

Ephesians

Lesson 2 Ephesians 1:1-14

Leader Guide

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Lesson 2

Ephesians 1:1-14

God's Assurance and Security

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Ephesians 1:4

Prayers

Introduction

Our pastor gave a wonderful children's sermon on labeling things and people. He printed off sheets of labels on stickers and placed the words "fun" and "smart" on the associate pastor. Then asked if any of the kids had ever experienced being called a bad word or labeled with a bad word. In contrast, the Bible had wonderful labels for them, words like "kind," "wise," "holy," and "compassionate." Each child received a label. The little boy sitting in front of us came back beaming and proudly showed his parents his label, "loved."

Paul used a similar technique in the first chapter of his letter to the Ephesians to show how deeply God loved them and provided for them. Paul's labels for God's love for us are words like chosen, holy, blameless, predestined, adopted, child of God, redeemed, and saved. These labels are woven together in the form of a short hymn or doxology as one continuous thought. In this lesson, we will spend some time thinking about God's labels for us.

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

Eph 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Eph 1:2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

Eph 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Eph 1:4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love

Eph 1:5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

Eph 1:6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

Eph 1:8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

Eph 1:9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,

Eph 1:10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

Eph 1:11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

^{Eph 1:12} in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ^{Eph 1:13}
And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.
Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,
^{Eph 1:14} who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's
possession—to the praise of his glory.

Discuss

1. Paul addresses his letter to the saints in Ephesus with a common greeting – grace and peace. Let's take a moment to review the meanings of the words in his introduction.

Apostle – comes from the ancient Greek "*Apostolos*," "**a person sent.**" An *Apostolos* was a person sent with a message and can be translated as messenger, envoy, or ambassador. Christian writers used the word apostle for Jesus (Hebrews 3:1), the original 12 disciples, and Paul. Paul said that signs, wonders, and miracles accompany the calling of an apostle (2 Corinthians 12:12).

Disciple – The word for disciple comes from the ancient Greek for "*learner* ." A disciple is someone who makes the mental effort to think something through. A disciple of Christ makes an effort to understand Jesus' teachings and obey them.

Saint – comes from the medieval Latin word "*sanctus*," meaning holy or set apart. A saint is "**a holy one,**" someone set apart for God's special purposes. Everyone who is a disciple of Christ is a saint. The holiness of a saint is found in their unity with Christ, Christ as their righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30), not by their own actions.

Grace and peace to you in verse 2 were the two most common greetings in the Greek and Jewish world. Grace to you (*charis*) was the Greek equivalent to "Have a good day." Peace (*Shalom*) in Hebrew was wishing someone well in every aspect of their being. Paul used the same greetings from the perspective of someone who has received God's grace to be in Christ so they can be at peace with God. In this way, God's grace always comes before his peace. What are some of the many blessings you have in Christ that you could complete Paul's greeting with:

Have a good day because of _____.

God's abundant grace!

God's love for us as his children!

God's forgiveness of all our sins!

Our salvation! Our hope for eternal life!

Unity and fellowship in Christ!

Loving relationships, family, God's provision, and many more!

2. In verses 3-14, Paul uses words that are the foundation of our church doctrines. How would you define Paul's words? How are these concepts personally important to you?
 - a. Verse 4 chosen

We are chosen by God to be his children and enter his eternal kingdom. We become his children only by faith in Jesus Christ. God chooses us, gives us faith to believe in Jesus, gives us spiritual rebirth through his Holy Spirit, and holds us securely in his kingdom as his children. God chose us to be with

him before creation in the same way Jesus chose his disciples: **You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit —fruit that will last** (John 15:16). Another word with the same meaning as “chosen” is “elect” (Matthew 24:22, 1 Peter 1:1).

b. Verse 4 holy and blameless

Holy and blameless is how God sees us when we believe in Christ, who forgives our sins. We are holy and blameless, not because of our obedience and perfect behavior, but because we are united with Christ. He is our righteousness, “[Christ Jesus] has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). Holy means to set apart for God’s special purposes – to love him and love others through worship and acts of service.

c. Verse 5 predestined

Predestination means God will bring us to faith to make our election sure. We are in his good, loving, and secure hands, now and to eternal life.

d. Verse 5 adopted

Adopted means to become a child of God. After our spiritual rebirth through faith and baptism by the Holy Spirit, we are children in God's kingdom by God's choosing. Our sins are forgiven and forgotten.

