**Ephesians 1: 1-10**

*Note, because this is the first Bible study of the term, it is intended to be a short one (30 min tops). A significant amount of time should be spent getting to know each other.*

*Background Material for Ephesians***-** *this background material can be read aloud or simply summarize the key points, it should be helpful material for you, the leader, to know in advance.*

*Ephesians is considered by many people to be the greatest of Paul’s writings. It emphasizes the breaking down of the barriers that divide men and a reigning God whose purpose for the world must ultimately prevail. - Vaughan*

*Ephesus:* The letter was likely a circular letter, written for all of the churches in the Roman empire, hence the omission of personal references. In this case, it would not be just for the church in Ephesus.

Paul wrote it while in prison, likely his first Roman imprisonment; likely dated between 61-63 AD

Paul also wrote Colossian, Philemon, and Philippians all around this time.

*Comprehensive Letter***:** absence of personal references, local coloring, and closing greetings. It has a large scope that walks through Jew and Gentile, heaven and earth, past and present, and what is yet to come. Paul frequently (50 times) uses the word *all*- He is over all, through all, and in all.

*Doctrinal Letter***:** Contains the last lengthy theological discussion that we have from the pen of Paul. It talks of redemption, divine intention for the human race, grace of God, fullness of God, predestination, reconciliation, union with Christ, and the church as the body of Christ.

*Practical letter***:** Speaks of moral, spiritual, and domestic problems and gives its answers in clear and unequivocal language.

Read vs 1-2

In the opening greeting, who are the main characters, what is the background? What authority does Paul have to be writing?

-Paul: Apostle: *Apostolos – a person sent, a messenger:* Principally in the New Testament was used in reference to the select group of men who had a special and direct commission from Christ and who went forth endued with His power and clothed with his authority.

*Saints: separation, consecration, holy ones.* In the OT it is used for Israel, in the NT for Christians.

Read 3-10

Vs 3 is a Praise to God for the things which He has done. What are these blessings? What do they mean to you, what do you think they mean? Do you see this as true in your own life? Are you satisfied with Spiritual blessings over material blessings?

Vs 4:-5 What does this mean that he chose us to be holy and blameless before Creation? What effect does it have that it was done out of love?

***Adoption*** *to* ***sonship*** *through* ***Jesus Christ****-* break this down, what do each of those parts mean, what effect do they have? Put this in your own language. Does it make sense to you?

Vs 7: what redemption do we have? Redeemed from what?

Vs 8: *He lavished on us riches of His grace*- What do this mean to you? The word “lavished” emphasizes the overflowing nature of what He did, is the emphasis necessary?

–He did this with all *wisdom (vs 8)*- what does this mean? How do you understand God’s wisdom? Do you trust His judgement or is this difficult to understand (or see) and therefore also difficult to trust.

Vs 9: What is the *mystery* of his will that he made known?

*This means nothing less than the truth about the ultimate destiny of the universe- that He might gather together in one all things in Christ. A new order, a new Creation in which Christ shall be the acknowledge head. –Vaughan.*

Vs 10: *He will bring unity to all things in heaven and earth*. What does this mean?

*Paul means that one day God’s universe, into which sin has brought disorder and confusion, will be restored to harmony and unity under the headship of Jesus Christ. Ultimately everything in existence will be made to serve the sovereign purpose of God. – Vaughan*

Conclusion

Rewrite or summarize the passage in your own words. What are the key points to remember? What are you taking away from this study? How does this change how you view Christ and your relationship with Him?