

**W@WEph21**

**Word@Work from BeaconLight**

**PEACE AT LAST**

**Read Ephesians 2:14-15a** *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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Peace is not primarily a feeling - it has substance. It cannot be manufactured by candles or music (although they may produce a sense of calm or tranquillity). Peace is a declaration that war is over. It is based on a clear victory and evidenced by a cease-fire, the laying down of arms and a willing acceptance that the victor has the right to rule.

When Jesus died, He dealt a death blow to the rules and regulations of the Jewish law (which we could not keep anyway). So, all those who relied on keeping the law, were trading in obsolete currency, and could never gain any assurance of peace with God. God was pleased only by people trusting in Jesus; whatever might have been their previous religious habit. It was those differences in piety that caused so much friction in social groups in the 1st century ... and all so unnecessarily, because peace for everybody only comes by trusting in Jesus.

Today, despite aggressively vocal attacks from a few secularists, religion is booming. As the differences become evident it is good to know that God has provided a way of peace for everybody. Since Christ's death there is no set of rules that will bring us to peace with God - only Jesus can do that. And that is a fact worth sharing!

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord Jesus. I am so glad that You abolished the complicated system of religious rules when You died. Now all I have to do is to trust in Your saving grace and rely on You each day. So please keep me trusting in You for my forgiveness and cleansing, and for my righteousness and peace, at work today. In Your Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph22

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### **THE INCLUSIVE JESUS**

**Read Ephesians 2:15b-16** *His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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God never works randomly; everything He says and does will achieve His purposes. The death of Jesus was not, as some suppose, a divisive activity, forcing polarisation upon the world's religions. The Apostle Paul maintains it was a massive act to unite all the Jews and all the Gentiles (non-Jews), everywhere in the world. Jesus was a descendent of Abraham, a Jew and the Christ. In Him, all the aspirations of world religion meet. But Jesus did not just outline a philosophy or recommend a lifestyle, His death provided the only way in which sinful people could be reconciled to the holy God.

Both Jew and Gentile, however pious they may have been about their religion or secularism, were equally unable to reach the heart of God because neither of them were 100% holy, righteous or sinless. Even though the Jews tried to keep the law, they failed as much as the Gentiles who were unconcerned about it. So, there was no moral difference, between those who tried to keep the law (but failed), and those who did not even try. Religious people still think that God gives them 'points for trying', but 'trying hard' is not what God is looking for. He wants 100% sinlessness; and that is only possible if all the sin is paid for and taken away: which is why only Jesus is able to reconcile both Jews and Gentiles to God.

One of the first lessons for new Christians is to realise that they are no better than anybody else. Indeed, the early days of new faith, often expose much more sin in their life than was previously thought to lurk behind the scenes. So there is no room for any one-up-man-ship or 'holier-than-thou' attitude. Christ sets a level playing field for all, and it is important that we explain this to those who somehow think that salvation is beyond their reach - for reasons of past sin, background culture or failed religious efforts. Jesus wants them reconciled to God too.

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord. Thank You for Your equal treatment of all sin (when Jesus died for all) and the equal opportunity for all to receive complete forgiveness through Your grace. Forgive me if I have ever given the impression that I am better than others, making Your salvation inaccessible to my colleagues and friends, for whom You died. In Your Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph23

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### PEACE DECLARATION

**Read Ephesians 2:17-18** *He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and Spanish

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A 'good news' announcement has an amazing effect. Those fearing the worst from the cancer doctor are relieved and then joyful - they feel free. They are free from the uncertainty with its worry, and from the chaos of life into which a more sombre diagnosis threatened to plunge them. Forgiveness of all sin, and acceptance into the intimate household of God, is good news indeed - that is why it is called the Gospel (that just means 'good news').

Gospel preaching took place at the command of Jesus (cf [Matt 28:18-20](#)). Christ was speaking through the apostles (cf [2 Cor 5:20](#)), and that is how we too heard the Gospel. For us, someone took the apostles' words (in the Bible) seriously enough to help us to see the truth in the Gospel; and when we believed, the Holy Spirit declared peace in our hearts. At that moment we were granted free access to Father God and were made His children. That same peace declaration remains true for all who will hear it and respond in faith. And it does not matter how far away they may seem to be.

