



Ephesians 1 v 1-14

Chosen and Secure – Leader's version

For an hour study, just do the starred * questions

Check in – ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they feel about studying the Bible today.

Before we start...

*1. What does Ephesians 4 v 1 tells us about the man who wrote this letter and his purpose in writing?

He was a prisoner. (His crime was sharing the gospel, which was against Roman law). The relevance of this is that if Paul can live for Jesus as a Roman prisoner, anyone can live for Jesus anywhere.

The purpose of the letter is that the readers would live a life worthy of their calling. Think about the calling we have received, encourage the group to identify their calling i.e. to follow and obey Jesus (it's not referring to vocational calling).

What does the passage say and mean?

Read v1-2

*2. Who is writing the letter?

Paul. Spend a few minutes asking what the group know about Paul, and telling them a bit about his background.

3. How does he describe himself in v1?

An apostle of Jesus, by the will of God (not by his own decision). An apostle means 'somebody specially chosen, called and sent to teach with authority' (Stott 2008, p21). The New Testament apostles were the first generation of evangelists and were specially commissioned and inspired by God to write the books and letters that make up the NT.

*4. Who is the letter written to?

God's holy people in Ephesus (a Greek city) i.e. Christians. The readers already know the gospel.

The temple to the goddess Diana (Artemis), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was in Ephesus.

There was a massive temple cult for Diana; Christians were the persecuted minority.

*5. How are these people described and what do you think that means?

Faithful in Christ Jesus i.e. faithful Christians.

6. On whose behalf does Paul send greetings?

God the Father and Jesus Christ. This reminds us that the letter is really from God.

The hope of Heaven Read v3-14

*7. **STICKERS** What effect has sin had on humanity?

Sin has separated us from God. God is holy, and cannot be in the presence of sin, because it is so offensive to him. We are not holy and blameless. Sin results in death (Gen 3 v 19).

Questions 8-10 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. Let the group work on them in pairs.

*8. **SDL** What did Jesus do that means we can be holy and blameless in God's sight and so be adopted into His family? (v7)

He redeemed us through his blood: He died on the cross, in our place, and paid the ransom for our sin. The price of our sin was death, that's why Jesus had to die to save us. Only by repenting and believing in Jesus' death and resurrection on our behalf can we be forgiven, and then God sees us as holy and blameless.

*9. **SDL** What are believers **chosen** to be? (v4). How does it make you feel to hear this?

*10. **SDL** Why does God want to **adopt** us into His family? (end of v4-v5)

He loves us, it brings him pleasure and is according to His will. It's not because we deserve it! Think about what it means to be adopted into God's family – belonging, community, identity, worth to God etc.

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When you trust and believe that Jesus died for your sins, you are adopted as a child of God. If you are a Christian, how does the knowledge that you are adopted by God affect the way you live today?

Give out copies of Ephesians 1 v 1-14.

11. On your paper copy of Ephesians 1 v 1-14, circle all the evidence that God had a plan in saving you. What are we to learn from this?

12. Read v3-10. What was the aim of God's plan?

Salvation

13. Read v11-12. What was the second (even greater) aim of God's plan?

To bring glory to God

14. Having believed and trusted in Jesus' death for you, what more do you need to do to earn forgiveness from God?

Nothing. We cannot pay God back or contribute to what Jesus did us on the cross. (Repentance and belief are our response to Jesus' sacrifice – they are not the reason we are saved. Jesus is the reason).

Note v7-8 – God has lavished the riches of His grace on us – it's an amazing act of generosity!

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Do you know that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins?

15. Read v13-14. What does Paul mean by the Holy Spirit being a 'seal' and 'a deposit'?

A seal, in Roman usage, marked something as belonging to the owner of the seal. As believers we are 'sealed' with the Holy Spirit; we belong to God. We can be sure that once we are (genuinely) saved, we are always saved. The Holy Spirit lives in everyone who has put their trust in Jesus. He is also the first instalment and guarantee of what is to come; the inheritance of eternal life.

16. How do we know the Holy Spirit is in us?

The Holy Spirit is in all believers – see also John 14 v 16. You don't need any supernatural experiences to prove that – if the Bible says the Holy Spirit is in you, the Holy Spirit is in you! (Some people have supernatural experiences, but not everyone).

The Holy Spirit helps us to recognise our sin and to understand the Bible, He gives us the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5 v 22-23 etc), prays for us (Romans 8 v 26) etc.

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What difference does it make to you, to know the Holy Spirit is in you?

Check out – ask everyone how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



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Evidence that God had a plan in saving you

Ephesians 1 v 1-14 (leaders)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

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

Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

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