



Why Is The Church So Blessed Up?

Ephesians 1

Icebreaker:

What's one good thing you experience by being connected to Bridgeway?

The Study:

If you've been in the church for any length of time, you've probably had the thought at one time or another, "Why is the church so messed up?" The apostle Paul had every reason to think that, when you look at how many letters he wrote to churches who were experiencing problems. But in Ephesians, Paul gives us a glimpse at the Church as seen through God's eyes. And for all its warts and wrinkles, what Paul shows us is that if we are part of the Lord's Church, then we are part of something that is big, blessed and beautiful beyond our wildest imagination.



1. Let's begin the study by taking a moment and reading through all of chapter 1 in one sitting.

Now write out below five observations that loom large in your thinking from chapter 1. Just go with your first impressions. After you're finished, if you're in a group, share one of your observations.

2. Paul is writing *"to the saints who are in Ephesus"*. In the world, sainthood is conferred to someone after a lifetime of righteous living. In the Bible, sainthood is assigned to a person the moment they repent and come to Christ. God calls us first, and then we are summoned to live up to the calling we have received (look at Ephesians 4:1).

Why do you think this is significant?

3. *"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."* In the Bible, grace always precedes true peace. You can have peace without being in a relationship with Christ, but it's very different from the peace that is built upon God's grace. How so?

4. Read verse 3. Three times Paul uses a form of the same Greek word for "bless". (If you're reading from the NIV, you'll miss this. It's not that the NIV is bad. The NIV translation strives to be understandable, while the goal of the ESV, NASB, etc. is to be accurate, closer to the Greek. It's why we should study from different English translations.) Paul's point is that if we understand how spiritually "blessed" we are, then we'll readily "bless" (worship) the Lord.

How would you rate your love and worship for the Lord right now?

Cold As Ice 1 2 3 4 5 On Fire For the Lord

We said in the teaching that if your worship life is on the cold side these days, it might be one of two reasons: 1) you're not fully aware of all the blessings that God has given you, or 2) you're more focused on material blessings than you are on the spiritual blessings the Lord gives. ("The world is too much with us," said Wordsworth). Meditate on these thoughts for a few minutes, then write down some of your musings, or share them with the group.

5. “[God the Father] chose us [in Christ] before the foundation of the world...”

Do you believe this? What difference would this make when you look in the mirror if you called this to mind more often?

6. “...that we should be holy and blameless before him.”

This verse supports the idea we often say that we should “make a difference for good and for God in the world.” If you ever feel bored with your life, or ever find yourself despairing that your life doesn’t mean anything, how might this verse help you?

7. “In love he predestined us...”

What do the following verses teach about predestination?

Psalm 139:16

Isaiah 48:3-5

Acts 2:23

Romans 8:28-30

The teaching of predestination is not meant to confuse us (though there are certainly aspects of it that are mindblowing!) But it is meant to comfort us and give us courage to face the future. How so?

8. In verses 5-14, Paul writes the most beautiful run-on sentence in the history of literature, as he describes the greatness of our salvation. Along the way he uses a number of words which shine out like jewels. Take a couple of moments to think deeply about each of the following words. Write down a sentence or two about each one, then share your thoughts.

Adoption (vs.5)

Redemption (vs.7)

Forgiveness (vs.7)

Sealed with the Spirit (vs. 13)

Heir/Inheritance (vss. 11, 14)

9. Read verses 15-23, which is Paul’s benediction for this great chapter. In this benediction, Paul asks that we might grow in our knowledge of Christ, by understanding the hope, the riches, and the power that we have in being part of Christ’s body.

Write down one way in which studying chapter 1 has helped you with this.

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