WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Ephesians | *March 10*

Welcome! Thank you for joining us in studying through Acts! The book of Acts tells the story of how the Gospel of Jesus spread throughout the world of the first century A.D. — and one man (Paul) was especially instrumental in that effort. Paul not only traveled on multiple journeys speaking the Gospel and starting new churches, but he also wrote letters to many of those new congregations.

The Bible includes 13 of those letters! (Find a chart of all 13 letters **here**.) As we continue our study in Acts, our midweek studies occasionally will focus on one of those letters (also called epistles).

Tonight we will be in Ephesians, a letter written to the church in Ephesus. First, let's learn more about this letter.

- **Why did Paul write Ephesians?** Paul helped start the church in Ephesus (see Acts 19). He spent more than two years with the people there and many became believers. His letter contains both encouragement and instruction for the church.
- **When was Ephesians written?** Paul likely wrote Ephesians about five years after leaving the city. Paul was likely imprisoned in Rome at the time he wrote it.
- **How is the letter of Ephesians structured?** In the first three chapters, Paul focuses on the doctrines of the Gospel, and in the last three chapters, he focuses on the application of the Gospel in the life of the church as well as each individual believer.

Tonight we will focus on a prayer that Paul includes in the letter for the Ephesian church.

Read Ephesians 1:15-23

- What stands out to you in these verses? Who is Paul praying for? Why is it important to notice that he is praying for believers?

In verse 16, Paul writes that he gives thanks to God for the Ephesians.

- Why is Paul thankful for this congregation? Is thankfulness for others a regular part of your prayers? Why or why not?

Paul prays in verse 18 that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened (verse 18). What does that phrase mean?

Paul then makes three specific prayers requests for the church: that they would know their **hope** in God, the riches of God's **inheritance**, and the greatness of the **power** of God.

Re-read Ephesians 1:18.

- What does Paul pray that the church would know first?
- Why do you think Paul wants the church to have their hearts enlightened about their hope in Jesus? What does that mean for you?

- How can being “enlightened” about the hope we have in Jesus make a difference in our lives and in the life of the church?

- What else in verse 18 does Paul pray that the church would know?
- What do you think Paul means by “the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints”? Look back through Ephesians 1. Does Paul write about an “inheritance” in other verses?
- Why would Paul want the church to have their hearts enlightened about the riches of God’s inheritance? What does that mean for you?

Re-read Ephesians 1:19-20.
- What does Paul pray in verse 19 that the church would know? Do you often forget about the “immeasurable greatness” of the power of God? Why or why not?
- How was the power of God demonstrated, according to verse 20?
- Why would Paul want the church to have their hearts enlightened about the power of God? What does that mean for you?

If time permits, read Paul’s second prayer in Ephesians as you close (Ephesians 3:14-21). What does Paul pray for the church in this passage?

Close in prayer. Using Paul’s prayer as a guide, pray that we as a church and individually would know God and the hope, inheritance, and power we have because of Jesus. Pray that the Spirit at work in us would enlighten us to these things and empower us to live a life that reflects who God is.

KIDS FOCUS

Ephesians is a letter in the Bible written by a missionary named Paul to a church in the city of Ephesus. Paul spends the first three chapters talking about Jesus and the the last three chapters are about how to live our lives for Jesus. Tonight we are going to focus on Jesus.

Read Ephesians 2:4-5.
- What sort of love does God have?
- What are “trespasses”? What do our trespasses make us? *(Dead.)* What can dead things do?
- How does God make us alive? *(By sending His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins and be resurrected so that we could be resurrected with Him!)*
- Do you know someone that needs to know that Jesus has done this for them? Let’s pray for them!

Close in prayer. Pray that you would remember what Jesus has done for you, and that you would be able to share that with others in your life!

PAUL'S LETTERS

LETTER	DATE	RECIPIENTS	PLACE OF WRITING
Galatians	48	Churches in south Galatia	Syrian Antioch
1 Thessalonians	49–51	Church in Thessalonica	Corinth
2 Thessalonians	49–51	Church in Thessalonica	Corinth
1 Corinthians	53–55	Church in Corinth	Ephesus
2 Corinthians	55–56	Church in Corinth	Macedonia
Romans	57	Church in Rome	Corinth
Philippians	62	Church in Philippi	Rome (in prison)
Colossians	62	Church in Colossae	Rome (in prison)
Philemon	62	Philemon	Rome (in prison)
Ephesians	62	Church in Ephesus (and other churches in Asia Minor)	Rome (in prison)
1 Timothy	62–64	Timothy	Macedonia
Titus	62–64	Titus	Nicopolis
2 Timothy	64- 67	Timothy	Rome (in prison)