



CHRIST & HIS CHURCH

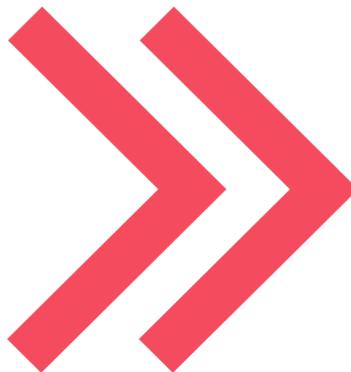
EPHESIANS

TERM 2, 2019

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS

Sometimes being a Christian can seem pretty ordinary. Sometimes we forget or take for granted the *extraordinary* things Christ Jesus has done for his church. And sometimes we forget or take for granted that *what Christ Jesus has done makes his church extraordinary!*

That's why the apostle Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus is such a great part of the Bible. When we read Ephesians our eyes are opened to the awe-inspiring dimensions of what God has done for us in Christ. It's as if the apostle Paul leads us to the edge of a look-out and stretches out in front of us the enormous view of God's plans for the universe, and where we as a church family fit into these plans.



Each of these studies includes a preparation page. Reading the passage before your Small Group meets and working through the preparation page will greatly increase the benefit you receive from the discussion. It's also a powerful way to love the others in your group as you share what you have discovered. Sometimes it's just not possible to prepare—make sure you still meet with your group! Showing your Small Group that the time you have with them is important to you is a powerful encouragement.

STUDY 1 PREPARATION

Ephesians 1.1-14

- Complete this page of preparation **before** you meet at Small Group.

Reading the passage before Small Group greatly increases the benefit you receive from the discussion. But it's also a powerful way to love the others in your group as you share what you have discovered.

- Pray and read Ephesians 1.1-14

Paul wants his readers to rediscover the awe-inspiring dimensions of what God has done for them in Christ Jesus. Keep your eyes open for the ways he does that as you read.

Who is this letter written to? Who is it from?

What does Paul want us to know about Jesus?

What does Paul want us to know about our church?

How is this an encouragement to us?

How does this help you to live all of life for Jesus?

BLESSING IN CHRIST – STUDY 1

Ephesians 1.1-14

Read Ephesians 1.1-14

Quickly list the things God's done for us.

How does Paul describe the following blessings?

Predestined

Adopted

Redeemed

Included in the mystery of God's will

Chosen (ESV/CSB: 'obtained an inheritance')

Sealed with the Holy Spirit

Which verse do you think acts as the best summary for this section?

Where does Jesus fit in all these spiritual blessings?

Who is at the centre of all God's plans? What does this mean?

What is the repeated idea in verses 3, 6, 12, and 14?

This is an intense start to this letter! Originally verses 3-14 were probably all read out as one sentence! It's all a bit overwhelming. Why does Paul hit us with so much so fast?

Re-read Ephesians 1.3.

What exactly have we been blessed with? How do we have this blessing? How does that make you feel?

How will remembering these words bring you joy and energy as you live for Jesus this week?

Implications

Do you ever feel like living for Jesus means you miss out on some things? How is this passage helpful when we feel that way?

If God chose us before the creation of the world, how many of these blessings depend on what we do?

How does this part of Ephesians shape how we respond to Jesus?

How does this part of Ephesians shape how we respond to God?

Pray

What have you heard about Jesus in this part of Ephesians that you can give thanks for?

What can you pray for each other at Small Group?

What can you pray for our church?

What can you pray for all those outside our church?

STUDY 2 PREPARATION

Ephesians 1.15-23

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- Pray and read Ephesians 1.15-23

Paul wants his readers to rediscover the awe-inspiring dimensions of what God has done for them in Christ Jesus. Keep your eyes open for the ways he does that as you read.

How does this section relate to everything we've read so far in Ephesians?

What does Paul want us to know about Jesus?

What does Paul want us to know about our church?

How is this an encouragement to us?

How does this help you to live all of life for Jesus?

PRAYER FOR CHRIST – STUDY 2

Ephesians 1.15-23

Read Ephesians 1.15-16

What does the ‘this’ in verse 15 refer to?

What other reasons does Paul give for praying?

How does Paul pray?

Read Ephesians 1.17-19a

What does Paul pray for?

Why would Paul pray for these things for people who are already Christians?

Whose riches does Paul mention in verse 18? What are those riches?

Discuss the advantages of growing in our knowledge and understanding of God, the hope we’ve been called to, the way God treasures us, and God’s power that raised Christ.

What do we miss if we aren’t growing in our understanding of these things?

