

## TRUE FAITH – VISIBLE LOVE

### PART 14 EPHESIANS CHAPTER ONE

Ephesians 1:15-16 NLT **SLIDE**

*Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, <sup>16</sup> I have not stopped thanking God for you...*

Verse 14 ends the great, long sentence which started at verse 3 of Ephesians chapter one.

**VERSE 15 begins a new section** where Paul now speaks to the church personally ... which is to us also ...

### THE FIRST THING HE MENTIONS IS THEIR GREAT REPUTATION

Ephesians 1:15-16 NLT **SLIDE**

*Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus ...*

HOW DID PAUL HEAR ABOUT THIS CHURCH'S FAITH & LOVE

*Paul didn't hear of their reputation because they were friends on Facebook or from their YouTube channel ...*

**HE HEARD BY WORD OF MOUTH**

I heard about (akousas) To hear, listen, comprehend by hearing, **reported**.

They had a reputation which was 'noised abroad' ...

There was **something notable about them** ... something that stood out ... something visible ...

**SO, WHAT WAS IT THAT THEY WERE KNOWN FOR?**

Ephesians 1:15 NKJV **SLIDE**

*... [Their strong] faith in the Lord Jesus and [their] love for all the saints.*

**HOW DO CHRISTIANS TODAY DESCRIBE THEIR CHURCH & WHAT ARE SOME CHURCHES TODAY KNOWN FOR?**

*Some Christians will tell you they go to a 'Family Church' ... others have a reputation of being a 'worshiping church' ... where they have great music ...*

## ***I LOOKED UP HOW PEOPLE DESCRIBE THEIR CHURCHES TODAY***

And saw this listed under 'Smart Church management' -  
They wrote, 'Do these things describe your church?'

**SLIDE** Dynamic / Relevant / Proactive / Interactive / Inviting / FUN ...

*We should change 'Sunday' to 'Fun-day' We go to church to have fun ... Kids go to a playground to have fun.*

*One marketing lady wrote ...*

*My passion for marketing kicked in and I asked our members to share **3 words to describe our Church**. I put these words in to a wordle so we could visually see how we all felt about our Church. What I didn't expect were words like **open, inclusive and committed**. Over and over again, I heard the words community, welcoming and progressive.*

*Overwhelmed with their answers, that day, I fell in love a little more with my church and the people in it. These are the qualities I was looking for in a Church, which is likely why I stayed. Together, we will do our best to portray **who we are** to every person who walks through our church doors.*

(Nicole Cayer 5 Oct 2015 'What 3 words would describe your church')

***DID YOU NOTICE, THERE WAS NOT ONE REFERENCE TO ... 'THE LORD JESUS' ...***

Yet, the Ephesian churches were known for - **SLIDE**

*'... [Their] faith in the Lord Jesus and [their] love for all the saints.'*  
Ephesians 1:15 NKJV

**This thrilled Paul** the apostle so much that he could not stop thanking God for them ...

*He was saying, 'Yes, **they get it!** Thank you, thank you Father ... Hallelujah ...'*

**BUT THIS IS NOT WHERE MANY CHURCHES ARE TODAY ...  
HAS THE MODERN-DAY CHURCH LOST IT'S WAY?**

## **PERIPHERALS**

We can so easily get sucked out of the centre of God's will and **SLIDE** ***GET CAUGHT UP INTO THE SWIRLING PERIPHERALS*** THAT SPIN AROUND THE RIM OF CHRISTIANITY.

These are things like community focus ... focus on music ... etc ...

And -

**WE FORGET THE TRUE CENTRE OF OUR FAITH ...**

**WHICH IS ... FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS.**

- We can become distracted and lose our focus ... on the real and true centre of the church ... that is ... 'The Lord Jesus'.
- We are not taught the paramount priority - FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS ... and so we don't know it ...

Despite all these peripheral aspects of the church, there is only ONE centre and Focus ... **THE LORD JESUS ...**

**PAUL ALREADY KNEW THIS FELLOWSHIP AT EPHESUS.**

Paul had helped establish the Ephesian church with the gospel many years before. They were his offspring (Acts 19:1-20) But now, many years later, he hears about their reputation ... He hears ... they had not been diverted from the true gospel that he had originally shared with them ...

