgiveness. My dear friends, as glorious as our forgiveness is, it is only a tiny fraction of what we have received. Indeed, we should rejoice that we have been given so much more. For we have been raised with Christ and seated with him in the glorious kingdom of God. I'm not suggesting this will happen one day - I'm testifying that it has already happened! When we accepted Jesus, his Spirit came to live in us, and our Spirit went to sit with him. We are now one with Jesus; both he with us as here on earth, and we with him in the heavens. What, one might ask, is God doing as we sit with him in the heavens? My siblings in Christ, he is looking at us with love and affection.

He is enjoying our company and reminding us of how he sees us: holy, blameless and forever loved. He does this to reveal to our hearts, indeed, to all of creation, the incomparable riches of his grace. For the rest of eternity we will be the living proof of God's unending kindness; we are his beloved forever. Our salvation is an act of pure grace. Our adoption, new life, and redemption have nothing to do with our own efforts and everything to do with the King of kings, the One and only, Jesus our Lord. Just as Jesus was a gift to the world, so too is the salvation that we have received through him. In light of this glorious truth it's easy to understand why our boast is not in our limited ability, but in his unlimited love for us.

Therefore, remember his grace always, and remember the whole story of God's redemption plan. Remember that God first set apart the nation of Israel. He gave them the Holy Scriptures and a temporary covenant of law through which he prophesied the coming of the saviour of all mankind : Jesus Christ. It is through Jesus that this old covenant was fulfilled and the new eternal covenant has been established. It is this new covenant of grace that you have been saved into. At one time you were separated from God, but, because God is faithful, all of you who were far from God have found yourself now

living in his very presence through the grace of Christ.

Previously, there was only one way, and that way was for the Jewish people. The law of their covenant excluded other nations and cultures from participating in a covenant relationship with the living God. Yet now we see how truly merciful God is, that he allowed Jesus, who is the Christ of the Jewish law, to come and fulfill all the righteous requirements of that law, bringing that covenant to fulfillment through his perfect life, ending the era of religious obligations and regulations, and establishing the promised new covenant; not according to man's nature of law, but according to God's divine nature of grace. The old, temporary covenant was exclusive to one nation, but the new, eternal covenant is available to every nation and tribe on earth. For Jesus himself has become our peace and he has made a way for all of mankind to belong to God; both those close and those far away. He died upon the cross for all people, regardless of their religious or cultural backgrounds, in order that they may come to know him and realise the profound reality that, through the sacrifice of Jesus, all mankind have been granted access to the Father through the Spirit of divine love.

Now, through the finished work of Jesus, we

can all rest in confidence with the knowledge that we are citizens of heaven and members together of one household. This household is built upon the foundation of the gospel message that I, together with the other apostles, have proclaimed to you, with Jesus himself holding the whole household together. In him we are held together in unity, joined together in love and connected together as family. For we have been created new in Christ, no longer as strangers, but now as brothers and sisters; and God is continuing to draw us all closer together as a family, where he also lives by his Spirit.

I am writing to you in the hope that you too would find as much joy in the good news as I have. Even now I rejoice, whether a free man or in jail for proclaiming the glorious truth. I preach it, regardless of the consequences, for the sake of all who have not yet heard it, that they too may know Christ.

Surely you have heard my testimony by now, and the powerful working of God's graceful Spirit in me? God, by his grace, not only saved me, but also revealed to me his eternal plan. It had been a mystery throughout the ages, but has now been revealed through the coming of his Son. This

mystery was not revealed to me by a mentor, a rabbi or a theologian, but rather by divine revelation. And so, as you read my letter, you can begin to understand why I so passionately lift Jesus up and seek to make plain the good news of his grace.

How wonderful his eternal plan truly is. The Son of God came down to earth, born of a woman, born under the old covenant of law to fulfil that covenant of law (for it was impossible for anyone else to fulfil it). He brought that first 'exclusive' covenant to a close, in order to establish a new 'inclusive' covenant for all. It is through this divine act of grace that all of mankind, both Jew and Gentile, are now heirs to a relationship with God and equally share in the promise of new life. God is not looking at the nationality of a person, but rather, he is looking at the Christ in one's heart. God has made a way that all mankind may have access to know him through faith in Jesus.