D.T. Niles (a 20th Century Sri Lankan evangelist) described evangelism as, "one previously starving beggar telling another 'down and out' where to find the bread". The Gospel is Christ preaching through His people. If you mainly link 'preach' with pulpits and hard pews (and therefore think it is not for you), think of 'victory broadcast' or 'group email about vast salary increases' or the excitedly gossiped announcement of an engagement or a new birth. It is good news that you want to share, and cannot hold in. But it is not all up to you, because the Holy Spirit will also be at work. He will help you to see the opportunity, and help you to speak the truth (and to be sufficiently bold). Then He will apply the truth to your friends' heart, and help them to respond in faith and receive Christ's peace. So although it is not all down to us, none of us should wriggle out of playing our part.

**Prayer:** *Father God. Thank you that You want my friends and colleagues to hear Your announcement of peace, as they trust in Jesus. Help me to be bold to see the opportunity to tell the message, and then trust You to apply it to their hearts. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

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## W@WEph24

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### **FULL CITIZENS**

**Read Ephesians 2:19-20** *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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Immigration is a big issue for any government. The right to be a full citizen is rightly guarded, and yet there are foreigners who we believe ought to have the right to stay. The plight of the Ghurkhas who bravely fought for Britain and yet had been denied the right of a home there, brought a wave of indignation: but after a case at the High Court, the government made residence possible. However, convicted criminals are denied visas, and many would say that was right.

But God takes convicted sinners (all human beings) and declares that He wants to give them full rights of citizenship in His heavenly Kingdom. The legalists want to know what good things they have to do in order to qualify (or better still, to jump the queue!). The New Testament apostles (including Paul who wrote this letter) tell us to listen to the Gospel, and believe that a free pardon can be ours as we trust that Jesus died for our sins. It is the same message that the Old Testament prophets wrote about (cf [2 Peter 1:19-20](#)). Both sets of messengers point to Jesus Christ as the centre point of God's plan; the person we must believe in.

Amazingly, Christians are now a part of the largest word-wide, heaven-high kingdom that will ever be. No member can claim any credit - Jesus has won it all for them. No member is any better than any other - Jesus has forgiven all their sins. All have full rights to approach Father God, to be indwelt by His Spirit (cf [Rom 8:9](#)). There are no second class citizens because all have been adopted as children of the King. Whatever your role, grade or rank at work, you are fully accepted by God Himself, and you are a joint heir with Christ of a wonderful inheritance in heaven (cf [Rom 8:17](#)). That should help your confidence! And the privilege should encourage Godly living and gospel speaking; shouldn't it?

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord, thank You for accepting me into Your family and kingdom. It is a great honour that You have given to me. Help me to live as a good citizen of Your kingdom, at work today. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

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## W@WEph25

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### MODULAR ARCHITECTURE

**Read Ephesians 2:21-22** *In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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Paul now changes his analogy for Christians, from a family and kingdom - to a building. Today the great city skylines are dominated by iconic structures, each intended to glorify the architect and the occupants. It is the same with the church. Each person is an individual module in the construction (cf [1 Peter 2:4-8](#)), but together we become 'something else'. Jesus, of course is the stone from which all others are measured; and with the apostles and prophets (cf [Eph 2:19-20](#)), constitute the church's foundation.

Paul makes clear that the church (that is all the people who trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation and sanctification) is an organic and dynamic structure. It grows 'in' Christ, it is joined together 'by' Christ, and it grows to be the place where Christ is seen to live. It is Christ who builds us into the church, as He has done in every previous generation. The purpose of the church is that the Spirit of God will live within it and be at home in us. And all so that the world might see Jesus in action!

The church does not always get a good press, but Jesus is still building it: it is His only plan for the spreading of the gospel and the salvation of all who will receive the truth. But the press does not understand that. Christian charity in the UK is the largest available source of free welfare support to the society; and that is its principal perceived function. But its real function is to be the people who host the living God in themselves and in their midst. Two or three people are enough to function as 'church' in the workplace or neighbourhood (cf [Matthew 18:20](#)). In their fellowship, the truth and love of Jesus lives and breathes. So don't stop meeting together (cf [Hebrews 10:25](#)); and if you have not stated a regular meeting of believers at your work - why not start one?