*Dr Martin Lloyd Jones says about this -*

**THAT THEY HAD NOT ONLY BELIEVED BUT THEY HAD CONTINUED IN THAT BELIEF.**

- They hadn't been diverted into a 'social gospel'
- They hadn't been diverted into a 'prosperity gospel'
- They hadn't been diverted into a 'manifestation gospel' - where there are endless *prophecies, angel visitations*, etc ...

**THEY REMAINED ON TRACK, IN THE CENTRE OF GOD'S PURPOSE ... IN THE TRUE GOSPEL OF 'FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS ... AND LOVE FOR ALL THE SAINTS.'**

- NB Paul also doesn't say ...  
'Since I heard of your moral living ... your holiness ... your great sanctification ... your growth and prosperity ...'

**THE TRUE EVIDENCE OF A TRUE CHURCH IS ...  
'THEIR FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS ... AND A REAL LOVE FOR THE SAINTS'**

The two pillars of Christianity are these two main elements ...  
'FAITH & LOVE'.

➤ LETS LOOK AT THE FIRST PILLAR ... 'FAITH'

Ephesians 1:15 NLT SLIDE

*Ever since I first heard of your strong **faith** in the Lord Jesus ...*

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT FAITH

THIS FAITH is not a positive mental attitude – not something we have to work up – not the power of positive thinking ...

- It is a substance (*Hebrews 11:1*)
- It is given to us - Each has been given a measure of Faith (*Romans 12:3*)

RECEIVING FAITH

THIS FAITH was freely given to, you by grace, **the moment you believed the good news**, so that you might believe from your heart.

Romans 10:17 Berean Study Bible SLIDE

*... Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.*

This is hearing The Gospel ... which has Faith infused into it ...

GOD KNOWS YOU CAN'T EVEN BELIEVE WITHOUT HIM, SO HE PROVIDES YOU WITH THE FAITH YOU NEED IN THE GOSPEL YOU HEAR ...

So when we hear the good news, we hear something **infused with faith**, which **knocks at the door of our heart** ...

SLIDE **It's now up to us to simply say, 'Yes I receive,' and begin to believe it ...** or else resist and reject it.

The gospel is infused with this faith ...

This faith is implanted into our heart ...

The gospel is also called **'the word of faith'** (Romans 10:8)

TO START TO BELIEVE RIGHT, OUR BELIEVING MUST SPRING FROM THE GROUND OF FAITH WHICH HAS BEEN IMPLANTED WITHIN US ...

FAITH KNOWS ITS OWN OBJECTIVE

We do not use this faith or try and harness it to get the things we want as some people preach and teach ...

**WE DON'T CONTROL IT.**

FAITH HAS ITS OWN OBJECTIVE WHICH IT KNOWS EXISTS & SEES AS A REALITY - *'The evidence of things not seen'* (Heb 11:1)

**WHEN WE FOLLOW FAITH'S LEADING WE CANNOT HELP BUT BELIEVE ...**

This faith has its own desires and faith's greatest desire is ...

**THE LORD JESUS.**

**THE TRUE FAITH IS A SOLID FAITH IN 'THE LORD JESUS'.**

THIS FAITH IS THE REALITY (SUBSTANCE) OF THINGS HOPED FOR (OR DESIRED). AND THIS HOPE SPRINGS FROM FAITH. (Not faith coming from hope).

If you follow your heart of faith you will believe ... You won't be able to not-believe in the Lord Jesus ...

### **THE LORD JESUS**

NB: THIS FAITH IS IN **THE LORD** JESUS.

This is because, 'This Faith' is not just in 'The Man Jesus' who is our Saviour ...

This Great Faith is in THE RISEN & REIGNING SAVIOUR – **THE LORD JESUS.**

**HE IS THE EXALTED MAN WHO ALONE HAS THE AUTHORITY TO GRANT SALVATION TO THOSE WHO BOW TO HIS AUTHORITY.**

To embrace and receive this faith, we must bow our heart to His Lordship ...