It is this message that I have become a servant to, according to the gift of God's grace, which continues to work so powerfully in me. And so my boast is solely in Christ, for I have not earned this gift, but have received it through God's love. Indeed, in myself I am truly nothing, less than the least of God's people. If it were based on works I would be given nothing from God. For before my salvation I

hated the name of Jesus, tried to destroy the Church, punished Christians and was brutal in my passion against the gospel message. And yet, God has used my life as a testimony to his promise: that in Christ we are made new, clean and without fault in his eyes. My past has truly passed away and I am a new creation in Christ; and so now, in Christ, this grace has been given to me: to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Jesus and to make known the glory of his grace to all mankind; the good news that has been hidden in God's heart since the foundations of the world.

God's purpose is now being outworked through our life together as God's Church, allowing the wisdom of his grace to be revealed to all creation; both here on earth as well as in the heavens above. All this is in accordance with his eternal purpose that has always been grounded and established in the life, and perfect work, of his Son: our Lord Jesus. In Christ, and through faith in him, we may now stand in the very presence of God with absolute freedom and confidence. In light of this wonderful truth, you can understand why it is not a burden for me, or a concern for you, to be imprisoned for preaching the gospel. It is a blessing, not a burden, for me to stand up and proclaim the truth of God's grace, regardless of the consequences.

With all this in mind, I bow before our Father, through whom all of us, as members of his family, receive our name. I pray that God would do wonderful things in you. I'm not suggesting that you attempt to energise yourselves with your own limited strength; rather, my prayer is that God himself, out of his glorious riches may strengthen you with his almighty power, through his Spirit that now lives in you, and that your inner being would be established in his strength. And now, being established in his strength, I pray that you would be able to truly rest in your beloved saviour who dwells in your hearts through faith. By resting in his strength, and trusting in his power, you are also allowing yourself to be rooted and established in his love. Dear family, just as you are established in his grace, I continue to pray that God will work his mighty power in you in order that you may have power, together with everyone in Christ, to grasp how deep his love for all of us truly is.

Oh, I'm telling you the truth; his love is so deep, so wide, so long and so high! The love of Christ has no limits in glory, and all his love is given to us who belong to him. We are the object of his affection, and he delights to reveal to our hearts the depth of his love for us. It is through knowing this love, a love that truly surpasses knowledge, that you

may be filled with all that he is.

We belong to him. We are his treasured possession, and as glorious as we know him to be, I can assure you he is even more glorious. Our saviour cannot be measured and he is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask and imagine. As we come together as the Church, may the revelation of his almighty love and grace be the message that unites us. Let us joyfully thank him together for all we have received through our saviour, Christ Jesus. Of this one thing we can be assured: his love is for us, now and forevermore. Amen.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I ask you to always remember the truth of who you are. You are children of the most high God, you are the beloved of Christ, and you are the treasured possession of heaven's king. You are perfect in him, and, with all this in mind, enjoy living a life that reflects this wonderful calling you have received.

Allow the power of God to be active in your life. Be humble and gentle. Remember that we are all still growing in our understanding of God grace, so be patient with one another, allowing God's love to be your guide. As you continue to grow together

in the truth of your new covenant reality, allow the Spirit to also lead you in the ways of God's love. We are one body and in all of us there is one Spirit. Likewise, through Christ you were called to one hope, one faith, one united life with Christ; one God and Father of all. It is God's desire that his children would live in unity, so let us be one in spirit as we walk the way of his love together.

As we walk in his love, let us also rejoice that Christ continues to pour out his grace upon all of us, just as he desires. Christ is a gift giver to those who belong to him, just as it says: "When he ascended on high, he led the redeemed in his train, and gave gifts to them." (Now what does 'he ascended' mean, except that he also first came down to earth? Yes, It is Jesus who first descended, and who has now also ascended higher than all the heavens, where his Spirit fills the whole universe!)