**Prayer:** *Father God. Thank you that I am a part of your organic and dynamic building, created by Jesus Christ for His glory and our blessing. Help me to practice a spiritual dialogue with other believers at work, to encourage each other in our work and witness, and to pray for our colleagues and those who make the major decisions. Thank you that You live in me and are specially known in our fellowship at work. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph26

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### **TRAPPED BUT CONTENT**

**Read Ephesians 3:1** *For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and Spanish

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It is not a nice feeling to be trapped in a lift (when will I get out?); or to be trapped in a job you detest (when can I get a new job?). But, it is worse to be locked out of a job that you love, or excluded from a relationship that you yearn for. Being 'trapped' in a job you really enjoy, is fine; so is the 'entrapment' of marriage to the person you love. It is not the loss of freedom which is the issue, but rather your attitude to the restriction. Depending on how you view it, you will either resent or delight in 'being trapped'.

The Apostle Paul was in prison and, although other letters indicated that he would rather have been a travelling evangelist and church planter, he was content with his circumstances. Why? Paul's attitude was shaped by that of Jesus (cf [Phil 2:5-13](#)). Jesus had not been trapped, even though he was unfairly tried and wrongly crucified - He knew it was the Father's will. Likewise, Paul knew that he was in prison for the sake of Jesus (the Holy Spirit had already prepared him cf [Acts 20:23](#)) and so he was easy. In his mind, it was not the Jews or Romans that put him in prison, but Jesus who had put him there. And indeed so, for while in prison, unable to tour the churches with personal teaching, he wrote many of the letters that now form our New Testament. So in a sense, he was there by the command of Jesus, for us.

Our own reactions to difficulty at work or home may need to be checked by knowing that, although you may not have chosen your circumstances, the Lord is going to use you in them - if you let Him. If we belong to Christ, He has the right to deploy us wherever He chooses. Trusting that we are placed strategically by His appointment, we can be confident that there is a good reason for it. And usually it has to do with conveying His truth to others. Resentment only leads to bitterness, and that is not a good basis on which to share Jesus. So why not give thanks for where you are and trust the Lord to use you - in His way.

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord. I accept that my circumstances are not random events but orchestrated under Your hand. Help me to trust that You will use me where I am, and not to resent what You have allowed. Help me to share your truth by example and explanation - I don't know who may respond but You do. And enable me to persist confident that you know everything that I do not. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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**W@WEph27**

**Word@Work from BeaconLight**

**TRUSTED WITH THE TRUTH**

**Read Ephesians 3:2-3** *Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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If you have ever been involved with dealing with someone's finances after their death, you will know the task is rarely straightforward. If there is no executor, 'letters of administration' are granted by courts in England: they give authority to a named individual, who is responsible to the court, for the proper distribution of the estate. This is the sort of thing that Paul writes about here. He is saying that the Lord Jesus has given him the gospel message, with detailed explanations, so that he can distribute it. He sees himself as a trustee (administration here means 'held in trust') with the task of telling the message of God's grace to His beneficiaries (among whom are the Ephesian believers, and us who trust in Jesus).

The gospel of God's grace is also described as a 'mystery'. The word means 'a hidden thing that is intended to be made clear', as opposed to occultism that intends to keep people in the dark. Paul, with all his learning and academic understanding of the Old Testament, had never understood the gospel - until Jesus revealed it to him. It was the same for us and will continue to be so for future generations of believers: we and they are incapable of working out God's grace until He explains it to us using the Bible. That is where the 'letters of administration' come in. Paul knows that it is his job to explain the truth convincingly to people's minds. Jesus gave him the authority and Paul was still doing it, even from prison ... and he is doing it for us too as we read the same letters.

Some Christians think that there is little point in sharing about Jesus with those who don't believe. But their unbelief is just the reason why we should! Most do not know what is true about the gospel, so they cannot believe it. Explaining what the Bible says is the only way our friends will get to know the facts. This essential trustee responsibility seems, all too often, to be left behind in church on Sunday - when it is intended for the working week as well. On Sunday we give thanks for the gospel; and the rest of the week we should give voice to it. As we do, the Holy Spirit will do His special work of convicting hearts, exposing sin and uncovering the mystery of God's grace.

