

Ephesians

A CHURCH ALIVE IN CHRIST

MAY 28, 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:

Week 3 we looked at ***Ephesians 1:15-23*** and the truth that because of Jesus, through His Word, we can know what God says about us, and what God has done for us is the most important thing we can fix our eyes on in our day-to-day lives. 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:

- Pastor John mentioned how we have different people and memories that remind us and speak to us throughout our lives, sometimes speaking louder to us than they should. He challenged us to see God, through His Word, as the loudest voice that speaks the fullness of truth. Share as a group how you've struggled or been encouraged to let God's Word (through the Bible) speak truth to you. In what ways has it been challenging?

- Read out Matthew 22:36-40. How does loving Jesus with all that we are shape how we view and interact with others around us? How does it change us to not view them as someone we need something from but as someone Jesus has entrusted us to love?
- Paul talks about love towards all the saints – remembering back to week 1, a saint is someone who is in Christ (not a special higher-tier of Christian). What are tangible ways you are living this out or how is the Holy Spirit convicting you to live this out?

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Pastor John's illustration of knowing that what Jesus says about us is the most important – not trying to earn something more or gain additional love from the Father. In Christ, what He says and how He sees you is the fullness of His love, grace, and mercy. Your identity because of Jesus is that you are fully a child of God. But often, other people, voices, and experiences drown out the truth of God's Word.

First Steps (IDENTIFY): Find space this week to personally take inventory. Start in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the incorrect words and identity statements you are carrying. You can make a list or draw photos of people or seasons where you are carrying a word, label, or identity that was spoken over you.

If this seems odd, it's okay. If this is confusing, here are a few examples: Maybe a school teacher who always told you you'd never amount to anything, that now as an adult you realize doubt wells up in you when you try and do tasks. Maybe you've always fought for attention, so you get fearful that you aren't seen or known unless you stand out and you carry this into trying to stand out to earn the favor of God instead of knowing that because of Jesus, because of what His Word says, You are His.

Next Steps (CONFESS/REPENT): As the Holy Spirit brings to mind things in your life or postures where you are not living in who He says you are, confess that to God and ask Him to give you faith to believe that He is enough.

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>