It is this very same Jesus who gave some of us to be sent out, with the task of bringing together and encouraging the Church throughout the world, some to share the love of God with words given to them from heaven, some to proclaim the mystery of the gospel now revealed, some to care for the community of God's children and some to teach in accordance with the new covenant truth of God's grace. Some are called in these ways for the benefit

of all, my brothers and sisters, that you too would be built up in your calling, and, through faith in the finished work of Christ, would also allow the power of God to work powerfully in you. For no matter what our calling in Christ may be, his purpose remains the same: that we may all be united in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, and, through accepting his grace and goodness over our lives, to become mature in him, receiving the fullness of his love into our hearts.

Christ loves you completely, and his desire is to give to you the whole measure of his very life in order that you may truly live in him. It is through receiving more of his love, and trusting more in his finished work, completed upon the cross, that you can grow in your faith. God is not measuring you by your works, but by your faith in Jesus, and it is for that reason you can receive a full measure of his love. Faith is not measured by what we do, but by our acceptance and rest in what Christ has already done for us. It is through this truth that we can mature in our faith, no longer being tossed back and forth by all sorts of worldly messages and teachings from men who seek to control us by placing our focus on our works and religious obligations. As children of God we allow our focus to remain on his grace. We walk in the ways of love

and speak the truth in love. We are able to do this only because we have full assurance in his love for us. Through this great blessing, we can grow up established in Christ. For it is only through Christ that we can grow in the ways of God, and together, through our faith in Jesus, we can support each other, building each other up in love, just as each one of us outworks God's love in our own life.

So what now? How should we live in light of this wonderful new life we have received in Christ? We should live as Jesus himself lived – as a beloved child of God in the eyes of our Father. We should live by faith, for we know and believe the message of salvation through Jesus is not just a good idea or concept – it is the truth. It is our reality, and now that we live in this wonderful light, we will certainly not live as if we are still in the dark; in the foolishness of a self-adoring lifestyle. A self-adoring lifestyle only leads to darkness, burdens and the hardening of hearts, but a Christ-glorifying lifestyle is led in the light, given rest, and has a heart that is overflowing with hope and love. Those who walk without Christ continue to walk their own way, having lost the 'Christ desire' they were born with (for we have all been made in his image) and having been deceived to accept the 'self-desire' that continues to chase after all the things the body and

ego lust after, with a continual desire for more.

You, however, did not come to know Christ according to that pattern. Surely you received the gospel as it truly is: the good news of God's grace that has been given to us in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught that Christ became darkness on the cross, so that you may now become light in him. It is not your efforts that have changed you, but rather, the power of the cross. For you traded in all your pain for all his joy, all your brokenness for all his wholeness and all your sins for all his righteousness. You exchanged your old self that was being corrupted by its deceitful desires and were made 'new' in Christ. And now that you are a new person in Jesus, see to it that the attitude of your mind agrees with this glorious reality. God never doubts that you are his beloved, a holy and perfectly loved child, so remind yourself of this truth and enjoy the reality of your new nature. Live in this truth each day, for you have been created new to be like God, full of grace and truth.

Therefore, as you grow in his grace, allow your old mindsets and doubts to be cast aside. The way of love does not speak in the language of lies, but in the language of truth, and so speak truthfully to each other, after all, we are a family and all belong to the one body of Jesus. "In your anger do not fall

into unbelief": my dear friends, we all still live in this earthly body, and if, on occasion, your negative emotions overtake you, don't allow them to remain the leader of your life. For you are children of faith, and so remain in this faith and let peace be restored to you. Don't allow frustration to take advantage of your anger and so get a foothold in your life. You have traded in the old for the new, the darkness for the light, and the lies of this world for the truth of God. With this in mind, allow your new life to mirror this reality. If anyone has lived the life of dishonesty, don't continue in that pattern of life; rather, enjoy the empowerment God has now given you to walk in freedom and honesty. In light of this reality, allow yourselves the blessing of being an honest man who can provide not only for himself, but also for those around him. Christ has set us free, be free then, and do something productive with the gifts and abilities God has given you, that you may be a blessing to those in need.

