

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS
"Part XLVIII: Ephesians - Directives For Overcoming Pagan Insecurity"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many people feel insecure in today's world:

(1) Knight-Ridder newspapers reported in the April 9, 1996 Waterbury American-Republican that a new system is being used in Texas, New Jersey and Kentucky to address crime. It is Victim Information and Notification Everyday, or "VINE". Whenever a prisoner is discharged from prison, this computer terminal, linked to the telephones of former victims calls them to warn within six minutes of the prisoner's release that they are out! Thus, though it does not keep such prisoners behind bars, our justice system at least give previous victims a fighting chance to know that they might be victimized **again!**

No wonder we have a nation of people who feel very insecure regarding the crime problem!

(3) Thursday, at his sentencing, the man who was convicted of kidnapping Polly Klaus from her slumber party and assaulting and killing her had an opportunity to make a statement. What he did caused even Dan Rather who reported on the incident great sadness: this criminal claimed that just before he performed his crime, Polly told him that her father had sexually abused her. When this vindictive, unfounded statement was made, Polly's father "lost it" and lunged at the criminal, and had to be forcibly taken from the courtroom!

Incidents like this that are tolerated by our justice system keeps innocent people insecurely wondering when they will be able to quit being so REPEATEDLY victimized by wicked criminals!

(4) Lee Iacocca, the CEO who turned a failing Chrysler Corporation around in the eighties, wrote in his book, Talking Straight that he has asked lots of college presidents and professors what their college students want most in today's world. He said, "They usually answer: 'Security' - a nice safe, secure, prosperous future."

With many collegians in America wanting a "nice, safe, secure, prosperous future," and in view of the antithesis of that in the REAL world, how is the next generation going to cope with life's real INSECURITIES?!

(We turn to the sermon's "Need" section . . .)

Need: "Many people today feel insecure in today's world, for so many institutions seem to be threatened: the home, marriage, business, school, government--you name it, and it has a problem! WHY is there so much insecurity, and WHAT is the solution?!"

- I. **Man's departure from God has left him to fend for himself in a destructive evil environment, leaving him very INSECURE.**
 - A. Though God created the world and set up man as His deputy, sin deposed him, and Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
 - B. God renewed human history by the Noahic Flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
 - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy, **replacing** God's help (by faith in spreading out on the world, Gn. 9:1) with staying put and seeking self-help welfare, Gn. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rv. 12:1-3.
 - D. This move left man exposed to Satan's inhumane works (Jn. 8:44), producing repeated failures to find a lasting fulfillment, Eph. 2:12.
 - E. Thus, by the era of the Early Church, converts reeling from ages in paganism brought into the Church their **insecurity** tendencies:
 1. As Ephesian forests were denuded for a livelihood, topsoil filled Ephesus' harbor, reducing its important East-West trade, Simpson & Bruce, Ephesians & Colossians, p. 15. By Paul's day, the city's **income** rested mainly in commerce from its ancient, lewd Diana cult whose temple was one of the world's seven wonders, Ibid.
 2. So when Paul led people to Christ in Ephesus, and their allegiance shift from Diana worship to Christ threatened the area's idol trade, it put the city's livelihood at risk and set off a riot, Acts 19:23-41.
 3. Paul left Ephesus to ease tensions for these believers (Acts 20:1) but was later imprisoned, worrying them, Eph. 3:1 with 6:21-22.
 4. Thus, coming from paganism without hope in God's care that produced extensive insecurities over the millennia, housed in a city threatened in its livelihood by their new faith, and having seen their faith attacked by insecure mobs and their apostle later imprisoned in a distant city heightened the old **insecurities** of these new converts!
- II. **God used Paul to draft a charter of security, the Ephesian letter, to comfort these converts from paganism's insecurity, Ep. 6:21-22.**
 - A. Paul revealed that these Ephesian converts were already locked into the Creator's **eternal** plan that would get them **safely to heaven**, Ephesians 1:1-14; 2:1-3:12 as follows:

1. Paul announced that, in **position** in Christ, these Ephesian converts were already blessed with **every** spiritual blessing in Christ, 1:1-3.
 2. This blessing was in accord with the Father's plan of **selecting** them **in** Christ to be holy and blameless in **heaven** one day, 1:4-6a.
 3. Thus, the believer is **accepted IN** God's **Beloved Son**, 1:6b.
 4. As such, the believer will enjoy seeing how all of human history will come to its head and finality in Christ's kingdom, Ep. 1:7-12.
 5. Accordingly, God **sealed** the believer with the Spirit (like logs on floats in Ephesus' harbor were sealed by purchasing agents in the lumber industry until shipped to their owners, cf. Biederwolf, Help to the Study of the Holy Spirit, p. 40) so that his **salvation status** is **secure** until he enters eternity, Eph. 1:13-14.
 6. That salvation took these Ephesian converts in Satan's domain to God's kingdom in Christ **apart from any human work**, 2:1-10. It then made them members of a spiritual body, the Church, to the praise of God's glorious grace in Christ, 2:11-3:12.
- B. Accordingly, Paul wanted these **insecure** converts to see how **secure** was their **CURRENT** life in Christ in view of God's **plans** for them:
1. He wanted them to see the surpassing power of God for them to stave off dreaded demonic forces they had served for ages, 1:15-21.
 2. He wanted them to see how that power takes control over all threats from humans to believers such as Paul, Ep. 1:22 with 3:13.
 3. He wanted them to see how that power and grace applies to fill **each of them** in **all** their areas of **need**, Eph. 1:23; 3:14-21!
- C. In **view** of such **stability**, Paul urged these converts to **use** the **spiritual** resources they had **in** Christ for **confident** living, chs. 4-6!
1. Instead of competing with one another out of insecurity, Paul urged them to serve each other humbly with their spiritual gifts, 4:1-5:17.
 2. The Holy Spirit would equip them to handle their needs to do His will on marital, family, business and angelic fronts, Eph. 5:18-6:20.

III. **Ephesians adds to the "thread of redemption" to reveal that Christ's salvation is so ETERNALLY SETTLED that ALL that BOTHERS the believer EN ROUTE is MANAGEABLE according to GOD'S purpose and power, so that he can RELAX!**

***Lesson Application:** If feeling insecure from being batted about by problems of this life, (1) believe on Christ as Savior and enter God's eternal plan with a secure "win" destiny, Jn. 3:16; Eph. 1:1-14. (2) Then, (a) confess any sins that block God's blessing in us (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) depend on the Holy Spirit's power (Ga. 5:16-23) to accomplish His winning will (Ep. 1:4-5) and face ALL life dishes out with confidence in God's eternal purposes in it all, Rom. 8:28!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Moody Monthly reports that Don Baker tells of the power of Christ to produce blessing out of a terrifying incident.

While serving in the military on a distant Pacific Island, he one day came face to face all alone on a jungle path with a cannibalistic pygmy! Don knew that missionaries had served in the area, and he felt that his only hope of staying alive depended on his somehow identifying with them to this armed pygmy. To Don, he looked more like a dangerous, wild animal as he stared at Don with distrusting eyes.

Having failed to communicate by trying different dialects, Don suddenly decided to name the name of Christ. He said, "Christos, Christos!"

The pygmy smiled, folded his hands together in the form of a prayer, knelt down and drew a cross in the dirt path. The pygmy turned out to be Don Baker's brother in Christ who had been led to the Lord by missionaries in the region! What had begun as a very frightening encounter turned out to be a blessing, all because of Jesus Christ!

Secure happiness in this life is based upon gaining a secure destiny in the eternal plan of God, and only those who believe in Christ and then claim His power to function in this life can handle this life without insecurity and spiritual defeats! Just ask Don Baker!