**Prayer:** *Father God. Thank You that somebody took the initiative to explain your gospel to me. Help me, as a trustee of your truth to distribute it to those who You want to be its beneficiaries. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph28

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### REVELATION FOR DISTRIBUTION

**Read Ephesians 3:4-5** *In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.(NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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Reading is generally informative, sometimes inspirational and on rare occasions, life-changing. But Paul's statement, that he is presenting the truth about Christ, that God had not fully unpacked previously, is a seriously unique claim. What he writes is not 'automatic writing', but a reasoned explanation of what Jesus Christ has done. However his wisdom is not through any superior intellect but by revelation (cf v.3). The Holy Spirit had told him how to understand the Old Testament, and how it is fulfilled in Jesus.

Paul knew that the Holy Spirit was at work in his mind. Previously he made such little sense of Jesus that the Christians were considered to be a dangerous and subversive sect. Now he had joined them. God had changed his mind. Before, he could do no better than his academic thoughts would allow; now he was crystal clear about the Divinity of Jesus and the nature of His sacrifice.

Paul, rightly, did not then shrug his shoulders and assume that the Holy Spirit would speak directly to everybody else. He knew that his role was foundational for the church. The role of the church leaders (like those in Ephesus) was to read what Paul had written, in order that others might also understand what God had said. That remains the task of the church, and all of us who are a part of it, wherever we may live or work.

**Prayer:** *Gracious Father. Thank you for giving the apostle Paul the insight to understand your purposes in Christ. Help me to read in order to learn, and then to pass on what You have said. Please give me some opportunity today to do both. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph29

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### **NOBODY EXCLUDED**

**Read Ephesians 3:6** *This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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Clubs have rules which say who may qualify to become a member. Those rules also automatically exclude others. The Jews had, rightly believed that they were special to God: but to say that others did not matter to Him was false. From the time of God's commission to Abraham, it was God's intention that everybody might receive His blessing (cf [Gen 12:2-3](#)) through His chosen people. But, with only a few exceptions, everybody else fought against God's authority; and it is the same today.

God's secret plan (mystery) was not to divide people, but to establish the basis on which He could bring them together. That basis was not Abraham, but Jesus Christ. That is why any attempt to bring religions together, on the basis of shared origins, is flawed, because Abraham's purpose was to look forward to Jesus. [John 8:56](#) quotes Jesus as saying, "Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." (NIV) So the work of Jesus was to give the same rights to the Gentiles as to the Jews: but more than that ... Jesus gave to believing Jews a far greater set of privileges than they ever had before. Only in Jesus can both Jew and Gentile find equality, assurance of forgiveness, direct access into God's presence and peace with Him.

Those who want to stay within the 'club rules' of religion, will always sidestep Jesus, or attack His right to rule. But those who have come to know Him, understand how amazingly kind and gracious and inclusive He is. God's purpose is to bring everything together under Christ (cf [Eph 1:10](#)). That message is the responsibility of us Christians: its intended recipients are people from every 'tribe, language, ethnic group and nation' (cf [Rev 5:9](#)) ... nobody is left out! So let's not be timid thinking that Jesus is just for Christians - He is for everybody! So let's not be timid.

**Prayer:** *Father God. Thank you that Jesus is not just for me but for all my friends and colleagues. Help me to live and speak so that they may know that He loves them, whatever their background. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph30

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### **POWER TO WIN THROUGH**

**Read Ephesians 3:7** *I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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A job description that included extremely hard work, imprisonment, flogging, stoning, shipwreck, hunger sleep deprivation and hypothermia (cf [2 Cor 11:23-28](#)) - would not attract many applicants. Paul's devotion to his work was no ascetic exercise to purify the soul. It was obedience to the call of Jesus Christ to preach the gospel. Paul had known the immense change that came to his own life, when he submitted to Jesus; and so he was willing to sacrifice everything, in order that others could hear the gospel too.

But altruism was never enough. When Paul received God's grace in Christ, (and chose to work with Him instead of fighting against the Lord), that grace become a motivator to serve his new Master. It was a powerful life-change, and one which was repeatedly proved as the apostle encountered one difficulty after another. Those trials are the test of servant-heartedness. And Paul passed with distinction. It is one thing to talk about the power of God, but it is only seen for real when you are willing to keep serving the truth in the face of severe opposition.