This faith only operates under the banner of, 'THE LORD JESUS'.

Romans 10:16 talks about obeying the gospel ... that is submitting to THE LORD JESUS ...

PEOPLE DON'T COME TO SALVATION BY BELIEVING IN JESUS ...

**People come to salvation by believing in 'THE LORD JESUS'.**

People believe in Jesus as a good man

People believe in Jesus as a religious example

People believe in Jesus as another holy man

And whereas this may be a step in the right direction ... it does not bring them into regeneration ... into salvation ...

**People come to salvation by believing in 'THE LORD JESUS'.**

## FAITH IS THE CHRISTIAN'S OPERATING SYSTEM

Romans 1:17 **SLIDE**

*By faith (out of faith) ... those who are justified shall live.*

By = 'ek' From out, out from among, suggesting from the interior outwards

Faith should be the standard way a Christian operates day by day. Faith sees the invisible things of God ... embraces these mysteries of God ... it operates in the spiritual dimension ...

Every other form of faith is a fleshly faith and is actually dead works ... it profits nothing ...

FAITH IS THE DOORWAY TO THE OTHER WORLD.

IT'S A STATE WITHIN US ... INTO WHICH WE CAN CHOOSE TO SURRENDER & BE ABSORBED ...

FAITH IS A STATE ... IT IS A POWERFUL, RULING STATE ...

IT IS THE AUTHORITY OF THE SPIRITUAL REALM ...

IT REIGNS SUPREME OVER ALL NATURAL MATTER

➤ LET'S LOOK AT THE SECOND PILLAR ... **'AGAPE'**

**THIS FAITH OPENS THE DOOR TO HIS LOVE**

Ephesians 1:15 **SLIDE**

*Ever since I first heard of ... **your love for all the saints***

## WE LOVE OUT OF FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS

When we live in this state of heart within us, we operate under His banner and we love The Saints ...

**NB: FAITH PRECEEDS LOVE**

1 Corinthians 13:13

*And now abide **faith (first)** hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

1 Thessalonians 1:3 Berean Study Bible

*... Continually recalling before our God and Father your work of*

***faith, your labour of love, and your enduring hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.***

**Ephesians 3:17 KJV**

***That Christ may dwell in your hearts **by faith**; that ye, being rooted and grounded **in love*****

**YOU CANNOT LOVE AS REQUIRED WITHOUT THIS HEART OF FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS ...**

### **LOOK AT THE 'IMPOSSIBLE' NEW COMMANDMENT**

**John 13:34** Berean Study Bible

***A new commandment I give you: **Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another.*****

**Jesus knew He was giving us an impossible New Commandment when He spoke the above words ...**

**Who could love like Jesus...? Not just for one moment but a lifetime**

- **Could you give up all your riches for people that hated you?**
- **Could you be crucified and forgive those who were killing you?**

**Yet this is the love that Jesus said to love one another with ...**

### **PAUL SAYS IT AGAIN IN RELATION TO HUSBANDS IN EPHESIANS**

**Ephesians 5:25**

***Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.***

***BUT NO MAN BY HIMSELF COULD LOVE HIS WIFE LIKE THAT.***

***IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE NATURAL MAN, ADAMIC MAN, TO LOVE AS JESUS LOVED ...***

**Titus describes the true condition of mankind without Christ Jesus -**

**Titus 3:3**

***We ourselves ... hating one another.***

**- Man by Adamic nature**

***WE NEED TO SAY, 'I CANNOT LOVE AS YOU LOVED ME, WITHOUT YOUR LOVE IN MY HEART TO LOVE FROM.'***

**HOWEVER, THIS LOVE IS IMPARTED TO US AT SALVATION & FLOWS THROUGH US WHEN WE ARE SEALED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

