



Northland Christian Church
EPHESIANS - THE MYSTERY MADE KNOWN • PERSON AND PLACE •
EPHESIANS 1:1-2 / WEEK OF OCTOBER 18, 2020 •

FOR THE LEADER - BACKGROUND COMMENTARY

[EPHESIANS 1:1-2](#)

1:1-2. Paul expressed his authority simply: apostle of Christ Jesus. Apostleship was never self chosen; rather, it was by God's will. Paul understood saints to be the same as believers. He was not referring to a super class of Christians. Paul's greeting of grace reminds us of God's initiative in salvation. He has provided undeserved help for the helpless. Peace (a traditional Jewish greeting) focuses on the result of salvation. Notice that the twin blessings of grace and peace have their source equally in God our Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.

MAIN POINT FROM THE MESSAGE

God's love changes a person. God's love changes a place.

In Christ, we find our identity and live differently in light of it.

INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What's the most important letter you have ever received? What makes it stand out?

What did you want to grow up to be as a kid? What similarities exist between what you do now and what you thought you wanted to do or be in life?

As kids, we dreamed of one day playing professional sports, traveling the universe as an astronaut, or being a superhero who can fly. Deep down, we all have a desire to do something significant and make a difference-in the world. And there's nothing wrong with that desire. There's actually something God-honoring in it. The hero or heroine's story touches us deeply because God wired us for significance. Saul wanted to be a passionate Pharisee and zealous Orthodox Jew, until he met Jesus. Then, he was dramatically changed; in heart, mind, soul, and goals. Even in name. We know him as Paul.

Transformation is a specialty of God's. He is in the business of changing what we (human beings since Adam and Eve) have broken and marred. God is in the glorious business of making us into more than we could be on our own. It's a mystery. It's what we begin diving into this week and will continue to explore going forward.

ENGAGING AND UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ EPHESIANS 1:1-2.

How did Paul identify himself in his introduction to the believers in Ephesus? Flip through the other New Testament letter introductions to name the ways Paul and the other writers identified themselves, in addition to "apostle" (i.e., "servant of Christ Jesus," Rom. 1:1, Phil. 1:1; "servant of God," Titus 1:1; "prisoner of Christ Jesus," Philemon 1; "servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," James 1:1).

Do you typically see yourself first in terms of your relationship with Christ, or in terms of others' opinions and expectations of you? Why?

How did Paul identify the believers at Ephesus in verse 2?

When you think of a saint, who comes to mind? What have they done and how did they live that caused you to consider them a saint?

Did you include yourself in that list? Why or why not?

The word "saint" finds its roots in the Old Testament, where God chose a people to be set apart from the other nations, to be His holy people. Now Christ has made us into His holy people (see Eph. 5:26). We're holy not because of what we have done, but because of what Christ has done. In other words, you're not a saint because you've lived a perfect life. You're a saint because Jesus lived a perfect life, and you've placed your faith in Him.

How does knowing you're covered in grace and peace affect the way you see yourself (v. 2)?

APPLICATION

- Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Do you ever feel unworthy to be used by God to advance His kingdom? How might considering Paul's testimony help us overcome such insecurities? (See [Acts 9:1-22](#)) (also Acts 22:1-21)

In what ways do you need the grace and peace Paul mentioned in his greeting to the Christians in Ephesus (see Eph. 1:2)?

Tony Merida has said, "If you love Jesus deeply, it will change your behavior dramatically." This was apparent in the life and story of Paul. How should living in the reality of a new identity change the way you interact at work? Treat others? Receive criticism? View success? Behave on vacation?

PRAYER

Spend time in prayer together as a group.