Without persecution, some Christians become self-centred and self-serving. Church can become either a club or spiritual tourism; witness translates as being nice; and ministry is confined to the times when it is convenient. Much talk about power in worship, but little evidence of endurance in difficulty. The power of God is not an exciting add-on for the good times but a combination of guts and grace for the rough patches. Keeping a gospel look-out at all times will stretch us almost to breaking point in the storm ... but that is when the promised power of God wins through.

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord. Help me to be willing to serve Your gospel in my workplace as well as community; trusting in Your grace and always relying on Your power, whatever the challenges. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph31

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### **DOWN BUT NOT OUT**

**Read Ephesians 3:8-9** *Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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God's only perfect servant on earth was Jesus Christ. All the rest were, and are, rough diamonds at best. From the dishonesty of Abraham, the grumbling of Moses and the adultery of David; to tax-collector Matthew, arrogant Peter and nervous Timothy - their flaws showed through. But few had such a 'colourful' background as Paul. He was a religious bigot, a self-righteous academic, and cruel to the point of inhumanity. For God to save him was grace indeed; and to appoint him as the last apostle was generous in the extreme.

Indeed, Paul felt had experienced more grace than any believer, because his antagonism to Christ and the church has been expressed so violently. Paul never forgot what he had been saved from, and that gave him insight that even the most hardened and violent official was not beyond God's reach; nor was the most bigoted religious cleric. His grateful humility enabled God's authority to be known in the preaching.

Far from disqualifying us from serving the Lord, our past experiences will be used by Him. They will keep us humble and grateful; full of praise and devoted to prayer: such attitudes mark out fleshly service from spiritual ministry. At the same time we can look at the lost with new eyes ... even the most rebellious are as saveable as the nicest ignorant person. Do we subconsciously categorise our colleagues into those who might get saved and those who might not? If so, we are not thinking Biblically. It is not our goodness but the presentation of the gospel by God's power that points people towards Jesus, whether they are good or bad - it makes no difference.

**Prayer:** *Father God. I know that I am acceptable to You only through your grace, help me to see others in the same way - and to live, work, speak and pray that they may find their peace through Christ alone, irrespective of their background of behaviour. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph32

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### RESTORED MASTERPIECES

**Ephesians 3:10-11** *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 which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and Spanish

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Staff are an employer's finest asset or greatest liability. However, Jesus' choice of the disciples might not have seemed wise. Mostly they were a rough lot with little education. The Corinthian church members had been worse: sexually immoral, thieves, drunkards, embezzlers and extortionists (cf [1 Cor 6:9-11](#)). The apostle Paul himself was previously an arrogant, bigoted, blasphemous, cruel and violent-minded man. But it was people like that who God chose - not because they were good, but because He would display His glory in changing them to become like Jesus.

Churches are (are should be) full of such salvaged lives. Jesus said that He had not come to call the righteous, but sinners who would repent (cf [Luke 5:32](#)). That is why He called us; and He is still calling those in our workplace even though they may have deaf ears now. Secularists assume that God is collecting nice, naïve people. Wrong. He is forming a church out of the most streetwise, perverted, manipulative and blasphemous people you can imagine (and those who don't do it but think it). Why? So that God can be seen as the only person in the universe who has the will to forgive, the power to purify, the strength to implant into weakness; and the grace to replace pride with humility.

The world observes this, Satan cannot help noticing and the angels rejoice. In God's people, you see the kaleidoscope of God's powerful wisdom, achieving His purpose of transforming sin-wrecked lives into living masterpieces. This was always His plan. So there is no lifestyle so blighted that God cannot renew it. No colleagues so irreligious that God cannot call them. And there is no Christian so defeated that God cannot bring them to peace and purpose. The workplace is full of people who God loves: He is waiting to pour out His grace on you and them. The key is trusting Jesus.

**Prayer:** *Father God. Thank you for choosing me to be in Your kingdom and family. I know that You can transform anybody by Your power through the blood of Christ. Help me to trust that You will do this for my friends and colleagues, and not be afraid of their negative comments. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph33

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### NEW CONFIDENCE

**Ephesians 3:12-13** *In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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A brave face at work gives the impression that you are up to the job. The reality may be different. True confidence is not the product of management training or assertiveness courses; it comes from a heart at peace and a mind full of good purpose. The greater the challenge, more confidence is needed. That is true at work when speaking with the boss's boss or others higher up the ladder. Interviews also need that extra confidence. So, what kind of confidence do we need to approach Almighty God himself?

