

Ephesians choral reading

CHARACTERS: Paul (53) Aquila (6), Priscila (6), Silas (50), ALL

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: about 3 minutes/page

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Acts 18:14-28, 19 and 20; Ephesians 1-6 (HCSB)

Introduction from Acts

PRISCILA: Aquila, my husband, Paul and I left Corinth and arrived in Ephesus.

AQUILA: Paul spoke boldly in Ephesus trying to persuade them about the kingdom of God.

PRISCILA: This went on for two years, so that all the inhabitants of Asia, both Jews and Greeks heard the message about the Lord.

AQUILA: God performed extraordinary miracles by Paul's hands.

PRISCILA: Even facecloths or work aprons that had touched his skin were brought to the sick,

AQUILA: and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.

PRISCILA: Many who had practiced magic collected their books, worth 50,000 pieces of silver, and burned them in front of everyone.

AQUILA: In this way the Lord's message flourished and prevailed.

PRISCILA: Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, caused Paul much trouble.

AQUILA: But the church in Ephesus loved Paul dearly.

PRISCILA: When Paul sailed past Ephesus to go to Jerusalem, he met with the Ephesian elders.

AQUILA: His goodbye was heartbreaking

Farewell to the Ephesian Elders

SILAS: From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church

PAUL: You know, from the first day I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time—

ALL: Yes, you served the Lord with all humility, with tears, and with the trials from the plots of the Jews.

PAUL: I did not shrink back from proclaiming to you anything that was profitable or from teaching it to you in public and from house to house.

ALL: You testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.

PAUL: that I am innocent of everyone's blood, for I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole plan of God

ALL: You preached the kingdom to all

PAUL: Now I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what I will encounter there, but I know that none of you will ever see my face again.

ALL: Why Paul?

PAUL: Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock that the Holy Spirit has appointed you to as overseers.

ALL: We elders will shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.

PAUL: (*sadly, pained*) I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

ALL: Men will rise up from our own number with deviant doctrines to lure the disciples into following them.

PAUL: Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for three years I did not stop warning each one of you with tears.

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ALL: We commit to God and to the message of His grace, which is able to build us up and to give us an inheritance among all who are sanctified.

PAUL: I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing.

ALL: Your own hands provided for your needs and for those who were with you.

PAUL: In every way I've shown you that by laboring like this, it is necessary to help the weak and to keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus.

ALL: He is the one who said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

SILAS: After he said this, he knelt down and prayed with all of them.

C: There was a great deal of weeping by everyone.

SILAS: They embraced Paul and kissed him, grieving most of all over his statement that they would never see his face again.

C: Then they escorted him to the ship.

Chapter 1

PAUL: Greeting from me, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will

SILAS: To the faithful saints in Christ Jesus at Ephesus.

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

PAUL: Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

ALL: who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens.

SILAS: He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world,

ALL: to be holy and blameless in His sight.

PAUL: We have redemption in Him through His blood,

ALL: the forgiveness of our trespasses.

SILAS: We have also received an inheritance

ALL: according to the purpose of the One who works out everything in agreement with the decision of His will,

PAUL: so that we who had already put our hope in the Messiah

ALL: might bring praise to His glory.

SILAS: When you believed in Him, you were also sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

ALL: He is the down payment of our inheritance.

PAUL: I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.

SILAS: I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, would give you a spirit of wisdom

ALL: and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

PAUL: I pray that the perception of your mind may be enlightened

SILAS: so you may know what is the hope of His calling,

ALL: what are the glorious riches of His inheritance among the saints,

PAUL: and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power to us who believe,

SILAS: according to the working of His vast strength.

ALL: He demonstrated this power in the Messiah by raising Him from the dead

PAUL: and seating Him at His right hand in the heavens—

ALL: far above every ruler and authority,

SILAS: power and dominion, and every title given,

ALL: not only in this age but also in the one to come.

PAUL: God put everything under His feet

ALL: and appointed Him as head over everything for the church,
 SILAS: which is His body, the fullness of the One who fills all things in every way.

Chapter 2

PAUL: God is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us,
 ALL: God made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses.
 PAUL: You are saved by grace!
 ALL: Together with Christ Jesus He also raised us up and seated us in the heavens.
 SILAS: For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift
 ALL: not from works, so that no one can boast.
 SILAS: For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
 ALL: which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.
 PAUL: At one time you were without the Messiah, excluded from the citizenship
 ALL: foreigners, without hope and without God in the world. 1
 SILAS: But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near
 ALL: by the blood of the Messiah who is our peace.
 PAUL: Through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.
 ALL: So then you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints
 SILAS: You are members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
 ALL: with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone.
 PAUL: The whole building, being put together by Him, grows into a holy sanctuary in the Lord.
 ALL: You also are being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit.

