

*Note: The online version of the Sermon Notes and Study Guide may be found at:
<https://notes.subsplash.com/fill-in/view?page=EmJk2j9TRu>*

:: Summary

Ephesians, a letter written to first century Christians in and around the area of Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia Minor, can be summed up as The Story of God. In this story, in which God is the primary actor, we see God at work, fulfilling his eternal purposes. The description of what God has done is breathtaking. Even so, there is more to the story, for it points to you and me, as believers/readers called into the story, and together, called to play a part in the story as the Church, the ekklesia (assembly) of God’s people.

:: Explore and Discuss | Ephesians 1:1-2

Read Ephesians 1:1-2. This form of greeting, contained in many of the Apostle Paul’s letters, is packed with meaning and implications for your life.

The Greek word for “holy” in the New Testament, *hagios*, can refer to something sacred; separated from common condition and use – set apart; morally blameless, righteous or pure; or consecrated, dedicated. It also refers to people – saints, most notably members of the first Christian communities. A person is not a ‘saint’ by personal merit; rather she or he is one set apart by God, and it is the privilege of every Christian to live in holiness.

Have you ever thought of yourself as a saint? Why or why not?

How does the biblical understanding of what it means to be a saint change the way you see yourself? How should this reality change the way you live in the world?

In Scripture, belief is closely tied to trustworthiness, loyalty and devotion. How would Jesus describe the devotion he desires from you?

Grace is a New Testament word signifying the undeserved favor of God. It is a gift, not something you acquire by your merit. Peace is a common Hebrew Old Testament greeting. Together these two words sum up the blessings found in Jesus Christ. Said as a blessing, “Grace and peace to you” is an expression of desire, a prayer really, that the receiver would fully know the unconditional love of God that results in restored relationship with God and God’s ongoing provision and protection in life and secondly, a prayer for peace in heart and mind, in relationship with each other, and most especially with God - the peace or wholeness of life where everything is as it is meant to be.



Is there anything in your walk of faith or life in this world that gets in the way of being fully blessed by the grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ? How might your group pray for you to break through to greater experience of this blessing?

:: Make It Personal

You are one of God's holy people by your faith in Jesus. How does knowing you are God's treasured possession shape your identity as you live in this world?

What is one "take-away" (an idea, practice, new understanding) that you can apply to your life and your journey with Jesus?

:: Pray

Heavenly Father, thank you that you call me your own. Thank you that by faith, my life is now bound up in the life of your Son, my Lord Jesus. Help me to live a life fully consecrated to you covered in grace and filled with your peace. Amen.

