

Ephesians

God's Glory in His Church

The Letter that appears with the name **Ephesians** in the Bible was written by God through the apostle Paul to a group of churches in modern day-Turkey. The primary theme of this biblical book is God's glory displayed through the Church. If you have questions about what the Church is all about, Ephesians is a great place to look. In six brief chapters God tells us what His design for the Church is all about. The first half dwells on who He has made us to be as His people and the second half explains what it means to live in this new reality of being the Church.

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

Please ask the Holy Spirit to guide you:

What does it mean for God to freely bestow grace on us in the Beloved?

What does it mean to be "in Christ"? What difference does it make?

Why does God receive all the glory for the adoption of His people?

Ezra-Nehemiah

A Community Restored for Worship

The book of **Ezra-Nehemiah** was written to encourage God's people returning after exile to believe the covenant promises and restore the temple in Jerusalem. God's people were being restored in the place of promise as a worshipping community. The restoration of purpose was far greater than their real estate. The place always has to do with what God promised would happen there.

Sermon Notes and Daily Devotional
First Congregational Church of Woodstock

Pastor Doug Warren
September 9, 2018

Morning Service

Ephesians 1:1-14

Celebrating God's Kindness in Our Adoption

1. God Gets All the Glory for Our Salvation (1-6).
2. We Are Adopted in Christ (3-14).
3. The Father Delights in the Son (6,10).

Summary: Every single bit of our salvation is God's doing and so it is only right that He should get all the glory from it. In this song of praise, we see layer after layer of God's glorious work in our salvation that results in our adoption in Christ for His glory. Wonder of wonders we receive the same affection from God as Christ as He set His everlasting love upon us.

Evening Service

Ezra 1-2

Restored to Worship

1. The Place of the Promise.
2. The People of the Promise.
3. The Purpose of the Promise.

Summary: Worshipping the true God together in community is not only the end goal of the promise, but it is the means by which we are restored. It is through biblical worship that we see God and ourselves rightly and are transformed more and more in the image of Christ our Lord to more fully and wholly worship Him.

Taking Gathered Worship Home

God is zealous for His own glory. He will not share it. Yet part of the wonder of the gospel is that He chose to adopt us into His family and be magnificently glorified through us. As we investigate Ephesians together, pray He would be more glorified through us. Please use the devotional material below each day this week to meet with Jesus. Please pray that we as a community of faith will learn His ways and walk in them to accomplish His purposes.

Sunday AM

READ today's passage: Ephesians 1:1-14. Why is God's glory the only right ultimate goal? How is God accomplishing this? Through whom? Discuss your experience with communion. Why did you participate or not? How did that connect with the sermon? The songs? The prayers? PRAY for God to convince us that nothing compares to the promise we have in Christ. Ask Him to empower us to extend His grace throughout the world.

Sunday PM

READ today's passage: Ezra 1-2. Describe the covenant promises of God. What is the relationship between its place, people, and purpose? PRAY for God to convince us that nothing compares to the promise we have in Christ. Ask Him to empower us to extend His grace through-out the world.

Monday

READ Ephesians 1:1-12; John 1:10-13. What right has Christ given to us? How did He accomplish this? Who is it dependent upon? REJOICE for God has adopted us into His family. PRAY for neighbors, peers, friends & family asking God to save them. Extend His grace to someone you know today. Lovingly express to them in word/deed the grace Christ has lavished upon you (us).

Tuesday

READ Romans 8:12-17. Who is led by the Spirit? What does this mean? Meditate on this reality—we have received the Spirit of sonship! PRAY thanking our Father God for making us His in Jesus. Praise His glorious name.

Wednesday

READ Ephesians 1:1-12. How is God glorified through our adoption? Meditate on the astonishing grace God has given to us. REJOICE if you have been adopted through Christ's sacrifice. PRAY, "Lord, thank You for adopting me. Help me to live as befits Your children."

Thursday

READ 1 John 2:28-3:3. How is our adoption related to how we are to live now? What does that mean for you (us) today? REJOICE in Christ's coming and freeing us from sin and death. PRAY, "Heavenly Father, thank You for all Your promises. Thank You for the fulfillment of all of them in Christ. Help us to see them more clearly and to believe in You rather than ourselves or the lies of this world. Strengthen our faith and help us to know Your faithfulness. Show us how Christ has come so that we may repent from our sin and turn to You. Reveal the depths of Your love for us. Strip away any other comfort that distracts us from loving You above all else we pray. Amen."

Friday

READ Galatians 3:26-4:7. How is a slave different from an heir? Which do you (we) live like? Why? REJOICE for Christ has died 'once for all' obtaining for us eternal life! PRAY for your neighbors who are deceived and unable to even see their own sin for what it really is. Ask God for their repentance. Pray that God will use you to bring them into His kingdom to the honor and praise of His name.

Saturday

READ tomorrow's sermon passage: Ephesians 1:3-23. PREPARE today for the gathered worship service tomorrow. PRAY for God's glory to be more and more manifested in the Upper Valley. Ask Him to use us to extend His grace as we celebrate it together. INVITE a neighbor, co-worker or friend to come with you to worship.