Chapter 3

PAUL: God who created all things, accomplished His eternal purpose in the Messiah,
 ALL: Jesus our Lord.
 SILAS: In Him we have boldness and confident access
 ALL: through faith in Him.
 PAUL: I pray that He may grant you, to be strengthened with power in the inner man through His Spirit,
 ALL: and that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith.
 SILAS: I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love,
 ALL: may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's
 love,
 PAUL: and to know the Messiah's love that surpasses knowledge,
 ALL: so you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
 SILAS: Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think
 PAUL: according to the power that works in us—
 ALL: 21 to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Chapter 4

PAUL: Walk worthy of the calling you have received,
 ALL: with all humility and gentleness, with patience,

PAUL: accepting one another in love,
 ALL: diligently keeping the unity of the Spirit with the peace that binds us.
 SILAS: There is one body and one Spirit—
 ALL: just as you were called to one hope
 SILAS: One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
 ALL: one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.
 PAUL: Our Lord personally gave some to be apostles,
 ALL: some prophets, some evangelists,
 PAUL: some pastors and teachers,
 ALL: for the training of the saints in the work of ministry,
 SILAS: to build up the body of Christ.
 ALL: Speaking the truth in love,
 SILAS: let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ.
 ALL: From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament,
 PAUL: promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love
 ALL: by the proper working of each individual part.
 SILAS: You took off your former way of life,
 PAUL: the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires;
 ALL: you are being renewed in the spirit of your minds;
 SILAS: You put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness
 ALL: in righteousness and purity of the truth.
 PAUL: Since you put away lying, speak the truth,
 ALL: each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another.
 SILAS: Be angry and do not sin.
 PAUL: Don't let the sun go down on your anger,
 ALL: and don't give the Devil an opportunity.
 SILAS: No foul language is to come from your mouth,
 ALL: but only what is good for building up someone in need.
 PAUL: All bitterness, anger and wrath,
 ALL: shouting and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice.
 SILAS: And be kind and compassionate to one another,
 ALL: forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

Chapter 5

PAUL: Be imitators of God, as dearly loved children.
 ALL: And walk in love, as the Messiah also loved us and gave Himself for us,
 SILAS: a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.
 ALL: Sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you.
 PAUL: Coarse and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable,
 ALL: but rather giving thanks.
 SILAS: For know and recognize this: Every sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, who is an idolater,
 ALL: does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of the Messiah and of God.
 PAUL: Let no one deceive you for God's wrath is coming on the disobedient because of these things.
 ALL: For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

SILAS: Walk as children of light—

ALL: for the fruit of the light results in all goodness, righteousness, and truth—

PAUL: Children of light discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

ALL: Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them.

SILAS: Get up, sleeper, and rise up from the dead,

ALL: and the Messiah will shine on you.

PAUL: Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise—

ALL: making the most of the time, because the days are evil.

SILAS: So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

ALL: And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless actions, but be filled by the Spirit:

PAUL: speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs,

ALL: singing and making music from your heart to the Lord,

SILAS: giving thanks always for everything to God the Father

ALL: in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

PAUL: submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.

Wives and Husbands (Chapter 5)

PAUL: Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord,

ALL: for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.

SILAS: He is the Savior of the body.

ALL: Now as the church submits to Christ, so wives are to submit to their husbands in everything.

PAUL: Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church

ALL: and gave Himself for her to make her holy,

SILAS: cleansing her with the washing of water by the word.

PAUL: He did this to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that,

ALL: but holy and blameless.

SILAS: In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies.

ALL: He who loves his wife loves himself.

PAUL: For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it,

ALL: just as Christ does for the church.

SILAS: As scripture says "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother

PAUL: and be joined to his wife,

ALL: and the two will become one flesh."

PAUL: To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself,

ALL: and the wife is to respect her husband.

Parents, children, slaves, masters (Chapter 6)

PAUL: Children, obey your parents as you would the Lord, because this is right.

ALL: Honor your father and mother,

PAUL: which is the first commandment with a promise,

ALL so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life.

SILAS: Fathers, don't stir up anger in your children,

ALL: but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

SILAS: Slaves, obey your human masters in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ.

ALL: Don't work only while being watched,

SILAS: in order to please men,

ALL: but as slaves of Christ, do God's will from your heart.

PAUL: Serve with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not to men,

ALL: knowing that whatever good each one does, slave or free,

PAUL: he will receive this back from the Lord.

SILAS: Masters, treat your slaves the same way,

ALL: without threatening them,

SILAS: because you know that both their Master and yours is in heaven,

ALL: and there is no favoritism with Him.

Christian Warfare (Chapter 6)

PAUL: Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength.

ALL: Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil.

SILAS: For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities,

ALL: against the world powers of this darkness,

PAUL: against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.

ALL: This is why you must take up the full armor of God,

SILAS: so that you may be able to resist in the evil day,

ALL: and having prepared everything, to take your stand.

PAUL: 14 Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist,

ALL: righteousness like armor on your chest,

SILAS: and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace.

ALL: In every situation take the shield of faith,

SILAS: with it you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

ALL: Take the helmet of salvation,

PAUL: and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word.

ALL: Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request.

SILAS: Stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.

PAUL: Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness ALL: the mystery of the gospel.

PAUL: For this I am an ambassador in chains.

SILAS: Pray that I might be bold enough in Him to speak as I should.

ALL: Peace to the brothers, and love with faith,

SILAS: from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

ALL Grace be with all who have undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Online review games from Ephesians

Ephesians 1-3 hangman

<http://www.quia.com/hm/808743.html>

Ephesians 4-6 rags to riches

<http://www.quia.com/rr/890885.html>