

Ephesians

A CHURCH ALIVE IN CHRIST

MAY 21, 2023

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Ephesians is a letter written by the apostle Paul to Christians living in the city of Ephesus in order to strengthen their faith, promote their unity, and exhort them to holiness. He reminds them of God's great grace and the spiritual blessings every believer possesses. He prays for them to grow in their knowledge of God and what He has done for them in Christ. He emphasizes grace in the salvation of believers and prays that they would be able to comprehend the love of Christ and that they would be filled with the fullness of God.

MESSAGE TAKEAWAYS:

**BEFORE WE'LL EVER SEE CHANGE FOR CHRIST,
WE NEED TO BE CHANGED BY CHRIST.**

Week 1 we looked at Ephesians 1:1-2. Take time as a group to reread this passage out loud. Invite any to share key words and phrases or repeated words that stand out in the passage. Feel free to have multiple readers in different translations (sometimes hearing the way others translate a word/phrase differently can shed more light on the truth the Holy Spirit wants us to hear.)

CONVERSATION QUESTIONS:

- Paul starts his letter with three descriptors: ***apostle, of Christ Jesus, by the will of God.*** The definition of apostle is "to commission, send forth, someone sent (commissioned), focusing back on the authority (commissioning) of the sender." What do you notice about the emphasis in these descriptions? Where is the focus? How does this truth that ***the most important thing you need to know about me is the One who sent me*** shape our understanding of life as a follower of Jesus?

- Prior to unpacking the term “saint” what were your thoughts or understanding of this word? What questions do you still have? How has God begun to change your understanding? ***Saints: holy ones, set apart ones.***
- “A saint never ties back to the worth of that person.” How does this statement and God’s Word shape how we view ourselves? How do we view others? As needed, confess with one another and pray with one another, offering intercession rather than opinion, asking the Holy Spirit to change us to see others rightly as God sees them.
- Re-read Acts 26:15-18. How does this passage along with the idea that our new identity as followers of Jesus shape where our focus should be and the activity that should mark our lives individually and corporately? Take time as a community or an individual and ask the Holy Spirit to give clarity to those you are entrusted to proclaim the goodness of Jesus.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

*Pastor Brannon asked us **have you ever asked Jesus to change you?** Maybe you have never confessed Jesus as Lord and surrendered your life to Him. Maybe you have a part of your life that you have never been willing to let Jesus change. Like David in the Psalms, a posture of worship and prayer is to say: “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” (Psalm 139)*

First Steps (IDENTIFY): find space to pray and ask Jesus to guide you by the Holy Spirit to answer these questions honestly and reveal parts of your life that the Father longs to change and redeem for His glory.

- How do I describe myself?
- How do I think about myself?
- How do I introduce myself?
- What do I lean on for my identity?
- Where do I go for my security?

Next Steps (CONFESS/REPENT): As the Holy Spirit convicts you of areas in your life and things that you look to and make much of outside of Him, things that are out of line with His Word and His leading, make steps to confess and repent. Take inventory and pray over specific situations/thought patterns/relationships. As needed, ask for your community to pray with you or seek out a conversation with a Pastor: <https://ncchapel.churchcenter.com/people/forms/551596>