

ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BIBLE FOR ALL (BFA) MATERIAL FOR SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSION

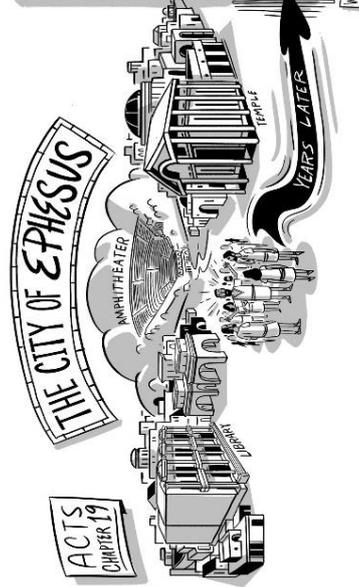
Ephesians – Walk Worthy of the Gospel

Sermon Series

02 May 2021	Ephesians 1:1-14	Walk Worthy of God's Blessing in Christ
09 May 2021	Ephesians 1:15-23	Walk in the Knowledge of His Will
16 May 2021	Ephesians 2:1-10	Walk in His Grace
23 May 2021	Ephesians 2:11-22	Walk as His Family
30 May 2021	Ephesians 3:1-13	Walk According to His Purpose

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

PAUL SUMMARIZES THE GOSPEL STORY & HOW IT SHOULD RESHAPE EVERY PART OF OUR STORY.



1-3 THE GOSPEL STORY

13-14 OPENING TOE!
 PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE'S DONE
IN CHRIST
 WE JEW AND GENTILES
 ARE BLESSED WITH YOU IN THE HEAVENS BY HIS GRACE
 (COVENANT PARTNER)
 GRACE
 EXPERIENCE THE POWER THAT RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD
15-23 PRAYER
 PAUL'S UNIQUE ROLE AS MESSENGER TO NON-JEWS

21-22 ...A NEW, MULTI-ETHNIC FAMILY
 "A NEW, UNITED HUMANITY THAT LIVES IN
PEACE"
 (E:19)
 MEN'S PURPOSE & TASKS
 ACCESSES
 NO DECEPTION SIN PROBLEMS SELFISHNESS

"THEREFORE"

4-6 OUR STORY
4-10 UNITY DOES NOT = UNIFORMITY
 ONE SPIRIT, MANY GIFTS
 • APOSTLE, PROPHET, TEACHER, PASTOR, EVANGELIST
 TO BUILD UP THE CHURCH:
 BUILD THE HEAD (LEADERSHIP) OF A NEW TEMPLE

17-19 OLD NEW
 TAKE OFF LIES ANGER THEFT GOSSIP REVENGE PROMISCUITY DRUNK
 PUT ON TRUTH PEACE GENEROSITY ENCOURAGE FORGIVENESS SELF-DENIAL GODS SPIRIT
20-21 THE ARMOR OF GOD
 SPIRITUAL BATTLE

SIGNS of the Spirit
 SINGING TOGETHER SINGING ALONE BEING THANKFUL ELEVATING OTHERS
CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD
 CHURCH = AN EMBRYO = JESUS
 REPORT LOVE
 ALLOW RESPONSIBILITY LEAD/DIVIDE CHILDREN SLAVES MASTERS
 SALVATION FAITH
 RIGHTEOUSNESS WORD OF GOD TRUTH
 SEE ESELAZER HAS THE SPIRIT OF GODS
 GOSPEL

created by the Bible Project

4. What does this text tell us about God, what He has done, and what He will do?

APPLICATION

5. What are the practical consequences of affirming that “every blessing of the Holy Spirit has been given us by the Father if we are in the Son”?

6. This text reminds us that God is the primary actor in this universe – it is a God-centred world, not an us-centred world. Does your life reflect this truth? What struggles do you have with this?

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

- Salvation history is according to God's plan and God's will – our inclusion in Christ is not an after-thought.
- God has given us every blessing which matters – in the past (redemption), in the present (the Holy Spirit), and in the future (our inheritance).
- The end to which God's plan and God's will is going towards is for all things to be under Christ and in Christ – Christ is the end-goal and the endgame.
- God is the centre of this world, not us – all things (including us) exist that God's glory may be praised.

4. Why was it important for the Ephesian believers (and why is it important for us) to know the hope to which we have been called, the riches of God's glorious inheritance in the saints, and God's incomparably great power for us who believe? (Consider also Eph 3:13)

5. One of the key themes of Ephesians is unity of the church (both internally and with God). How does this prayer support this theme? Does it also speak to our struggles with unity?

APPLICATION

6. In what ways would you like to know God better? What difference would that make to how you live?

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

- Following Paul's example, witnessing and hearing of God's work in the lives of others should prompt us to praise God, give thanks and pray for their knowledge of God to be deepened through the Holy Spirit
- We need the Holy Spirit's work in us to better understand what God has done in Christ and its implications on our lives
- Ephesians 1:15-23 provides us a model of prayer for each other's Christian growth

16 May 2021

Ephesians 2:1-10

Walk in His Grace

What do you think your life, your personality and your character would be like right now if you had not placed your trust in Christ?

OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION

1. Read Ephesians 2:1-3.

(a) What were the Ephesian believers like before they trusted in Christ (vv.1-2)?

(b) Why were we “by nature deserving of wrath” (v.3)? Who did we follow and what were we influenced by (vv.2-4)?

2. Read Ephesians 2:4-7.

(a) Why is God rich in mercy (v.4)?

