

Small Group Guide:

"What the Gospel Declares"

Week of March 15, 2026

Series: "The Purpose of the Gospel"

Text: Ephesians 1:3-14



Opening Icebreaker

What comes to mind when you hear the word "Gospel"? How has your understanding of it changed over the years?

Sermon Overview

This message explored the foundational declaration of the gospel found in Ephesians 1:3-6, specifically focusing on what it means to be adopted into God's family. We discovered that the gospel is not merely an entry point into Christianity, but the very foundation we stand upon daily. Before God ever calls us to action or purpose, He establishes our identity as His chosen, adopted children. This truth has powerful implications for our spiritual life—it means we stop living from a place of striving for acceptance and begin living from a place of already being accepted. Our relationship with God is not based on our performance but on His grace, secured through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Key Takeaways

1. **God chose you before you ever chose Him-** Your adoption into His family was predetermined by His love and grace, not by your worthiness or effort. This takes the pressure off trying to convince God to love you—He already made that decision.

- 2. You were brought into God's family by grace alone, not by works** - You are not living your life trying to gain acceptance; you are living from acceptance. You already have a place at the table as a son or daughter of the King.
- 3. Your relationship with God is secure in Christ** - You are not a temporary member of the family or on spiritual probation. When you stumble, struggle, or doubt, you are still His. Your security is based on His faithfulness, not your consistency.

Discussion Questions

1. God chose you before you ever chose Him (Ephesians 1:3-6)

What specific spiritual blessings does Paul mention? Why do you think Paul begins this letter with praise rather than instructions?

How does knowing that God chose you before the foundation of the world impact the way you see yourself? Your struggles? Your purpose?

2. You were brought into God's family by grace alone, not by works (Ephesians 1:5-6)

In what areas of your life are you still trying to *earn* acceptance rather than living *from* acceptance?

How might your daily life look different if you fully believed you already belong?

3. Your relationship with God is secure in Christ (Romans 8:16-17; John 10:28)

Do you ever feel like you're on "spiritual probation" with God? What causes those feelings?

How does the truth of your security in Christ challenge those feelings?

The sermon mentioned that some believers live like "spiritual orphans—afraid to fail, hesitant to come close, quietly wondering if God might change His mind about you."

Have you ever felt this way? What triggers those orphan-like thoughts?

What truths from today's passage can you speak to yourself when those feelings arise?

4. Grace and Adoption Came With a Cost (Ephesians 1:7-10)

How do you feel about Moses not entering the Promised Land after leading Israel for decades? What does this teach us about faithfulness versus outcomes?

The sermon said: "Are you willing to serve God faithfully, even if somebody else gets to see the final results?" How does this challenge our culture's emphasis on personal achievement and recognition?

Moses invested in Joshua to continue the mission after him. Who are you investing in? Who is pouring into you? How can we adopt a more generational mindset in our faith?

5. The Big Picture of the Mission (Joshua 1:1-2, Matthew 28:18-20)

How does remembering the price Jesus paid deepen your appreciation for your adoption into God's family?

Practical Application

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Daily Declaration: Each morning this week, before you do anything else, speak this truth aloud: *"I am chosen. I am adopted. I am secure in Christ."* Journal about how this practice affects your day.

From Striving to Resting: Identify one area where you've been trying to earn God's (or others') acceptance. Pray specifically about releasing that striving and receiving God's grace. Share your struggle with one trusted person who can pray with you.

Gratitude List: Create a list of specific "spiritual blessings" you have in Christ (use Ephesians 1:3-14 as a starting point). Read this list daily and add to it as God brings things to mind.

Worship Response: The pastor asked, "Did I worship today?" Each day this week, intentionally pause to worship God—through song, prayer, Scripture reading, or simply speaking His praises. Note how this regular worship impacts your perspective.

Share Your Story: If you've never shared your salvation story with your small group, take time this week to write it out. Be prepared to share it next time you meet. If you're not yet a believer, consider talking with your group leader about what's holding you back from receiving Christ.

Closing Thought

The Gospel isn't just good news you once believed—it's the good news you wake up to every morning. It's what you stand upon, what you live from, and what carries you when life gets heavy. Before God shows us our next steps, He reminds us of what's already settled: our identity in Christ.

For Next Week:

Next week we'll continue in Ephesians 1:7-14, exploring more of what the gospel declares, particularly focusing on redemption and forgiveness. Come prepared to discuss what it means that we have been redeemed through Christ's blood.