



THE CAMPUS CHURCH
LOVE AND SERVE GOD AND PEOPLE

One – Studies in Ephesians

Small Group Discussion Resource

Message 2 – The riches of God’s grace

As usual, begin your discussion by inviting God’s spirit to join you and illuminate his truth in your minds.

1. Are you a leaper or a groaner? I’m talking about how you get out of bed in the morning. How you get out of bed in the morning tells a lot about you. Do you leap out of bed, excited to live another day with Jesus, or do you slowly roll out of bed, wondering if it is even worth getting up?
2. In the first chapter of this book of Ephesians, Paul, under the inspiration of God, gives us many reasons why we ought to jump out of bed filled with appreciation of who we are in Christ and anticipation of the adventure we can have discovering the riches of God’s blessing in our lives. Read the passage together out loud.

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. 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 for adoption to sonship 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.

⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

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, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:3-14 NIV)

3. In the message, this passage was called “The Symphony”. Does breaking this section down into three verses and a chorus help you understand this in a more reflective way? If so, how?

The symphony of Ephesians 1

Verse one (1:3-6): *Praise to God the Father for his wonderful plan (past)*

God is the source and subject of all blessing.

Verse two (1:7-12): *Praise to the Son for accomplishing our redemption (present)*

Jesus Christ is the means by which these blessings are delivered to us

Verse three (13-14): *Praise to the Holy Spirit for his assurance and hope for the future (future)*

The Holy Spirit is the giver of assurance and hope

Chorus: *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. To the praise of his glorious grace. For the praise of his glory. To the praise of his glory.*

BTW - If you are an aspiring artist, here is a basis for a beautiful song or poem. Why don't you write the Campus a new worship tune based on this passage?

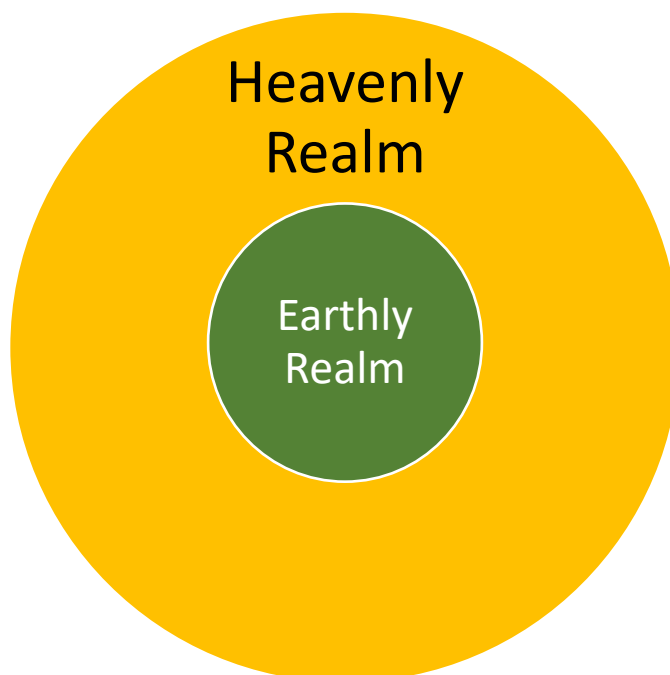
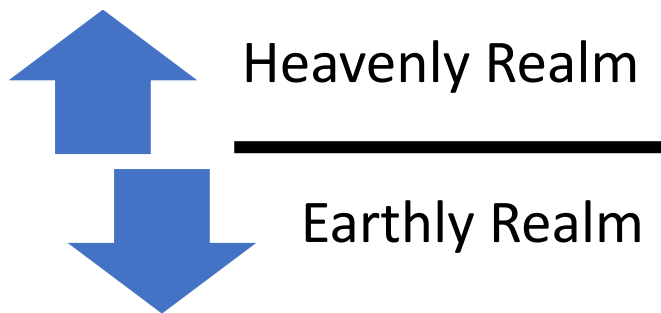
4. The word “praise” here is the root from which we get our word “eulogy”. Literally it means “well spoken words”, like we give in a funeral speech. In this case, the repeated words of “praise” are words spoken in honour of the living God. If you had to give an impromptu speech about God, what things would come to your mind to express?

5. Reflect on verses 13-14.

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were **marked in him with a seal**, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is **a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance** until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14

How is the Holy Spirit’s presence in your life like a seal or a deposit or pledge?

6. Glance over verses 3-14 again and as someone reads, the others yell out, “*spiritual blessing*” for every term that could fit that category.
7. Reflect on the concept of “the heavenly realms” – the unseen world of spiritual reality. Of the two diagrams below, which one is more helpful for you in understanding this Biblical concept? Why?



8. Read and reflect on these verses

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

9. Review the times in this book when this phrase “heavenly realm” is used. Discuss any of your impressions.

- 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms
- 1:20 That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.
- 2:6 ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,
- 3:10 ¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord
- 6:12 ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

10. Discuss your impressions with Daniel 10:10-21. What is helpful? What is confusing?

11. A.W Tozer suggested that the blessings God wants to give us fall into 3 categories.

- The riches we receive at salvation: Forgiveness, justification, adoption, baptism into his life... The moment you bowed your head and asked Jesus to come into your life and take control these riches became ours. We might not have been aware of them at the time but this is the spiritual reality.
- The riches that come to us through inheritance, but which we can't enjoy until the next life. Imagine mental and moral perfection. Imagine glorified bodies and walking and talking with our God every day of eternity. These riches surely are ours, but they are reserved for eternity.
- The riches that are ours through Christ's victory on the cross, but blessings that will not come to us unless we make a determined effort to seek God and possess all he wants for us.

12. As you close off your study, read this passage again from the Message paraphrase. The spend some time in prayer.

³⁻⁶ How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is! He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son. ⁷⁻¹⁰ Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah, his blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, we're a free people—free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. And not just barely free, either. *Abundantly* free! He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, letting us in on the plans he took such delight in making. He set it all out before us in Christ, a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and summed up in him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth. ¹¹⁻¹² It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone. ¹³⁻¹⁴ It's in Christ that you, once you heard the truth and believed it (this Message of your salvation), found yourselves home free—signed, sealed, and delivered by the Holy Spirit. This down payment from God is the first installment on what's coming, a reminder that we'll get everything God has planned for us, a praising and glorious life. Ephesians 1:3-14 (MSG)