

Small Group Discussion Outline



Having completed the first chapter of Ephesians in which Paul gives us an overview of God's Big Plan and the role of the Church in its fulfilment, Paul now explains four key steps which God has taken towards the fulfilment of His purposes.



Read: Ephesians 2:1-10

There are four basic sections to this passage.



1. What do you think they are? (E.g. Verses 1-3 are mainly about...)

This passage can be broken up under four headings:

1. How we were (Eph 2:1-3)
2. What God has done (Eph 2:4-6)
3. Why God has done it (Eph 2:7-9)
4. What we need to do (Eph 2:10)



Read: Ephesians 2:1-3



2. How were we before we met God?

Paul describes the state of everyone before our relationship with God was restored. We are described as having been "dead" in our "transgressions and sins." Transgressions mean 'wrong steps' or 'to trespass' and sin is defined as 'missing the mark'.



3. What does it mean to be "dead" in this context?

Obviously this is not a literal death, it means cut off and separated from God. This means we were isolated from the revelation of God, from the experience of His love, blessing, and purpose. We were not outside of God's love, but we were immune to experiencing it.



Read: Ephesians 2:4-6



4. What three things has God done as described in this passage?

There are three specific actions described in this passage which God has undertaken; He has (1) Made us alive (2) Raised us with Christ (3) Seated us in the heavenly realms. These three actions parallel Paul's description of how God has displayed His power in Ephesians 1:19-20 by raising Jesus from the dead and seating Him in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians #5 Raised Office

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5. What does this parallel illustration suggest about the relationship between Jesus and those who receive God's salvation?

The New Testament emphasises the shared experience that Christians have with Jesus: Jesus died, we were dead to God, Jesus was raised from the dead - we have been made alive to God, Jesus has been seated in the heavenly realms and has authority over the enemy - so have we.



Read: Ephesians 1:20-21



6. Jesus, seated in the heavenly realms (or ruling over the spiritual dimension), has been given how much authority over what?

7. We share this same experience and have been seated in the same place; what does this mean?

Jesus gave His disciples authority over the enemy, authority in the heavenly realms to proclaim God's rule and power over the influences of Satan in the world. This is not simply a nice idea to make us feel important, this is something that has been given to Christians by God to exert His influence upon the world to see situations and lives changed for the fulfilment of His purposes.



Read: Ephesians 2:7-9



8. Why has God done all this?

The simple answer is that God wanted us to be able to grasp the love He has for us. Paul writes that God did this to "show the incomparable riches of His grace."

Everything that God has done for us is to demonstrate to us His love. He acted out of unmerited favour towards us, He acted despite the fact that our lives were formerly against everything He desires.

The phrase "in the coming ages" describes the time between Jesus' resurrection and His return and also into eternity. God's grace is for now and it's forever.

Paul makes it very clear that this awesome act of love and mercy towards us is not because of anything we've done - it is simply because of God's love and desire for a relationship with us.



Read: Ephesians 2:10



9. What do we need to do to respond to this?

In the closing sentence of this section Paul brings the focus back onto God's Big Plan and our role in it. We have been created to fulfil God's purposes, "created in Christ to do..." We've been created to do "good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do."



10. What significance do you think there is that God "prepared" these things "in advance"?

Ephesians has a strong emphasis on the role we play in fulfilling God's purposes, especially as His body, the Church. We've been given God's power and authority to change situations and lives and introduce God's Kingdom into this world, but there are practical applications of this power as well as spiritual. We need to couple prayer with action and action with prayer and "do" what we've created for in response to God's love. As a Small Group, continue your discussion from previous weeks about what you can do in this community, write one big idea down and come up with an action plan to get it done.

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