

Sermon Discussion – 28 January 2024

Read Ephesians 1:3-14

Getting Started *Sharing from personal experience*

In light of the series theme of “finding identity in Jesus,” reflect on your own journey of discovering your identity. What are some of the ways that blessings in your life changed your sense of identity?

Observation *Discovering the context*

At first glance of Ephesians 1:3-14, we see the Apostle Paul searching for words to describe the delight he has in what God has done for believers through Christ. One commentator even describes Paul’s tone, words, and demeanour here as “controlled ecstasy”. In fact, verses 3-14 are one single glorious run-on sentence (apologies to our English teachers out there!) Paul encourages the reader to bless God because He has blessed us with a multitude of blessings.

- When you think about Jesus, what, if anything, makes you feel excitement and/or delight?
- What are the blessings in this passage in which Paul is so thankful?

Interpretation *Discovering the meaning*

1. Discuss the concept of being chosen by God and predestined in love found in v. 4-6. How does understanding God's love as the motivation behind predestination shape your view of God's character?
2. Predestined in Greek means “*marked out beforehand*”. It emphasizes God’s eternal plan; He didn’t make things up as they unfolded. His plan all along was to adopt us through Christ. As adopted children, we are reminded that it was God, in His grace, who chose us. It wasn’t our own doing. Why do you think it matters that we understand this?
3. According to v. 7, what do we receive from God by the work of Christ? (*Hint: Redemption, forgiveness of sins.*) In your own words, what is redemption?
4. Read v. 13-14 again. Reflect on the idea that salvation is of the Lord and cannot be lost. How does this perspective influence your confidence in God's faithfulness and your eternal inheritance?

5. Why is the fact that the Holy Spirit is guaranteeing our inheritance so significant in contrast to a works-based faith? How does the Holy Spirit enable and empower Christians to live according to their new identity in Christ?

Application *Putting knowledge into practice*

- Discuss practical ways in which understanding your identity as described in Ephesians 1:3-14 can impact your daily life, relationships, and decision-making.
- Try memorising Ephesians 1:7-8...
“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight.”
- Encourage each other in recognising and embracing the blessings God has provided. Pray for one another, asking God to deepen your understanding of your identity in Christ and to empower you through the Holy Spirit for a life that brings glory to His name.