Don't speak in ways that are unwholesome, but as you truly are, speak in ways that reflect your life in Christ. Talk to each other in ways that are helpful in building each other up in love, so that your words may benefit those who listen. The Holy Spirit is now living in you, so remind yourself of his wonderful presence in your life, and, in accordance with his

leading, empty yourself of any remaining bitterness, rage and anger. Allow the full work of the Spirit to heal and refresh your inner being so that you may be kind and compassionate to one another. Keep the great work of Christ fresh in your hearts, and forgive one another just as you remember how much Christ has forgiven you.

Keep the eyes of your heart upon Jesus, and allow the working of God's power in you to outlive his love in your daily life. Just as you are dearly loved children, live a life of love. Allow the Holy Spirit to remind you daily just how much Christ loves you and how he gave himself up for you, enabling you to forever stand in the presence of your heavenly Father with freedom and confidence.

You now live in the reality of God's nature of love, and so continue to walk in his way of love and do not chase after the things that are along other darkened paths. The way of love is not sexual immorality, impurity or greed; indeed these things should have no partnership with your life as a child of God. Neither should you fill up your time with foolish talk or dirty jokes; instead, allow your words to result in thanksgiving to God. God's kingdom is one of love, and those who indulge in the immoral

and impure things of this world have not yet crossed over into God's kingdom. Don't let anyone deceive you with empty words, for your salvation is not empty of power, but powerful enough to free you from all the things that deceive and trap those still walking along darkened paths. For although you were once in darkness, you have now become light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of light is consistent with all goodness and truth) and enjoy walking the path of light that pleases the Lord. Do I really need to tell you what the fruitless deeds from the darkened paths are? I don't think so, for you yourself know the depth of their darkness and why we no longer entangle our lives in such things. For it is shameful to even mention what takes place in darkness. You, however, have traded in your dark secrets for all of God's light. You have been redeemed. Your dirty rags have been removed by the Spirit of God and have been replaced with God's own robe of righteousness. Now that you live in the light your eyes can see what is consistent with the ways of his love and what is not; for his light makes everything visible. That is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleepy one, rise from your unbelief and the light of Christ will shine on you."

Be aware then how you are living. Not as one willfully living in ignorance, but as one who has

come to know the truth. Make the most of every opportunity to live in the light, for these days are corrupt. Take the time to understand what the Lord's will is. Don't become disheartened and turn to excessive drinking, which only leads you off the path of light onto the shadows of disillusionment. Instead, be filled with the Spirit of God. Talk with one another with loving affection, with the words found in the Psalms, with hymns and songs that remind you of God's faithfulness. Allow the joy of the gospel to play a heavenly symphony in your hearts to the Lord. As you walk with God, give thanks to him for everything, and do it all in the name of our Lord Jesus. Love one another as you remember Christ's unending love for you.

Wives, believe your husbands when they speak words of loving affection over your life, just as you do with the Lord. For your husband is committed to being a strength to you, as he imitates how Christ is the strength of the Church, his body, whom he loves more than his own life. Now just as we, the Church, submit to Christ when he confirms his love for us, so also wives should submit to their husbands and accept their husbands' praises in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loves his Church and gave himself up for her, declaring her holy, speaking words of life over her regarding

her beauty and cleanness; reminding her that she may stand confident of his love as a radiant bride, without stain or wrinkle, or any other blemish; proclaiming she is his beloved, pure and blameless. In the same way, tell your wives how loved they are, how radiant they are and how beautiful they are in your eyes. Remember how the Lord sees you with the eyes of his grace, and do the same with your wife. Care for your wife as you imitate how Christ cares so abundantly for his church. Scripture declares: *"The day will come when a man will leave his parents in order to enter into a new covenant with his wife, and the two, in the eyes of God, will then become one."* My brothers, this is a profound mystery—but this scripture is talking about Christ and the Church! It is true that in the eyes of God you have been united as 'one' with your wife through your covenant marriage. What a profound revelation to realise that even your marriages are a glorious illustration given to you from above to help you understand your heavenly reality that, through your union to Jesus, you too have become one with Jesus in the eyes of our Father! And so, as husband and wife, in light of the loving acceptance you have received from Christ, and with the same spirit of love, respect each other as you live together under his care.

