

**Dennis R. Wiles
First Baptist Arlington
August 4, 2024**

**AUGUST 2024
Together!
August 4 - 31, 2024
Preaching Voice: Teacher**

***Together . . . in Partnership with Christ!*
Ephesians 1:1-2**

How high or how developed is your view of Christ and His Church?

The Apostle Paul: Pastor, Preacher, Planter, Prophet, Prisoner

AD 60 – Churches in Asia (Roman province – Acts 19:10), Lycia, Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, Bithynia, Achaia, Macedonia, Europe, Syria, Samaria, and Judea were all small house churches where Christians lived in the shadow of the Roman Empire.

“These churches were a mess, and Paul wrote his letters to them to try to clean up the mess. But the dominant concern in this Ephesian letter is not to deal with the human problems that inevitably develop in church—no church is exempt—but to explore God’s glory that gives the church its unique identity . . . It is as if Paul takes time out from his responsibilities for straightening out the problems of belief and behavior that have cropped up in the various churches and writes out, as clearly and completely as he can, what makes church *church*. And what comes clear is that church is not what we do; it is what God does, although we participate in it.”

-Eugene H. Peterson, *Practice Resurrection*

“Ephesians is about the cosmic vision of heaven and earth coming together. The church is to be filled with the Spirit in the present age as the sign to the world what God is going to do for the whole cosmos in the future. The church is to demonstrate to the world who the world’s creator really is. In fact, the Church is a small, working model of the new creation.”

N. T. Wright

“. . . for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

-Isaiah 11:9

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

-Habakkuk 2:14

“Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory.”

-Psalm 72:19

Ephesians is about the people of God who are now “in Christ.” “In Christ” – this phrase or imagery connected to this phrase appears 164 times in Paul’s writings and 36 times in Ephesians!

“To bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.”

-Ephesians 1:10

“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

-Ephesians 3:10-11

“. . . that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

-Ephesians 3:19

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