

A Church of Many Facets
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Ephesians 1:1-14

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his children through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Eph 1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Paul's church folk faced a huge problem we still face: **Poverty**. Not material poverty, but a poverty of imagination. Paul's work of social construction through language. All the ways he attempts to express, *"You are utterly uncommon, un-average, untypical, unlike anything else God has ever done."*

The church has no analogy.

The problem: We don't feel this way about our Christian community. Church is the context in which we tend to be the least imaginative and adventurous.

Paul want to ignite our imaginations with the knowledge that he intends for us to be:

- An emblem of exquisite beauty

- Members of an entirely new human structure – a divine family
- At the center of his most sacred enterprise – the redemption of the world

What object better embodies God's extraordinary efforts to set us apart for himself, to make us flawless, and to represent his loving intentions better than a diamond?

God wants us and has chosen us to be holy and blameless in his sight, and to exist “to the praise of his glorious grace.” In other words, God intends for the church to be:

Exclusive- All to God's self

Flawless – Exhibiting God's choosing love

Famous - In order to make God look good

Exclusive (Holy) - All to himself

The beginning of a new life is symbolized in an engagement ring. The care taken in choosing the ring – the 4C's, going from jeweler to jeweler, asking friends, etc. is all part of the ritual of setting something precious aside that would be a symbol not only of marriage, but of the new family that would someday be created. The diamond is set aside just for the bride. Though he could refer to God by an infinite number of titles, the title Paul chooses is Father, and the relationship we have with God is adoption – *chosen*, literally “picked out” by God before the dawn of time to be part of his new family.

Blameless - Flawless

C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity chapter 9* on Charity.... He starts off by explaining that Charity today means alms because giving to the poor would be the natural expression of someone who practices the Theological Virtue of Charity, which is part of Paul's Big Three (1 Cor 13:13): When all is said and done, faith, hope and love – that is, Charity – will remain. But the greatest of these is Charity. This is not sentimental love, but a choice of the will – taking every opportunity to do good, however we can. Rather than thinking that God expects the church to be morally perfect, God has chosen us to be eagerly loving.

Phil 2:14-15 “ Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, ***in which you shine like stars in the world.***

Famous: To the praise of his glorious grace - **In order to make God’s love famous**

This is the greatest of God’s love and “his good pleasure and will” - literally *good-thinking*.

When a would-be groom goes down on one knee, he doesn’t offer his beloved a shiny rock – he offers her HER RING – the one he has learned is according her tastes – perhaps even shown him pictures of or sketched it on a napkin several months before. How’s that for good thinking? And among her friends, the fiance indeed becomes indeed famous.

By itself, a diamond is just a diamond. Diamonds are meant for settings; Christians are meant for community: SALT, LIGHT, CITY ON A HILL

Conclusion – But Where do Diamonds Come From?

Anyone can pick out a nice diamond. He chose us when we were still coal. Mary Case: *No pressure, no diamonds*

Benediction

²⁴ To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— ²⁵ to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

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