



Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture

SERMON TEXT: Ephesians 1: 1-14

KEY POINT: A Christian's identity comes stems from what God has accomplished in Christ.

FOR LEADERS

- Final Descent! We are approaching our final weeks together in Communities before we break for the Summer! Take some time to fellowship with your group before we close and talk a bit about expectations for the Fall Season. Will you be continuing? Will there be any changes in time / location / leadership? Anyone that you could see leading for this upcoming year?
Feedback: Walking in discipleship together this past year during Pandemic has been CHALLENGING (to say the least)! Even so, the challenging seasons we've faced have opened new doors of opportunity for us together as a church. As we prayerfully consider what it means for discipleship to consider to flourish at Emergence, we would very much like to hear from our faithful leaders! When you have a moment, please head to www.emergencenj.org/feedback to let us know what your experience has been and to help provide insight as we plan for what's to come!

GETTING STARTED

- [1] Communities Video: Watch this week's community extras video!
[2] Icebreaker: What did you want to "be" as a child growing up?
[3] Opener: What were your biggest takeaways from the sermon this week?

IDENTITY

Our passage this week in Ephesians presents us with a brilliant opportunity to examine our own identity and, most importantly, from where (or whom!) we derive our identity.

- [1] Take a moment and have each person in your group fill in the blank of "I am ____ ." three times. Then go around the room sharing your answers explaining why you chose the answers you did, and how that affects the way you live.
[2] What expectations do you feel you have to live up to in light of how you define yourself? How does our identity affect the way we live?

WHO AM I?

Ask for someone to read Ephesians 1:1-2.

- [3] What does Paul mean by calling himself an "apostle"? What does he mean by calling his readers "saints?"
[4] Paul calls himself an apostle by "the will of God." What difference does that make for how one would perceive his or her identity?
[5] Do you think that Christians today could say that their identity as saints is grounded in "the will of God?" Why or why not? And again, what difference does this make?

WHAT HAVE I?



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Ask everyone to read through our passage this week (Eph 1:1-14), taking note of everything Paul says a Christian “has” in Christ.

- [6]** According to this passage, what does Paul say that we “have” in Christ?
- [7]** What does it mean to say that God has “blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places?”
- [8]** Notice how “blessing” goes two ways: we bless God and He blesses us. What does it mean to bless God, and how is that difference from God blessing us?
- [9]** What does it mean to say that we are holy, blameless and adopted as “sons” in God’s family? What is it that gives us such status?
- [10]** What does Paul mean in saying we have “redemption by his blood,” and why is that connected to the “forgiveness of our trespasses?”
- [11]** Twice in this passage, Paul says that God “predestined us” according to his will. What does this mean, and why is it important for us to know?
- [12]** Disagreement over the concept of predestination is almost inevitable. How can we navigate conversations about this in a way that honors God, and who we all are in Him?
- [13]** What difference does the Holy Spirit make in the life of a Christian? Where have you seen that in your own life?
- [14]** How do these verses contribute to our understanding of the Christian’s eternal security?

WHY AM I?

- [15]** Three times, Paul says that God did all of this “to the praise of his glory” (vv. 6, 12, 14). What does this teach us about the purpose of salvation? Why is Paul keep repeating himself?
- [16]** Go back through the passage and try to identify all the ways Paul places the responsibility for our salvation on God. What is the practical importance of this? How does this affect the way we understand our identity?

PRAYER

- [1]** Take a minute to bless God for the salvation you have in him, using the language of this passage.
- [2]** Pray that God would help us all see our identity in light of these amazing truths.