Young children, you too have the Spirit of God, and so you too can walk in the ways of love and be obedient to your parents in the Lord, for this is pleasing to God. Indeed, we are all children of the promise of Jesus, and because of this we not only honour our Father in Heaven, but also our parents here in earth.

Fathers, may our Father fill you with the grace of his character, so that you may be an example to your children of the grace and kindness of God. Bring your children up with the example of love, so that they may continue to grow in their own relationship with their heavenly Father.

No matter where you work, or what your tasks are, do them with respect and sincerity of heart. Just as you joyfully obey Christ, so also do what honours your employer. Allow God to work through you, so that you may work wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men. Christ is with you, he loves you, and when you allow his grace to flow through you in your workplace, he will reward you.

To those who are employers, treat your employees with the same respect and sincerity of heart you desire from them. Do not threaten them, for you know that Christ never threatens you, and yet the result is obedience and a fruitful life, so too

when you treat your employees with respect and in the spirit of love they will work more productively, to your benefit.

Finally to all of you, be sure to always find your strength in the Lord and in his mighty power. God has equipped you with all you need to stand strong and victorious in Christ. Always remember you are standing not just near Jesus, but you are standing in him. With this in mind, be assured that you can stand against the pressure to conform to the patterns of this world. For we, who are in Christ, do not struggle against people, but against the spirit of deception and the spiritual authorities that try to impose it upon mankind. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the spiritual forces try to deceive you, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have remained standing in the truth that is found in Christ, you can glory in God, that he is mighty to save. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist. With the breastplate of Christ's righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness to proclaim the goodness of God that comes out of being established in the gospel of his grace and peace. In addition to all this, always keep hold of your mighty shield of faith; not faith in your own godliness, but faith in the perfect redeeming work of Christ, so

that any accusation brought against you based on your limitations and weaknesses will be extinguished by the all empowering truth of God's grace before they can even draw near to you. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with any kind of prayer and request you may have, for your Father will always listen when you call to him. With this in mind, keep your conversation going with the Lord; and don't limit your conversation with him to matters concerning only your own needs, but also discuss the needs of your fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord and express the confidence you have in him, that he will surely meet their needs with the fullness of his grace.

Finally, pray also for me, that the Spirit of God will continue to proclaim his glorious gospel powerfully through me. Pray that when I open my mouth words may be given to me in order that I may also stand firm and passionately proclaim the mystery of the gospel. Pray that I will preach it fearlessly in order that those who hear my message will also believe and enter into a united life with God, embraced in his eternal nature of love. Pray that I may present this truth with all God's power at work in me, just as indeed I should.

Tychicus, my fellow preacher and a faithful servant in the Lord, who has delivered this letter to

you, can continue to tell you everything concerning my situation. May he be a blessing to your community as he continues to proclaim the glorious gospel of our saviour Jesus and encourages you in your journey of faith.

May the Lord of all peace pour out his peace upon all of you, along with his love and faith that comes from the very heart of our heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love that will last throughout eternity.

(Paraphrased by Mick Mooney) Visit Mick's website:

[www.searchingforgrace.com](http://www.searchingforgrace.com)

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*This paraphrase of Ephesians is part of the paraphrase book titled: **"The Gospel Cannot Be Chained"** that includes all of Paul's four prison letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians & Philemon) You can buy a paperback version at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*

**Biblical Reference Text**

The NIV (New International Version) is the translation I personally read, and it was the translation I used as my primary reference text for this body of work. As I stated in my foreword, this book is my own understanding and expression of what Paul originally meant in his letters. It is more of a commentary of Paul's letters that may help you see and understand his message in a fresh and positive way. Whatever Bible translation you choose to read, I hope this book has encouraged you to read the Bible more in order to search and discover the incomparable riches of Christ. I trust, and I am excited to know, that our good Lord is committed to leading you into greater revelations of his love and truth.