

Ephesians: Living a Life In Christ

Ephesians 1:1-14 | Every Spiritual Blessing in Jesus Christ

→ *Survey: Let's understand the background and context of the passage.*

While under house arrest in Rome, around 60 A.D., a man named Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in the city of Ephesus - this letter is what we call the book of Ephesians. In the first half of the letter, Paul teaches the full story of the Gospel of Jesus, explaining how God's family is now a unified, multiethnic community of followers. The second part of the letter explores how this Gospel should affect every part of our lives, as Paul urges these followers of Jesus to "live a life worthy of the calling you received" (Ephesians 4:1).

Before we begin the letter, we must understand more about where Paul was writing to. Ephesus was a huge city and major hub in Asia Minor, now modern day Turkey. Even Jesus wrote a letter to Ephesus, found in Revelation 2. In this city was one of the 7 ancient wonders of the world - the Temple of Artemis. Artemis, a goddess of fertility and childbearing was central to all aspects of life for the Ephesians. You can even read about Paul's time in Ephesus in Acts 19, where a riot formed as people shouted "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" for about 2 hours straight.

In this place of idol worship, Paul urges God's people to live according to God's will, as he helps them understand God's love demonstrated through Jesus, sealed by the Holy Spirit. We too have been called to be with Jesus, to be like Jesus, and do as he did. Let's see what this Gospel truth is all about and explore God's plan together as we begin reading the book of Ephesians.

Read: Ephesians 1:1-14 (NIV)

→ *Observe: Let's take a close look at what the text is saying.*

1. (v. 1) Who is writing this letter? How does he describe himself? Who is he writing to?
2. What has God given those in Christ (v. 3)?
3. When did God choose his people (v. 4)? For what purpose?
4. In love, what has God provided through Jesus Christ (v. 5)?
5. What has God done with his glorious grace (v. 6)? How (v. 6)?
6. What do followers of Jesus have (v. 7)? By what means (v. 7)?
7. What is God's will & purpose through Christ (v. 9-10)?
8. What is the role of those chosen by God (v. 11-12)?
9. What happened to the Ephesians once they believed (v. 13)? What is guaranteed (v. 14)?
10. Take a moment to re-read, underline, and look at all that God has done through Jesus (v. 3-14). Turn to a neighbor, what stood out to you?

→ *Interpret: Let's seek to understand the meaning of this text in its original context.*

1. Verse 3 tells us that followers of Jesus have every spiritual blessing in Christ. What are some of these spiritual blessings that you see in this passage? *Let's define them.*
 - How do these spiritual blessings help us understand the Gospel story? In a sentence or two, what is the Gospel story according to verses 3-14? *(Use specific words from the text!)*
 - How do you see the Trinity - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit at work in this Gospel story? How are they at work in the life of a Christian?
2. What role do we have in being saved? Why might Paul start his letter with what God has done rather than what Christians need to do? Why is it significant that God chose us?

→ *Apply: Let's explore where the text intersects with our lives and our world.*

1. How does this passage help you understand God better? How does it help you better understand what the Gospel is?
2. God adopts those who follow Jesus into His family, not by their works, but His. Where are you striving to earn God's love rather than believing you were chosen & redeemed through Jesus? How would your life look differently if you believed God chose you?
3. What again is God's purpose & will? (v. 10)? How does this truth help you see your purpose on this campus? In what ways do you want to grow in this?