With our sin and its curse, coming to God would not be possible. But when we know our sin is paid for, and its curse has fallen onto Jesus - there is nothing more to fear. More than that, we are accepted as we repent and receive Christ. It is His sacrifice that gives us confidence to come up to God's awesome throne, as His child. Whatever else may discourage us, and however hard it is for us or others to obey Jesus, the death and resurrection of Jesus gives us a whole new freedom: freedom to come to Father God, without any fear.

Of course, confidence in one area may give us courage to face other matters. When we are confident that we are acceptable to God, and welcomed by Him; that should bring strength and boldness in every area of life. So, instead of trying to pluck up courage for the little things, if you are trusting in Jesus then practice a bold approach to His throne to ask for mercy and grace to help you in all your needs. That is why confident prayer is the best way to face the hassles of even the meanest workplace.

**Prayer:** *Father God. Thank you that you accept me fully when I trust in Jesus, repenting of my sins. Please give me fresh confidence in Your love so that I may be strong for all the lesser matters at work today. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph34

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### IT'S GOOD TO BELONG

**Ephesians 3:14-15** *For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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Despite our society's preoccupation with individual achievement, most people want to belong to a loving family. Those, whose family is like that, often underestimate their privilege; while others may despair of ever being embraced by that kind of relationship. Our emotional stability depends on secure relationships, and so humans seek them wherever they can. And so it is easy to throw ourselves into work, which for many provides a substitute family.

The best place to look for satisfying relationship, is to Father God. He invented 'family'. He is described as 'Father', not only because He is the ultimate life-giver, but because He has always been the head of the divine family of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When He created people in 'His image', He created people designed to relate in families, as the basis of society. The Jewish people understood that they were special to Him as subjects to a King, and children in a family. Although the Old Testament Jews were reluctant to call God, 'Father', [Psalm 68:5](#) describes Him as 'as father of the fatherless'. It was Jesus who often spoke of His Father, and was clear that He is our Father too (cf [John 20:17](#)).

The wonderful thing about believing in Jesus, is that we also find we have a Father who loves us personally. We are included into a family and we have a place where we belong, by right. But then our human family also becomes an even more special place; maybe there are difficulties, but having a heavenly Father who invented 'family' we have somebody we can talk to about the situation. We should therefore be encouraged that we know the one person who can make a dysfunctional family, whole; and good family, brilliant. And many of our colleagues really need this kind of Father too: guess who is there to tell them!

**Prayer:** *Father God. Thank You for including me in Your family so that I can talk to You about everything that matters to me and my friends. Because You understand what 'family' is all about, please help me to be a blessing to my family, and to pray specifically so that Your grace and power and glory may be seen there too. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph35

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### HUMAN RESOURCES

**Ephesians 3:16-17a** *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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The business world sees its resources as money coming into the bank from confirmed orders, repeat business and successful marketing campaigns. And stockholdings are generated on confidence in the company's performance in the future. Of course the most important resources are quality raw materials, sound intellectual property and good staff. However Christians have a personal energy, power and confidence that do not rely on the business cycle, but depend solely on God.

Paul prays that God will give these resources, freely, because the Christians can never pay for them, cannot earn them and do not deserve them. Our greatest resource is having Christ resident in the place where we weigh things up and make our decisions (our hearts). The impact of His presence should be even more significant than a world-expert advising a board. Knowing how to deal rightly and wisely will inevitably give confidence. And understanding the situation from God's point of view will enable courageous decision-making, and leadership.

Praying in the workplace should be second-nature for the Christian. Praying together with others is also a powerful antidote to complaining over coffee. Those who believe that God has power and answers prayer will meet regularly to do so. Some prayer groups, requesting a meeting room, have told their bosses that they want to pray for them, and the business! If other faith groups can request such a meeting, surely believers in the 'God who answers prayer' should have the confidence to claim the same right. Some Word@Work readers have already done that. Do let us know if you have too!

