


Ephesians

Our Riches in Christ

Part 2

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11

Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a "transforming church". We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." Since "Talking Points, Walking Points" is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to "dive deep" too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled "Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time", are perfect for private reflection.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- Read Ephesians 1:3-14, trying to sort out what refers to God the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
What do you learn about the **Father's** role in salvation?
What do you learn about the **Son's** role in salvation?
What do you learn about the **Spirit's** role in salvation?
What do you think is the significance of the fact that our salvation is "trinitarian"?
- Read 2 Peter 1:2-11. Let's see how we can "make certain that we are called and chosen by God". According to v. 2-4, what aspects of our salvation have already been accomplished?
Verses 5-7 tell us to supply virtues to our faith "for the very reason because we have been saved". What do you think is the connection between accomplished salvation and a life of virtue?
What is accomplished when we add these virtues to our salvation (v. 8-11)?
Do you ever wonder if you are "called and chosen by God" (v. 10a)?
Do you ever worry about stumbling (v. 10b) or wonder if heaven's doors will be thrown open for you (v. 11)?

Sermon Summary

In Ephesians 1:5-14 Paul praises God for the incredible spiritual blessings that God has poured out on us, his children, who are “in Christ” (Paul repeats this phrase eight times in this one, long, run-on Greek sentence of over 200 words!). **There are six spiritual blessings described in this passage.**

I. Election (See last week’s sermon for the discussion of this blessing.) Christians disagree as to exactly how election was accomplished, but there is no disagreement on the most important gospel truths: (a) salvation comes to us by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, (b) God has chosen those who respond to Jesus in faith, and (c) God no longer counts our sins against us.

II. Predestination Election and predestination are related concepts: election is about *who*, predestination is about *what*. Election refers to *people*, predestination refers to God’s *purposes*. At the moment a person places their trust in Christ a number of things happen: (a) The Holy Spirit imparts eternal life; we are born again; we are given new life—the kind of life that God has. (b) The Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us. (c) We are adopted into God’s family. Being “born again” emphasizes the idea of coming into God’s family as a baby with the need for growth and development. Adoption is the act of God by which he gives his children adult-standing as heirs. He does this because a baby can’t legally use his inheritance (Galatians 4:1-7), but God wants us to draw upon our vast spiritual inheritance right now! We must not wait to claim our riches in Christ; we need them right now! (Yes, there are *some* benefits that we can’t draw upon now. Romans chapter 8 talks about that time in the future when we will receive our glorified bodies. Revelation assures us that we will live out eternity on a new rejuvenated earth in new glorified bodies where we will reign with Christ forever!) There is one more characteristic of adoption that we must understand. The New Testament concept of adoption draws upon the background of first century Greco-Roman life where adoption was prominent. In the first century, wealthy but childless couples would often adopt a son, who would become their heir. Once adopted, if the adopted child had living biological parents, they had no more claim over their child. In a similar way, when we enter into God’s family our allegiance is to our heavenly Father and to our spiritual family. Our biological families become secondary (Matthew 10:37–38).

III. Redemption Many people today want a version of Christianity that minimizes the cross, but without redemption there is no Christianity at all! From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible’s central message concerns our need for redemption. At the heart of the teaching of Jesus and his apostles is a God who redeems his people. Redemption means liberation or deliverance because a payment is made. Originally it was a commercial term; the act of purchasing someone out of slavery was called “redemption.” At the heart of Christianity is the teaching that Jesus died on the cross to pay the price required to free us from our slavery to sin (1 Peter 1:18-19). Many people today believe that God doesn’t take sin all that seriously. They’re wrong. Yes, God is loving, but he also is holy and just and cannot pretend that sins haven’t been committed. His holy nature doesn’t allow him to pronounce us innocent when we are guilty. That would be injustice. Man’s sin requires a just payment and the amazing thing is that the Judge of the universe paid our penalty for us.

IV. Revelation God has revealed to us the mystery of his will. In the Old Testament, God’s people didn’t know all the details about how God was going to deal with their sin. All they knew was that their sin required a blood sacrifice. They didn’t know what these sacrifices pointed to, that one day God would send a divine-human Savior who would make the ultimate atonement for our sin. Those details remained shrouded in mystery. But all this became clear with the appearance of Jesus! It also now has been revealed that salvation includes non-Jews. In the Old Testament there were only isolated references that salvation wasn’t limited to the Jews.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*"Five Question Bible Study" (see next page) is a simple way to study any passage.
Let's use it to study each of the six blessings of Ephesians Chapter 1...*

Monday—Election Read Romans 9:11-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Colossians 3:12; Titus 1:1

Tuesday—Predestination Read Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:5-11; 1 Corinthians 2:6-8

Wednesday—Redemption Read 1 Peter 1:18-19; Galatians 3:10-14 & 4:4-5; Titus 2:11-14

Thursday—Revelation Read Romans 1:16-19; 1 Timothy 3:14-16; Philippians 3:12-16

Friday—Inheritance Read Galatians 4:1-7; Romans 8:14-17; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Colossians 3:23-25

Saturday—Holy Spirit Read Romans 8:12-17; 1 John 2:27; 4:13; 5:13; Galatians 5:22-23

Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]