(b) What three things did God do because of his mercy (vv.5-6)? What does this tell us about God's desires for us?

(c) What does it mean for us to be “in the heavenly realms with Christ Jesus”? What implications does this have (cf. vv.1-3)?

(d) What purpose did God have in doing these (v.7)?

3. Read Ephesians 2:8-10.

(a) How have we been saved (v.8)? How have we not been saved (v.9)? What implications does this have?

(b) How does Paul describe us in v.10? What implications does this have for how we see our acts of discipleship?

4. Ephesians 2:1-10 is a summary of the gospel. What are the key elements of the gospel presented here? How is this truly good news?
5. God's powerful action on our behalf is accessed by us through faith by God's grace. What is faith? How do you know that you have faith in Christ Jesus?

APPLICATION

6. Consider how Ephesians 2:1-10 has been true in your life, particularly vv.4-6. How do you respond to God's marvellous grace as you see it described here and as you experience it in your life?

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

- Without God, all of us were in a wretched state and were under judgement
- But our merciful God chose to redeem us and give us access to His power, even though we were not worthy, because of his great love
- God's mercy towards us makes His grace known throughout the coming ages
- It is wholly by grace that we have salvation, wholly by grace that God has re-created us for His new creation
- We give thanks to God for His glorious grace displayed through His work in our lives

23 May 2021

Ephesians 2:11-22

Walk as His Family

Think about the world around us – what separates the people around us, making them dislike and/or avoid each other?

OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION

1. Read Ephesians 2:11-13.
 - (a) Verse 11 starts with “therefore” – what is the basis that Paul is using for vv.11-13 (see vv.1-10)?

 - (b) What was the original status of the Gentiles (vv.11-12)? How has this changed (v.13)?

 - (c) The Gentiles were called “uncircumcised” by the Jews (who called themselves “the circumcision”) – why were they called this? What attitude did the Jews have towards the Gentiles?

2. Read Ephesians 2:14-18.
 - (a) How is Christ described here? What has Christ done and for what purpose (vv.14-16)?

 - (b) What is the significance of the fact that Jesus “preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near” (v.17), and that “through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit” (v.18)?

3. Read Ephesians 2:19-22.
 - (a) What is the outcome of Christ’s work?

 - (b) Consider the building mentioned in vv.20-22. What role does each component (Christ, apostles and prophets, individual believers) play? (cf. 1 Peter 2:4-5)

 - (c) Why is it important that it is the community of believers which is being “built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit” (v.22)?

4. According to Paul, what should and should not characterise the community of believers? Why does he say so? Do these same divisions occur in our society today?

APPLICATION

5. How do you respond to being a part of God's new society, built together into a holy temple in which God lives?

6. What individual Christians or groups of Christians are you separated from in your daily life (because of theological, cultural, denominational, racial, economic, or other differences)? Ephesians 2:11-22 tells us that these barriers no longer exist between Christians – what struggles do we have with this truth?

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

- Christ's blood has bridged the distance between God and man, through the grace of God
- Christ has overcome all barriers to reconcile warring groups of humankind to each other and, more importantly, to God
- Being united with Christ also means being united with all other believers – we cannot be united with Christ while also building barriers against other believers, whether individually or in groups
- Christ is our peace in all senses of the world – He brings salvation, reconciliation, life with God
- Christ sanctifies us and builds us into a holy dwelling appropriate for God to live in – hallelujah!

30 May 2021

Ephesians 3:1-13

Walk According to His Purpose

What would you choose to explain to others who you are?

OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION

1. Read Ephesians 3:1-7.

(a) How does Paul describe himself? What catches your attention here? (v.1)

(b) Verse 1 begins with “for this reason” – what reason is Paul referencing, and what does this have to do with his status as a prisoner? (v.1)

(c) What is “the mystery of Christ” (vv.4, 6)? Why is it a mystery?

2. Read Ephesians 3:8-13.

(a) How does Paul describe himself? What does this tell you about whether he considers himself worthy of the work he has been given (v.8)?

(b) Paul mentions “God’s grace” (vv.2, 7) – what is this grace (vv.8-10)?

(c) What is the purpose of the work which Paul was given (vv.10-11)? What role does the church play in this?

(d) How is Paul’s work in line with God’s purposes? (cf. Eph 1:10)

(e) Paul tells the Ephesian believers not to be discouraged because of his sufferings for them (v.13). Why does he say this?

3. How would you explain the core of Paul’s message to someone else in less than five simple sentences?

4. Paul placed high value on the Body of Christ, and was willing to suffer for it. Do Christians value it?

APPLICATION

5. Each and every believer in Christ is part of the Church, through which God's wisdom is made known. How do we, both individually and corporately, live out this purpose and privilege?

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

- In everything we do, it is ultimately Christ Jesus who we are serving – Christ calls us, equips us with the Holy Spirit, and sends us to proclaim His gospel
- The gospel of Jesus Christ is worth suffering for – the higher a value we place on the gospel, the more we are willing to suffer for it
- Hardship is not an indicator of disobedience to God's call – in Paul's case, the sufferings he went through were a direct result of his obedience (preaching Gentile inclusion), and provided a platform for his continued obedience (preaching the gospel to Gentiles in Rome)
- The church is the vehicle through which God has chosen to make his manifold wisdom known to all creation – it is in the church, through the church, that the unity desired by God (Eph 1:10) is to be displayed