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord. Forgive me when I have failed to pray for my bosses, employees and colleagues at work. I know that You can act powerfully when Christians pray: please help me to take this responsibility seriously. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph36

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### **SATURATED BY LOVE**

**Ephesians 3:17b-19** *And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and Spanish

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It is not often that you are allowed into your senior manager's plans for the future of the business. But Christians have the privilege of knowing much more about God and His purposes. Jesus said that He did not call his disciples, 'servants', but 'friends' with whom He would share so much (cf [John 15:13-15](#)). The Bible lets us into the secrets of creation and the end of the world; something of the mysteries of heaven and hell; and to know the extreme depth of God's love for us. And that is not only knowledge, but power.

All those who are confident of God's love in Christ, become settled in their hearts and steady in their minds. They develop the ability to receive God's love, more and more; they become filled with His love so that they can overflow with genuine love for others. Paul's prayer is that this process might continue gathering momentum, until every believer is saturated with the loving character of Christ. Being loved by God, is not just a matter of factual understanding, it is a decision to allow Him to 'reach the parts' that nothing else can reach, as He gives to you all that He has for you. Our role is to receive, and to respond with thanks.

The workaday world is intended to be functional; it demands that you achieve objectives. God's love is relational and gives even more than we dare to ask. The person who is satisfied by that love, should be in a good position to ease working relationships and tackle the daily demands without the stress of personal insecurity. Such a man or woman can pray through the problems, relaxed that when we don't have the answer, God does. To go home with a mind and heart full of thanksgiving for answered prayer, and power to make godly decisions, is the sign of a good day's work - experiencing Christ's love.

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord. Please help me, today, to remember how much You love me, and to receive Your love so that I may be filled up inside with what fills You. May my confidence in Your ability to guide and guard me keep growing, as I seek to make decisions that will please you. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph37

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### COMMITMENT AT WORK

**Ephesians 3:20-21** *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and Spanish

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'Commitment' is something that employers demand of us. But we also expect them to be committed to us, in providing wages or salary, reasonable working conditions and various benefits. In a time of recession, we may wonder if they can keep their side of the employment bargain, when the customers may evaporate and the business overheads make it difficult to balance the books. However God has no such limitations. Whatever happens, He is still God.

God is not limited by circumstances or the reactions of other people. He does not have to borrow to maintain enough provision for all, because He owns everything and has unlimited resources. His generosity is not restrained by our poor moral-credit rating, and He never tires of working with us, and putting His power within us. His 'handouts' always exceed our requests either in quantity or quality (or both), and His bounty is never capped by our limited imagination to ask for the best. This is the God who never changes and fully intends to amaze and astound us so that we will give Him the glory He deserves.

If such a Person has committed Himself to us, never to walk out on us or drop us in the downturn, should we not be confident? His commitment to us, far exceeds ours to Him. The stories of His astonishingly generous actions ring through the generations and will fill heaven. But what about today? Even if our circumstances change, He never will. So this is a great day to give thanks for all we have received and all that is going to come from His hand. It is also a great day to be confident in the Lord. That confidence is the mark of secure relationship. So, "*Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will direct your paths.*" (NLT) ([Prov 3:5-6](#)).

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord. Thanks You for Your unlimited provision for my needs and for those around me that you are drawing to Yourself. Help me to dare to ask bigger prayers and never to be slow in giving thanks for the answers. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph38

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### **RIGHTS ISSUE**

**Ephesians 4:1-2** *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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Prison is not an ideal setting for an author, but it certainly concentrated Paul's mind on His book. He was writing about the cause of His imprisonment - his love and service of the gospel of Christ. It certainly got him into trouble but he was able to write from the experience of knowing that the violence and intimidation of the world could never stop the gospel. Likewise, his gentleness and humility were more powerful than military forces in turning people from idols to serve the true and living God (cf [1 Thess 1:9](#)).

So Paul urged his readers not to retaliate against their persecutors with the same aggression (cf [John 18:36](#)). Neither should they use the same tactics in internal power struggles within the fellowship. In Jesus' kingdom, the power comes from love; and 'love' is a word that describes sacrificial self-giving to meet the needs of another. It is easy to talk 'love' or to imagine the pleasure of being loved, but that is not real love. We are called to receive God's love (sacrificially paid for) and then to dispense that love sacrificially: that is our calling.

