

The Way of Jesus: Reformation
Ephesians 1:11-23
Week of October 30, 2022

Opening Questions:

- How easily do you embrace change? Are you an “early adopter” or the person who says “change? NO WAY!”
- Share about a person in your life for whom you “give thanks” because of their faith in Christ and their love for all God’s people.

Read aloud this introduction:

The great motto of the Protestant Reformation is sometimes still echoed today: “Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda” - “The Church Reformed and Always Reforming.” It is important for us to remember that the reformers’ appeal for change was not based simply on a desire to keep up with culture or to appropriate the latest innovations. Their focus was a return to the ancient text of Scripture - “sola Scriptura” - as the basis for a more faithful life of discipleship.

Dr. Anna Case-Winters, Professor of Theology at McCormick Seminary, reminds us that the church needs an on-going reformation for two reasons. First, because of who we are - sinners reliant upon God’s grace and forgiveness. And second, because of who God is - a living God who continues to speak to us through the Scriptures in a changing world. This great motto calls us, she says, “to communal and institutional repentance. It invites us, as people who worship and serve a living God, to be open to being ‘re-formed’ according to the Word of God and the call of the Spirit.”

The Apostle Paul, at the beginning of his letter to the Ephesians, has these same concerns on his heart. He reminds the believers in that part of Asia Minor of who God is, what God has done for them in Christ Jesus, and what his prayer is for them as they go forward to live out the gospel in a changing world.

Invite someone in the group to read Ephesians 1:11-23 aloud.

Pray this prayer (one person or the whole group together):

Lord, as we come together to study your Word, we bring all of who we are with our needs, our hopes, and our expectations. Meet us here in the power and presence of your Holy Spirit. Give us insight and understanding as we listen carefully for your voice. And then give us courage and conviction to align our lives with the way of Jesus. We pray in his name. Amen.

Questions for Exploration:

- In verses 11-14, what can we observe about who we are in Christ?
- What has God done for us?
- What does Paul pray for the believers in verses 15-19?
- What is the goal of Paul’s prayer? How does he desire God to answer?



Questions for Pressing it Out:

- What elements of Paul's prayer are in accordance with the idea of being 're-formed'?
- What can we learn from Paul's prayer about how we should pray for others?
- What does this passage teach us about who God is?
- What can we understand about God's greater purposes in our world?
- What "reformation" might God be asking of you in order to more fully participate in his plan?

Closing Prayer:

Depending on the needs/desires of your group here are some options:

- Ask one or two group members to close the group in prayer
- Pray the Lord's prayer together aloud:

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen."