



Northland Christian Church

• BLESSED IN CHRIST • EPHESIANS 1:3-6 WEEK OF • 10/25/2020

MAIN POINTS

All of God has been working throughout all of time to bless all of us. The boundary for blessings is built at the cross.

INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION

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

Paul's letter to the Ephesians begins by describing how a person is changed when he or she enters into a relationship with Jesus. Spend a few minutes brainstorming together the ways you are different in Christ. Maybe even Create two lists—one of who you were before Christ, and a second list of who you are in Christ.

In Ephesians 1, Paul described the marvelous spiritual blessings that belong to the church in Jesus Christ. All of these blessings are assured to each believer, for they flow from God's grace, wisdom, and eternal purpose. Because of Jesus' work on the cross, we lack no spiritual blessing because we are saints in Christ. Behind each of these blessings is God's desire that our lives glorify and praise Him.

Here are 3 blessings from today's passage that we will focus on:

- Blessing #1 The Father Choose Us
 - Blessing #2 The Father Predestined Us for Adoption
 - Blessing #3 The Father Freely Gives Grace
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ENGAGING AND UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD

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

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ [EPHESIANS 1:3-6](#).

Why is it important to know that God intentionally chose you to be part of His family?

How does knowing that give you confidence for life, service, and security in your calling from the Lord to be a part of Jesus' mission?

What does the fact that God adopted us show us about His nature and character?

It's amazing to think that you have been in the mind and heart of God before the foundation of the world, but that's exactly what these verses tell us. Because of His great love and mercy, God graciously chose to bring us into His family. Because that choice was based in His character and not our own goodness, we can have confidence for life, service, and our future in Him.

Why is our adoption to the praise of God's glory? What about our adoption glorifies Him?

Given that we were chosen by God, there is no room for pride. He chose us for His glory, not our own, so we have no claim on that choice. Our adoption doesn't fill us with pride, but brings us low in gratitude as we reflect on the grace of God by which we were chosen in Him.

APPLICATION

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

How does knowing you are adopted by God change your view of yourself and of God? How does it inform your view of others?

How do you feel about the quality of love of the One who has chosen you? How does this affect your love for others?

Which of the spiritual blessings in Christ from this passage do you have the hardest time believing is true for you? Why?

PRAYER

Close in a time of praise, inviting your group members to voice sentence prayers, either silently or aloud to the group. Begin the prayer time with your own statement of praise, such as "I praise You, God, that I am in Christ, that I am a saint, and that I am blessed."

BACKGROUND COMMENTARY FOR THE LEADER

EPHESIANS 1:3-6

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.

1:3. The verb blessed as applied to God points first to His kindness extended to others. Its meaning also includes praises returned to Him by those whom He has blessed. The Heavenly Father is the Source of our every spiritual blessing—and for that matter of our material blessings. Here, however, Paul focused on benefits that exist in the heavens, that is, the supernatural realm invisible to natural sight.

1:4-5. The Old Testament Israelites were often referred to as God's chosen people. Now, however, it is Christians whom Paul called the chosen people. In the mind of God, before all eternity we existed, and before Christ died for sinners, God chose us to be in Him. This teaching, often called the doctrine of election, is difficult

to fully understand. Yet Paul emphasized the result God intends for His chosen ones: to be holy (morally pure, a positive term) and blameless (free from guilt, a negative term). Predestined persons are the same as those God has chosen. The source of God's saving plan is His favor and will. He was pleased to make this plan, and His determination to accomplish His pleasure cannot be thwarted. The Agent of God's plan is Jesus Christ, His unique Son, who achieved the plan through His death (1:7). The Father's plan called for undeserving sinners to be adopted as His sons and daughters, giving His Son a family of siblings.

1:6-8. Paul moved from the benefits we receive through God's plan of salvation to the benefit God receives: the praise of His glorious grace. When we realize how magnificently God has displayed His grace, we can't help but praise Him. Our inclusion in God's gracious plan (He favored us) occurs only in living union with Christ (in the Beloved), God's Son. Because of His grace, the Father's love for His Son Jesus has overflowed toward us ("in love," 1:4).