e. Verse 5 God’s sons, sons of God

“Sons of God” is more commonly translated “children of God” in many modern Bibles. The use of male pronouns for non-gender-specific references did not come into English use until the mid-18th century. Ancient Greek had gender-specific nouns and pronouns for sons, daughters, sons and daughters, and children. Gospel writers had a deeper, more significant reason for referring to believers as “sons” of God. Gospel writers consistently used “sons” because the emphasis was on the inheritance of eternal life, not the gender of the believer. In the culture of the day, only sons received an inheritance, but all of God's children share the same inheritance of salvation and eternal life. Consequently, it was more appropriate for the Gospel writers to refer to God’s children as “sons” because all God’s children inherit his blessings.

f. Verse 5 grace

Grace is God’s gift or favor that we do not deserve or earn. Grace is related to mercy, God’s forgiveness or favor, instead of a punishment for sin that we deserve. God's grace is shown by forgiving our sins, adoption, redemption, salvation, eternal life, and the blessings he shows us daily.

g. Verse 7 forgiveness – mercy

Mercy is God’s forgiveness and favor instead of punishment for sin, which we deserve. Mercy is related to grace, God’s gift or favor that we do not deserve or earn.

h. Verse 7 redeemed

To redeem is to pay the price to ransom or rescue someone from captivity or slavery. We are redeemed from slavery to sin by the blood and death of Jesus.

i. Verse 13 salvation

Salvation is deliverance from death and sin to eternal life in God's kingdom. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ, "for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Salvation is by faith, not by good behavior, charity, or other good works. Obedience and charity are our responses to Jesus' love and sacrifice for us.

3. Peter wrote his letter to the "elect," verse 1. The idea of God's election is often misunderstood but is synonymous with being chosen or called. The ideas of election and predestination go hand in hand. Read the following verses and explain what it means to be the elect and predestined.

[Jesus speaking] ^{Mt 24:22} **If those days [the last days] had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.**

[Paul writing] ^{Eph 1:4} For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Being God's elect means to be chosen by God to be his child through faith in Jesus Christ. God chose us before the world's creation to be his, before we sinned or were obedient or even born, so that we might know we are his by his choice, not by our actions.

Predestination means God will bring us to faith to make our election sure. We are in his good, loving, and secure hands.

4. How do God's predestination and mercy give you complete security in Christ?

Predestination gives us security in Christ because God made plans for us to be in Christ before creation. God gives us our faith by His grace, and His Spirit keeps us in Christ. God's loving mercy gives us security because we know he will forgive our sins when we confess them and look to Christ as our Savior because of his great love for us and Christ.

5. Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as God's seal in his letters to the Ephesians (verses 1:13, 4:30) and 2 Corinthians (verses 1:21-22, 5:5). The word seal refers to the seal of a signet ring – sealed with authority for security and attested to as genuine. How does God's seal of the Holy Spirit give you assurance in your faith?

The Holy Spirit moves us to faith, keeps us in faith, guides us, offers prayers of intercession, illuminates our minds, and keeps us secure in Christ until we are raised to eternal life. God leaves nothing to chance regarding our faith. He made plans for us before creation, chose us to be his children, gave us faith so we would believe in Christ, and gave us his Spirit to dwell in us until we join him in eternal life.

6. In the first 14 verses of Ephesians, Paul contrasts the works of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. What are some of the works of each?

Gods Work

Verse 3, He blesses us

Verse 4, He chose us

Verse 5, He predestined us to be in Christ

Verse 5, He adopted us as his sons

Verse 6, He gives us his grace through Christ

Verse 8-9 He gives wisdom and understanding of his will [for salvation through faith in Christ]

Verse 10 He brings all things together under Christ's supremacy

Verse 11 He works out everything for our salvation according to his will

Verse 12 He brings us to faith to praise and glorify Christ

Christ's Work

Verse 7 Redemption

Verse 7, Forgiveness

The Spirit's Work

Verse 14 Guarantees our spiritual inheritance in Christ.

Closing

Dear Father in heaven,

Help me always remember that you have known and loved me before creation. You created my inmost being. You have ordained all the days of my life. Search, test, guide, and lead me in the way of everlasting life through Christ, my Lord. Amen