In a nutshell, Paul is asking God to grow the Ephesians in their understanding of all the incredible truths we read about previously in the first half of the chapter. After the intensity and profound depth of what we read last week that seems like a great thing to ask!

Read Ephesians 1.19b-23

Here Paul seems to get distracted from the things he's been praying—he's so excited about Jesus!

There are many ways to demonstrate power. How has God shown his power in verse 20? Why is this good news for us?

What is reassuring and encouraging about Jesus' ultimate rule and authority, power and dominion?

What is reassuring and encouraging about knowing that Christ is head over everything for the church?

Implications

Do you believe it's worth you growing in your knowledge and understand of the things Paul's been praying about? Why, or why not?

How do your reasons for praying compare to Paul's reasons for praying? Is this an encouragement or a challenge?

How will the things Paul prays for shape the things you pray for this week?

Spend some time praying these things for each other.

STUDY 3 PREPARATION

Ephesians 2

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- Pray and read Ephesians 2

Paul wants his readers to rediscover the awe-inspiring dimensions of what God has done for them in Christ Jesus. Keep your eyes open for the ways he does that as you read.

How does this section relate to everything we've read so far in Ephesians?

What does Paul want us to know about Jesus?

What does Paul want us to know about our church?

How is this an encouragement to us?

How does this help you to live all of life for Jesus?

WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST – STUDY 3

Ephesians 2

Read Ephesians 2.1-10

How does Paul describe the Ephesians before they became Christians?

What does it mean to follow “the ways of this world”, “the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient”, and “the cravings of our sinful nature”?

Paul includes himself in this description (verse 3). Do you think he would say the same about us?

How does Paul describe the Ephesians now?

What contrasts do you notice between what the Ephesians *were* and what they now *are*?

How has this change happened?

Read Ephesians 2.11-22

How does Paul describe the Ephesians before they became Christians?

What does it mean that the Ephesians are Gentiles? Would Paul describe us the same way?

How does Paul describe the Ephesians now?

How has this change happened (verse 13 is a short summary, but Paul fills out the details in verses 14-18)?

Implications

Re-read verses 1-3 and 11-12. Have you ever really digested the fact that by nature you deserve wrath? Have you properly grasped that your achievements still leave you separate, excluded, hopeless, and Godless?

Is it possible to have full understanding and joy in what God has done in Christ Jesus, without having a full understanding of who we once were?

Have you seen or experienced gospel-centred reconciliation between people?

Re-read Ephesians 2.19-22. What are the implications of these verses for how we think of each other and treat each other as a church family?

Pray

What have you heard about Jesus in this part of Ephesians that you can give thanks for?

What can you pray for each other at Small Group?

What can you pray for our church?

What can you pray for all those outside our church?

STUDY 4 PREPARATION

Ephesians 3

- Complete this page of preparation **before** you meet at Small Group.

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- Pray and read Ephesians 3

Paul wants his readers to rediscover the awe-inspiring dimensions of what God has done for them in Christ Jesus. Keep your eyes open for the ways he does that as you read.

How does this section relate to everything we've read so far in Ephesians?

What does Paul want us to know about Jesus?

What does Paul want us to know about our church?

How is this an encouragement to us?

How does this help you to live all of life for Jesus?

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST – STUDY 4

Ephesians 3

Read Ephesians 3.1-13

Why is Paul a prisoner?

What is the “mystery” referred to in these verses?

Why is this mystery so close to Paul’s heart?

Paul has been sent by Jesus himself to proclaim God’s grace to the Gentiles. How qualified do you think Paul is for this job? What makes him qualified? (You may want to also check out Acts 9.1-19 and Philippians 3.4-11.)

What is God’s intent for the church?

How is all this an encouragement to the Ephesians (verse 13)?

Read Ephesians 3.14-21

Why does Paul pray? What is Paul referring to with the words ‘for this reason’ in verse 1 and verse 14?

List the things Paul prays for the Ephesians. How would you summarise them?

What does Paul hope is the result of his prayer?

Implications

To what extent do we share Paul's mission of making the mystery of Christ known?

When you're asked who you are and what you do, what answer do you usually give? How does it compare to how Paul describes himself in the first half of this chapter?

What do you usually pray to God about? Does Paul's prayer here encourage you in the way you pray, or does it challenge you to pray differently?

How do verses 20-21 encourage us to pray passionately, energetically, emotionally, and intensely for one another?

Pray

What have you heard about Jesus in this part of Ephesians that you can give thanks for?

What can you pray for each other at Small Group?

What can you pray for our church?

What can you pray for all those outside our church?