**Romans 5:5 SLIDE**

***... The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.***

### **ALL THE SAINTS**

**Ephesians 1:15 SLIDE**

***Ever since I first heard of ... your love for all the **saints**.***

**NB: WE ARE NOT TOLD THE EPHESIANS LOVED ALL THE WORLD ... BUT ...  
**ALL THE SAINTS.****

**NB: WHEN JESUS PRAYED IN JOHN 17 ... HE DID NOT PRAY FOR THE WORLD ... BUT HIS PEOPLE.**

**John 17:9** Amplified Bible

***... I do not pray for the world, but for those you have given me ...***

**YOU ARE NOT ASKED TO TRY TO LOVE THE WHOLE WORLD ...**

GOD LOVES THE WHOLE WORLD (John 3:16)

WE ARE CALLED TO LOVE HIS PEOPLE ... OUR PEOPLE ... THE SAINTS OF GOD ...

### **ALL THE SAINTS**

**Ephesians 1:15 SLIDE**

***Ever since I first heard of ... your love for all the saints.***

**NOT ONLY THOSE YOU LIKE ... NOT ONLY THE COOL ONES ... THE TRENDY ONES ...**

**BUT THOSE WHO MAY NOT EVEN BE GRACE PEOPLE ...**

**THOSE STRUGGLING ... THE POOR ...**

**NOT JUST THE CLEVER ONES ...**

**NOT ONLY THOSE OF YOUR OWN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP ...**

**CHURCHES CAN BECOME HORRIBLY EXCLUSIVE ...**

***We were invited to a church to minister ... But as we were setting up, one lady aggressively confronted us. She was very defensive, very rude and confrontational. She said, 'Who are you people? What are you doing here?' She gave off this **hateful** vibe.***

***She didn't say, 'Oh hi, how are you guys? Are you singing today? I'm Barbara ... Great to have you with us etc ...'***



***No. it was a wall of hate and rejection.***

**THESE PEOPLE DIDN'T DISPLAY 'LOVE FOR ALL THE SAINTS' ...**

**Ephesians 5:2** Berean Study Bible

*And walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant sacrificial offering to God.*

**Colossians 3:14**

*And over all these virtues put on love, which is the bond of perfect unity.*

**God never asks us to do anything He has not given us the means to do ... HE SAYS LOVE LIKE I DO BECAUSE HE HAS GIVEN US HIS LOVE, TO LOVE AS HE LOVES ...**

**YOU HAVE THE LOVE ... SHARE THE LOVE ...**

**It starts with one to another and it spreads like wild-love ... Love ignites love ...**

**THIS DIVINE LOVE WITHIN US MUST EXPRESS ITSELF.**

**It has a pure attitude of unselfishness ...**

**It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit that manifests all the other blessings ... peace ... joy ... patience ... gentleness**

### **THE VISIBLE SIGNS OF AGING LOVING**

**Ephesians 1:15** SLIDE

***Ever since I first heard of ... your love for all the saints***

**THIS WAS MORE THAN TALK**

**It's great to say, 'I love you' ...**

**It's better to show I love you ...**

**Acts of love follow the Love of The Saints ... Expressions of Love ...**

**Tertullian c.AD 160–c.225**

**Roman theologian and Church Father from Carthage North Africa -**

***'Look how they [Christians] love one another' (for they themselves [Pagans] hate one another); 'and how they are ready to die for each other' (for they themselves are readier to kill each other).*** *Apologeticus* ch. 39, sect. 7

**Many people have come to believe in The Lord Jesus because of the Visible Love that is expressed among Christians ...**

**It silences every argument ... It is the fulfillment of the Law ...**

You cannot deliberately hurt someone whom you love ...  
You serve with great energy.  
Jacob served 14 years for Rachel ... because He loved her.  
You can never hold a grudge against someone you love ...  
You desire their best.

John 13:35 **SLIDE**

*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

**NB: IT'S THE LOVE OF JESUS**

*My mother a dedicated Catholic came and stayed at Bible college for my graduation ...*

*This is where she came into the Life of The Spirit and was changed forever ... But it was the love she experienced that she could not ignore ... She was overwhelmed by The Love of The Saints, Under The Banner of Faith in The Lord Jesus.*

Let's love one another. You have love. Share love.