

**“Some Good News”**  
Small Group Discussion  
Ephesians 1:1-14

*Begin with prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you all through God’s word, and to lead your discussion.*

**Opening Question** (try to get everyone involved in discussion):

- (Aside from the gospel,) what is the last item of “good news” that you remember hearing or reading? Share it with the group.
- Share about some group or team you have been part of that was truly unified.

**Ephesians background:** This week, we’re beginning a series in Ephesians. Ephesians is one of the letters that Paul wrote from a Roman prison. He had spent three years in the city of Ephesus during one of his missionary journeys, helping to get the church established there. But it seems that he’s writing this letter to all the new believers in the surrounding province of Asia, not just in Ephesus. He probably intended this letter to be passed around from church to church. The recipients are Gentile believers—people who don’t have a Jewish heritage—and Paul is writing to open their eyes to all that they have received in Jesus.

**Read Ephesians 1:1-14**, then discuss the following.

- What questions jump out at you on first reading of this passage?
- When you first read v. 3—either Sunday or today—what was your initial reaction? Did you share in Paul’s exuberance? Were you confused? Elaborate.
  - One phrase in this verse that we didn’t discuss much yet is, “In the heavenly realms.” What do you think it means in this context?
  - “Every spiritual blessing” refers to all that Paul is about to describe, in vv. 4-14. Let’s look closer at each of those.
- On Sunday, we focused on one or two of the “spiritual blessings” in this passage. Try now to identify at least five “spiritual blessings” that Paul describes here. As you name each one, try to give a simple definition or description. (Leaders, they are printed below for your reference. See if your group can come up with all of them on their own, even if the words are not exactly the same). Each one has a follow-up question for application as well.
  - 1. God sees you as perfect (v. 4, holy and blameless)**
    - How does the recognition of the way that God sees you help with your actual behavior and character now?
  - 2. God has adopted you as his son (v. 5)**
    - How does this adoption impact how you live?
    - Pastor Josh told us on Sunday about the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century implications of “adoption to sonship.” What do you recall of those? How do those apply to you in your adoption by God?
  - 3. God has redeemed you (v. 7)**

- What bearing does your redemption have on how you live today? What accomplished this redemption for you?
- 4. God has let you in on his grand scheme (vv. 8-10)**
  - What is God's grand scheme, as described here?
  - New Testament commentator F.F. Bruce calls this ultimate plan, "to gather up the fragmented and alienated universe," speaking of the phrase, "bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth." How do you feel about this idea?
  - In what way can being let in on this grand scheme affect how you approach life today?
- 5. God has given us a guarantee of our future (vv. 13-14)**
  - What aspects of our promised future do you most long for?
  - When are you tempted to despair about whether God will make good on his promises?
  - What "deposit" does Paul tell us we can consider a guarantee of our future? Does this awareness make any difference for you?
- Of the five spiritual blessings above, which one seems most pertinent to you at this moment? Did one or more of them touch you deeply?
- We focused this week especially on the possibility of unity, which is enabled by our "adoption to sonship."
  - When you think about the prospect of unity within our local body of Christ today, how do you feel? Is it a realistic possibility?
  - What would have to take place for this kind of unity to exist among us?
- All of these spiritual blessings are said to be our if we are "in Christ." How many times do you see that phrase, or something similar (such as "in him") show up in these verses?
  - What does "In Christ" mean?
  - What two events are necessary for someone to become "in Christ?" (v. 13)

### **Sharing/Prayer**

- As always, take some time to share areas where you need people to pray for you. Spend time praying for one another.
- If you have relied on other items for your status, aside from "adoption to sonship," confess those in prayer with your group. If you have been a hindrance to unity in the body of Christ, confess those in prayer with your group. Pray for the unity that can be ours in Christ.