STUDY 5 PREPARATION

Ephesians 4.1-16

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- Pray and read Ephesians 4.1-16

Paul wants his readers to rediscover the awe-inspiring dimensions of what God has done for them in Christ Jesus. Keep your eyes open for the ways he does that as you read.

How does this section relate to everything we've read so far in Ephesians?

What does Paul want us to know about Jesus?

What does Paul want us to know about our church?

What does Paul say about how we are to live together as a church family?

How does this challenge you to live all of life for Jesus?

CHRIST'S CHURCH – STUDY STUDY 4

Ephesians 4.1-16

Read Ephesians 4.1-6

What have we been called to? How does this connect with everything we've read in Ephesians so far?

What is Paul's primary focus here?

What reasons does Paul give for unity in our church?

Read Ephesians 4.7-13

What has Christ given to "each one of us"?

Who has Christ given to his church?

What do all these people have in common in their job description?

What are God's people being prepared (or equipped) for?

What does it mean to be built up in unity, faith, and knowledge of the son of God? What does it mean to become mature and attain the fullness of Christ?

What works of service (or ministry) can we be doing that build each other up in maturity in Christ? List as many examples as you can.

Read Ephesians 4.14-16

Describe the negative picture in verse 14.

What is the better alternative?

What is the key role that each and every one of us has in this picture of church?

Implications

Do you think of yourself as a minister (someone given the task of speaking the gospel into the lives of others)? Why, or why not?

What are some real ways you can be building others up in maturity in Christ on Sundays?

What are some real ways you can speak gospel truth in gospel love during the week?

How can you proactively seek to be equipped to build others up in maturity in Christ?

Pray

What have you heard about Jesus in this part of Ephesians that you can give thanks for?

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What can you pray for our church?

What can you pray for all those outside our church?

STUDY 6 PREPARATION

Ephesians 4.17-32

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- Pray and read Ephesians 4.17-32

Paul wants his readers to rediscover the awe-inspiring dimensions of what God has done for them in Christ Jesus. Keep your eyes open for the ways he does that as you read.

How does this section relate to everything we've read so far in Ephesians?

What does Paul want us to know about Jesus?

What does Paul want us to know about our church?

What does Paul say about how we are to live together as a church family?

How does this challenge you to live all of life for Jesus?

HOW TO DRESS FOR CHURCH – STUDY 6

Ephesians 4.17-32

Read Ephesians 4.17-24

What is the primary command in these verses?

How did we come to know Christ?

What are we to put on?

Paul's interest here is **seeing our church grow in maturity of faith and build itself up in love** (remember last study). The first topic he now turns to isn't church events or programmes, but our godliness. Does that surprise you?

Read Ephesians 4.25-32

What is our motivation for living the life Paul describes here?

What are we to put off and get rid of?

How do the following 'old self' things endanger Jesus' church?

- falsehood

- anger

- stealing

- unwholesome talk

- bitterness, rage, brawling, slander, and malice

Why do you think these things grieve the Holy Spirit?

What opportunity is the devil looking for?

What are we to do instead, to help one another put on the new self?

How do these 'new self' behaviours grow and strengthen our church?

Implications

When are you most tempted to revert to your old self at church?

What are some practical things you can do in order to put off the old self? What are some practical things you can do to help others put off the old self?

What are some practical things you can do in order to put on the new self? What are some practical things you can do to help others put on the new self?

How does this part of Ephesians shape how you pray for your church family?

How does this part of Ephesians encourage you to press on with renewed energy in loving your church family?

Pray

What have you heard about Jesus in this part of Ephesians that you can give thanks for?

What can you pray for each other at Small Group?

What can you pray for our church?

What can you pray for all those outside our church?

STUDY 7 PREPARATION

Ephesians 5.1-14

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- Pray and read Ephesians 5.1-14

Paul wants his readers to rediscover the awe-inspiring dimensions of what God has done for them in Christ Jesus. Keep your eyes open for the ways he does that as you read.

How does this section relate to everything we've read so far in Ephesians?

What does Paul want us to know about Jesus?

What does Paul want us to know about our church?

What does Paul say about how we are to live together as a church family?

How does this challenge you to live all of life for Jesus?

NOT FOR CHURCH – STUDY 7

Ephesians 5.1-14

Read Ephesians 5.1-2

What two things does Paul highlight about Christ?

What does Paul highlight about us?

How does this connect with what we've read in Ephesians so far?

Read Ephesians 5.3-7

What must there be “not even a hint of” in our church family?

Why can't these things exist in a church?

Can you think of examples of empty and deceptive words that go against Paul's logic here?

Read Ephesians 5.8-14

What are we to have nothing to do with?

What are the alternatives to fruitless deeds of darkness?

