



Week of January 12, 2020: Ephesians 1:1-23

Discussion Questions Set #1

“Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior”. (Colossians 1:21)

“None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one”. (Romans 3:10-12)

In sermon, we discussed the idea that the book of Ephesians was written to encourage and challenge a group of followers of Jesus rather than to convince individuals to follow Jesus – it was not an evangelistic tract or written to counteract false teaching. As such, it requires we understand two key concepts: Paul’s understanding of grace and his use of the phrase “in Christ”.

1. What difference might it make to our interpretation of the text if we understand that this was written to individuals already following Jesus? How might we read it differently if it were written to convince people of the truth of the gospel or to counteract false teaching?
2. Paul’s understanding of grace sounds like this: *“though we deserve absolutely nothing good from God, because of who He is, in Jesus, God is eager to lavish grace upon us in varied ways. He is good to us because of who He is and not because of who we are.”*
Discuss this understanding of grace. How does it differ from other definitions you have encountered? What difference might it make to grasp this definition of grace rather than any other?
3. For Paul, and for the early church, they understood that their identity was uniquely tied to being “in Christ”. Somehow by faith, they were caught up in Christ, retaining their individuality and personal culpability, yet uniquely joined to Jesus. How might understanding our salvation primarily as being a “me in Christ” sort of thing differ from understanding salvation as a “Christ in me” sort of thing? Do we belong to Christ or does Christ belong to us? Are these mutually exclusive ideas?

Discussion Questions Set #2

God “chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight”, “in love, he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, and “in him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory”. (Ephesians 1:4,5,11)

In sermon, we discussed the idea that God is to be praised because through His provision of Christ Jesus, He “has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing” (Ephesians 1:3). We also tackled Paul’s use of choosing/predestination language.

1. What do you think it means that in Christ, we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing? What difference might this understanding make in a practical sense in the life of a follower of Jesus?
2. Though debate often occurs around the issue of predestination, Paul’s inclusion of this idea in his letter to the Ephesian church speaks to his understanding of the concept.
 - a. How does the inclusion of the idea of predestination influence one’s understanding of our faith?
 - b. What difference does it make to understand that those in Christ were chosen “before the foundation of the world”?
 - c. Does being chosen necessarily communicate privilege?
 - d. What reservations might you have in regards to the idea of predestination?



Discussion Questions Set #3

In sermon, we discussed that Ephesians 1 presents us with the idea that God choice of us results in four praiseworthy realities:

- I. It enables us to “be holy and blameless in his sight” (v.4).
- II. It permits our “adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ” (v.5).
- III. It enables the knowledge of the mystery of God’s will (v.8).
- IV. It enables our receipt of God’s Spirit (v.13-14).

1. Discuss each outcome and its importance in the life of the follower of Jesus.
2. What other praiseworthy realities might you add to a “run on” sentence of God’s praiseworthy deeds if you were to write one based on your own experiences?