

# Small Group Guide: Ephesians 1:1-14

## "Blessed in Christ: Understanding Our Spiritual Inheritance"

### SERMON RECAP (5 minutes)

This message began our study of Ephesians, written by Paul from prison as an encouragement letter to believers. Verses 3-14, form one long sentence in the original Greek—Paul couldn't stop writing about all God has done for us! We explored the incredible spiritual blessings we have "in Christ" and how God chose us before the foundation of the world.

**Key Verse:** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3)

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **We are chosen and predestined** - God knew us and planned for us before creation
2. **We are redeemed through Christ's blood** - Freedom from sin we couldn't earn
3. **We are sealed with the Holy Spirit** - A permanent guarantee of our inheritance
4. **We have every spiritual blessing** - Available now, not just in the future
5. **We bring God glory** - When we trust Christ and live for Him

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#### Understanding the Text

1. **Spiritual Blessings (v. 3):** Pastor Jerry mentioned we often think of physical blessings (health, home, job) but should focus on spiritual blessings. What are

some specific spiritual blessings you have in Christ? Make a list together.

- 2. Chosen Before Creation (v. 4):** How does it make you feel to know God knew you and chose you before He even created the world? Does this change how you see yourself?
- 3. The Predestination/Free Will Tension (v. 4-5, 11-12):** Pastor Jerry used the illustration of the door with "Whosoever Will" on one side and "Chosen in Christ" on the other. How do you understand the relationship between God's choice and our choice? Why is it important not to get stuck arguing about this?

## Going Deeper

- 4. Redemption Through Blood (v. 7):** The Word emphasized that Jesus redeemed us "not by His sinless life or moral example, but only by His death in our place, by His blood." Why is this distinction so important?
- 5. Made Holy and Blameless (v. 4):** We cannot be perfect on our own, yet we are made "holy and without blemish" through Christ. How does this truth help you when you're struggling with guilt or shame over past failures?
- 6. The Seal of the Holy Spirit (v. 13-14):** What does it mean to be "sealed" with the Holy Spirit? How does this guarantee give you confidence about your salvation?

## Personal Reflection

- 7. Mirror Examination:** Pastor Jerry challenged us to look in the mirror and ask, "Am I truly a believer in Jesus Christ, or just someone who says they're a Christian?" How would you answer this question? What evidence in your life shows you've truly trusted Christ?
- 8. Taking God for Granted:** The message mentioned we don't always take advantage of the spiritual blessings available to us. What keeps you from accessing these blessings? What would it look like to "take advantage" of them more fully?
- 9. Pondering God's Goodness (Psalm 107:43):** Pastor Jerry noted we get too busy to "be still and know God" and ponder what He's done. When was the last

time you spent intentional time reflecting on God's goodness to you?

## **PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

### **This Week's Challenge:**

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

#### **Option 1: Gratitude Journal**

- Each day, write down 3 spiritual blessings you have in Christ (use Ephesians 1:3-14 as a guide)
- Share your list with the group next time

#### **Option 2: Slow Down & Ponder**

- Set aside 15 minutes of uninterrupted time (no phone!) three times this week
- Read Ephesians 1:3-14 slowly
- Ask God: "What do You want me to understand about what You've done for me?"

#### **Option 3: Share Your Story**

- Think of one person who needs to hear about God's grace
- Share with them what God has done in your life
- Invite them to church or to coffee to talk more

#### **Option 4: Memorize Scripture**

- Memorize Ephesians 1:7-8 this week
- Write it on a card and review it daily
- Reflect on what redemption means personally to you

**Remember:** "If you think little of what God has done for you, you will do very little for him. But if you have a great notion of his great mercy to you, you are greatly grateful to your gracious God." - Spurgeon