How do we know what “fruit of the light” pleases the Lord?

Implications

If we’re all saved by grace anyway, does it even matter if these deeds of darkness exist in our lives?

Is there *even a hint of any kind* of sexual immorality, impurity, or greed in your life? If you’re not comfortable sharing, make a private note. What can you do to replace this darkness with light?

The world around us tells us that sexual immorality, impurity, and greed are fine—in fact they’re often celebrated. When are you most in danger of being deceived by these empty words? How can make sure you don’t become “partners with them”?

How does the reminder that we’re dearly loved children of God encourage us? Are there other reassuring things in this part of Ephesians?

Pray

What have you heard about Jesus in this part of Ephesians that you can give thanks for?

What can you pray for each other at Small Group?

What can you pray for our church?

What can you pray for all those outside our church?

STUDY 8 PREPARATION

Ephesians 5.15-6.9

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- Pray and read Ephesians 5.15-6.9

Paul wants his readers to rediscover the awe-inspiring dimensions of what God has done for them in Christ Jesus. Keep your eyes open for the ways he does that as you read.

How does this section relate to everything we've read so far in Ephesians?

What does Paul want us to know about Jesus?

What does Paul want us to know about our church?

What does Paul say about how we are to live together as a church family?

How does this challenge you to live all of life for Jesus?

SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH – STUDY 8

Ephesians 5.15-6.9

Read Ephesians 5.15-21

What is the key to living a wise life?

What will we do if we are Spirit-filled?

What does it mean to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ?

Read Ephesians 5.22-33

How should wives relate to their husbands?

How should husbands treat their wives? What goals should a husband have?

How should Christians relate to Christ? How does this help wives understand their role?

How does Christ relate to his church? How does this help husbands understand their role?

Read Ephesians 6.1-4

Why are children to obey their parents? How does this fit with chapter 5 verses 15-21?

What is the goal of good parenting?

Read Ephesians 6.5-9

How should slaves obey their masters?

For what reason should slaves obey their masters?

What does it mean that masters should treat their slaves “in the same way”?

Implications

If you’re single: Think of one way you can help married couples in your church family to submit to Christ, and make a plan to do it this week. If you’re married: Think of one way you can submit to Christ more in your marriage, and make a plan to talk about it with your spouse and put it into action this week.

How can parents work together to bring up children in the training and instruction of the Lord?
Where does this kind of parenting fit in church?

How are Paul’s words to slaves and masters helpful for us today?

This part of Ephesians has covered three important areas of life where we are to live in Spirit-filled submission to Jesus. Can you think of other areas of life where this is important?

Pray

What have you heard about Jesus in this part of Ephesians that you can give thanks for?

What can you pray for each other at Small Group?

What can you pray for our church?

What can you pray for all those outside our church?

STUDY 9 PREPARATION

Ephesians 6.10-24

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- Pray and read Ephesians 6.10-24

Paul wants his readers to rediscover the awe-inspiring dimensions of what God has done for them in Christ Jesus. Keep your eyes open for the ways he does that as you read.

How does this section relate to everything we've read so far in Ephesians?

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What does Paul say about how we are to live together as a church family?

How does this challenge you to live all of life for Jesus?

THE CHURCH'S GOSPEL ARMOUR – STUDY 9

Ephesians 6.10-24

Read Ephesians 6.10-13

What does Paul want for the church?

What does Paul say we're involved in? Do you think Paul is describing something unusual, or is he describing everyday life for Christians?

What might the devil's schemes look like? (Check out 4.25-27 for one example.)

How confident is Paul that we can stand our ground against the devil's schemes? Why?

Read Ephesians 6.14-24

List the pieces of the armour of God. What does each piece represent?

Where does this armour come from?

How does this gospel-shaped armour strip the devil of his power?

Why does Paul encourage prayer and ask for prayer?

Implications

Are you ever in danger of not taking the devil and his schemes seriously enough? How does this part of Ephesians help you?

Are you ever in danger of taking the devil and his schemes too seriously? How does this part of Ephesians help you?

What can we do to make sure we're standing firm in our gospel armour at all times?

Paul encourages us to be praying on *all* occasions, with *all* kinds of prayers, with *all* perseverance, for *all* the saints. What will be the benefits to Jesus' church if we pray this way? How has Ephesians equipped you to pray this way?

Think back over this letter. How has Ephesians challenged you to grow, build up, and strengthen your church family in gospel maturity?

Pray

What have you heard about Jesus in this part of Ephesians that you can give thanks for?

What can you pray for each other at Small Group?

What can you pray for our church?

What can you pray for all those outside our church?