

Lesson One

Christ made us alive

Chosen in Christ

Ephesians

Introduction

Today we begin our study of the Book of Ephesians. This letter to the Christians in the city of Ephesus is one of Paul's "prison epistles," written from Rome while he was awaiting trial before Caesar (Acts 25:10-12; Acts 28:11-31). It is a letter in which Paul explores some profound mysteries. His language is technical, and some of the topics he probes are difficult to understand. But we come away astounded at the depth of God's grace, and we marvel at the dimensions of God's love that has brought us in Jesus' family.

Our sins have left us spiritually dead by nature. We have no more power to raise ourselves to spiritual life with Christ than a corpse has the ability to call itself back from the dust of death. Today we consider God's amazing grace: That when we were still dead in transgressions and sins, God who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ!

Search the Scriptures

We were chosen to live

Read Ephesians 1:1-14. The Apostle Paul explores some very deep concepts here. Answer the following questions based on your reading:

- When did God choose you?
- Why did God choose you?
- What is the word that St. Paul uses for this divine election by God?
- Whom has God sent as a "deposit guaranteeing our inheritance"?

If God chose you, predestined you to eternal life, does that mean he did not choose those who don't believe in him? (See **1 Timothy 2:4** and **Matthew 23:37**.)

Were you chosen because you are a better person, or because God saw in you some redeeming qualities? (See also **1 Timothy 1:9-10**.)

If you didn't reject God, does that mean you had a part in your salvation?

In Paul's time being marked with a seal was a sign of ownership. What does being in God's possession mean for you on a daily basis, especially as you interact with others?

The doctrine of election or predestination has generated a great deal of discussion, controversy and confusion over the years. Explain why this is the case.

The doctrine of election or predestination is a doctrine _____.

We have been called from death to life

Read Ephesians 2:1-10.

- What was your spiritual condition (v. 1)?

- Who took the active role to bring about a change in your condition? (v. 4-5)
- How far does God take us from the conditions in which mankind naturally finds itself? (v. 6)
- How did you help bring yourself to life in this process?

Can you think of any religions other than Christianity which teach that we are unable to do anything to put ourselves into a right relationship with God?

Why is it a comfort to you to know that your salvation does not depend upon you?

We have been given abundant life

Review Ephesians 1:7-10. List the blessings St. Paul mentions that we receive:

Select one of these blessings for consideration. Describe how it makes your Christian life meaningful and special.

How does the price God paid for you impact your sense of worth and dignity?

Christian life is powerful life

Read Ephesians 1:15-23. How has God shown his great power?

How do we see God's power at work in and through believers?

Does it really seem like God is in control in our world today? Reflect upon how verses 19b-23 relate to this question.

Summary

We did not choose God; he chose us, made us alive and gave us spiritual blessings and power. Consider all that God has given you and done for you. What impact does this have on:

- Your ability to testify for Christ to others?
- Your feelings of being in control of your life?
- Your hopes, dreams and fears for the future?

Your walk with God

For this section you may wish to mark your calendar for the upcoming week. That way you can get into the habit of taking time out of your schedule for a personal walk with the Lord.

Day one

Read 1 Peter 1:18-25. We have been redeemed from an empty way of life by the precious blood of Christ. Meditate on the tremendous love God has for you that he has done this. What is your response?

Day three

Read Romans 6:11-14. Do you find that a particular sin is still ruling you? Pray for strength in your Christian sanctification to be dead to sin and alive to Christ.

Day five

The story of Joseph is written in Genesis chapter 37 and chapters 39-47. Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery, falsely accused, imprisoned and forgotten by those he helped. Ultimately he rose to second in command to Pharaoh,

and with knowledge given to him by God he was able to prepare the land for widespread famine. Read chapter 45, the account of Joseph meeting his brothers 20 years after they sold him into slavery. Who was in control throughout the events of Joseph's life? How does this story encourage and comfort you?