

The Essentials: Ephesians

Session 1

Opening Collect

Together: Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Watch Video

Read: Ephesians 1:1-14

Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

1. When Paul thinks about what's going on in the world it results in wonder and praise. How might we cultivate this in our own lives?
2. The first thing that Paul points out is his amazement at our election. On the back of your question sheet, circle the words in the passage used to describe our election in Christ. What are some of the terms? How might those words define (or *redefine*) the way you think about election?
3. The second thing that Paul is amazed at is God's plan to unite all things into the life of God (v 10). This is not just a statement about human history, but a statement about the entire cosmos. Do you ever think about all of history having a sequence or "story"? If so, how have you thought about it?
4. Note specifically the description of God's grand cosmic plan (vv. 8b-10) and our individual places within it (vv. 11 and 13). Discuss how you, individually, being made part of this cosmic plan this makes you feel.
5. Union with God sounds abstract, but in fact answers the deep relational need for all people to belong to God and others. All of our experiences of belonging echo this deep cosmic plan. Have you ever heard the Christian hope articulated in this way?
6. Is there something in this passage that you sense God intends just for you to hear?

Closing Prayer

Ephesians 1:1-14

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

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

[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, [6] to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. [7] In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, [8] which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight [9] making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

[11] In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, [12] so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. [13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (ESV)