It is not easy to choose to serve others at work, especially if you work in a place where dog eats dog. But humble and joyful service is the Jesus' way. Other Christians can be more of a hindrance than a help at times, but the humble spirit will crack nuts that dent sledgehammers. However much you may wish you were elsewhere, rejoice that you are where God wants to use you. Your experience may never rival that of the persecuted church, those victimised for their faith or believers who are the continual butt of their family's malicious humour - but those who stand up best for Christ are those who lay down their rights as they serve others. So perhaps it might help to rethink your personal human relations policy ... for His sake.

**Prayer:** *Gracious God. As You have given up so much for me, may I have the courage to lay down my rights in order that my colleagues may see that You alone are always in the right. I know I can trust You to protect me, even when it gets tough. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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## W@WEph39

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### **SPIRITUAL UNITY WITH INTEGRITY**

**Ephesians 4:3-6** *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - in English, and Spanish

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In our individualistic world, there are almost as many religious and philosophical cliques as there are family groups. It has always been so. A god or idea to suit the wide variety of appetites (cf [2 Tim 4:3-4](#)), is the common human folly. By and large, humans create the gods that we think we might be able to reach or, at least, which provide enough incentive to move forwards by our own efforts.

But when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is very different. His Spirit comes to live in us (cf [Romans 8:9](#)). His function is to bind us organically into the body of Christ, so that we become a properly functional part of what Christ is doing in the world. He chooses how he will link us with other believers so that He can do His work through us. None of us has all of God, but if we are willing for Him to have all of us, then He will fit us into His purposes.

Superficial unity without integrity has bedevilled the church for centuries. Some have tried to achieve a cosmetic unity by agreeing a form of words, to which everybody can subscribe - even though they mean different things by the same words. Others use spiritual organisations as a power base; and yet others use fellowship as a means to achieve their personal agendas. Those kinds of association cannot be invested with the Holy Spirit's power because there is no true oneness of heart. Unity in the invisible God can only come through a shared belief of His revealed truth, and its accompanying behaviour. So where two or three people commit themselves to God's truth and meet in His Name, Jesus is there (cf [Matt 18:20](#)).

So if you know others who are trusting Jesus in your workplace, why not meet regularly to discuss a Bible passage (Word@Work could be a good start) and pray. As you do, you can present yourselves as willing volunteers to work with Him: then He will work through you, and far exceed your expectations! (And please [let the Word@Work team know](#), so that we can pray for you!)

**Prayer:** *Father God. Thank you for others around me at work; who also have made their peace with You at the cross of Jesus. Please link me in organic trust and integrity with those who share in Your Spirit and my workplace, and show us how to be Your representatives there. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

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## W@WEph40

### Word@Work from BeaconLight

#### **EQUIPPED BY GOD**

**Ephesians 4:7** *But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. (NIV)*

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You can read the verses around this Bible passage from the [Internet Bible](#): - *in English, and Spanish*

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As we progress at work, we sit examinations to prove our knowledge-base, and go on courses to increase our skill-base. In theory, we could all be CEO, if there were enough jobs. But there are other limitations too. Nobody has the natural ability to fill every role, even if coached. So we are at our best when the demands of the job are matched by our natural aptitude and ability. The skill of management is to find those attributes, and put them to work in a creative mix of colleagues.

But the people of God operate somewhat differently. That is not to say that competence and efficiency should be outlawed in the church (although some Christians appear to think that is a virtue)! Natural talents may be of use to God, but that is up to Him. He has little use for excellence done in the flesh to please us; in fact He often uses people who think that they are nothing and have little to offer. He uses them because they trust Him and not themselves. They may be out of their own comfort zone, but they are comfortable knowing that they are serving their Heavenly Father who loves them and helps them. The real work of the body of Christ relies on supernatural skills that come from Him to achieve supernatural objectives, which will then glorify Him.

God gives these abilities to Christians just as He sees fit. It is not a question of important gifts being given to important people. He gives just the right gift to the person who He can trust to use it in the right way. Spiritual gifts are not toys to show off with, but tools designed for hard work. Because it is not easy to properly assess oneself, Christian fellowship provides a great opportunity to identify the gifts we have each been given, and to encourage each other in using them to God's glory ... even at work!

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord. Thank you for entrusting me with your grace. Help me to use what you have given to me for Your glory - and help me to encourage my Christian colleagues at work to use their gifts too. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

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