



Connect: LIFEgroup discussion guide

a Christian community of fresh hope

Paul says "You are in Christ"

Sun 30th Oct 2022

WELCOME: Last Sunday – 23rd October – we had a prayer breakfast and this Sunday – 30th October – we were again around tables and prayer was an important part of our focus.

- What has the focus on prayer meant to you in the past couple of Sunday gatherings?
- In what ways do you think we could further develop prayer as part of our LIFEgroup, part of our church family gatherings and/or part of our own personal lives?

In our recent studies we looked at John 14 where Jesus says to those following him, "you are in me and I am in you." What does it mean to you to be "in Christ?"

DISCUSSING THE MESSAGE: (Ephesians 1: 1-23)

The message is about Christians being "in Christ" and what impact that has on our lives. In the book of Acts we find the Pharisee Saul involved in persecuting the early church. In Acts 9, he has a supernatural encounter with Jesus, which changes his whole life and perspective and by Acts 18 now known as Paul he begins the church in Ephesus – who can God not reach?

READ: Eph 1:1-14

- How many times in these verses does Paul speak about being "in Christ," "with Christ," "in Him" etc – why do you think Paul emphasises so much what Jesus taught in John 14?
- How would you sum up this section in your own words?
- In what ways does this passage reflect the Trinity?

READ: Eph 1:1-3

Some manuscripts do not say "in Ephesus," have someone read it and say "in Engadine" instead.

- What does God say and give to the church?
- What would you say God has given to you?
- What are our spiritual blessings in Christ?

READ: Eph 1:4-5

These verses speak about people whom God has chosen. It is tempting and easy to get drawn into a discussion the about who God has "not chosen," however this passage doesn't address the idea that God may not have chosen some. Try to stick with this passage and focus on what it does say.

- What does it mean to you that followers of Jesus have been loved by God and chosen before the world was formed?
- What do you think it means that God "chose us in Christ" to be holy and without fault?"

READ: Eph 1:6-8

- How should we respond to being chosen and adopted into God's family?
- In what ways have Christians received all wisdom and understanding?

READ: Eph 1:9-12

- What is God's mysterious plan?
- What is our role in God's plan?

READ: Eph 1:13-14

- What is the role of the Holy Spirit here?
- What is the inheritance we have been promised?
- What should our response be to what God has done for us?

ACCORDING TO THE APOSTLE PAUL, "IN CHRIST" WE ARE:

CHOSEN	v4	God chose us in Him [Christ]
FREE	v6	God gave grace in the Beloved [Christ]
FORGIVEN	v7	Redemption is available in Him [Christ]
KNOWING	v9	God made known the mystery of His will in Christ.
ALL THINGS	v10	Everything comes together in Christ
HEIR	v11	We have an inheritance in Christ
HOPE	v12	We set our hope in Christ.
SPIRITED	v13	We believed in Christ received the Holy Spirit

Key reasons for the Holy Spirit being here are:

- To give believers a sense of identity v 13
 - Guarantee our inheritance v 14
 - Empower us to praise and glorify God v 14
- In what ways does the Holy Spirit inspire a sense of Christian identity for you?
 - In what ways are you empowered to praise and glorify God?

READ: Eph 1:15-23

- In what ways is Paul's teaching being "in Christ" reflected in his response, which is to pray?
- In what ways and how often is an attitude of prayer referred to in this passage?

ACCORDING TO THE APOSTLE PAUL, AS A FRUIT OF BEING "IN CHRIST" WE PRAY:

v16	Pray - Thanking God
v17	Pray - Asking God for wisdom, insight, knowledge
v18	Pray - for Hearts flooded in light to understand hope
v19	Pray - that Christians understand God's power for us
v20	Pray - for Revelation of the power of the Gospel
v22	Pray - that we recognise all authority is in Christ for His church
v23	Pray - we can see that the Church is Christ's body, complete in Christ

Pray together:

Take time as a LIFEgroup to pray for one another and pray for our church family to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to know who we are and to passionately praise and glorify God. Pray that we can learn to be a people of Prayer. Pray we would encourage one another to know that we are each CHOSEN, FREE, FORGIVEN, KNOWN, HEIRS, PEOPLE OF HOPE, SPIRIT-FILLED PEOPLE... AMEN