

BECOMING *OUR TRUE SELVES*

AUGUST 29, 2021

FRAMEWORK FOR THE SERIES:

EPHESIANS IS A LETTER WRITTEN FOR EARLY CHRISTIANS WHO WERE JUST FIGURING OUT WHAT IT IS MEANT TO BE THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS. AS WE TRANSITION TO COMING BACK TO CHURCH COMMUNITY IN-PERSON, AND AS WE START UP REVIVE IN-PERSON AGAIN, GOING THROUGH EPHESIANS CAN HELP GUIDE US IN REFLECTING WHAT IT MEANS FOR US TO BE GOD'S PEOPLE TOGETHER AND WHAT KIND OF COMMUNITY WE WANT TO BE AS REVIVE.

OVERARCHING THEME & MESSAGE:

IN A NUTSHELL, EPHESIANS IS ABOUT GUIDING US TO BECOME THE PEOPLE GOD HAS ALREADY MADE US INTO, OUR TRUE SELVES IN CHRIST. THE BOOK HAS TWO MOVEMENTS - THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS ARE ALL ABOUT WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE HAVE IN GOD, AND THE SECOND THREE CHAPTERS ARE THEN HOW DO WE LIVE IN RESPONSE. THE ORDER MATTERS, BECAUSE IT SIGNIFIES THAT WHAT WE DO STEMS OUT OF THE TRUTH OF WHO WE ARE. WE DO GOOD WORKS OUT OF THE TRUTH THAT WE ARE ALREADY GOD'S BELOVED, NOT BECAUSE WE ARE TRYING TO EARN GOD'S LOVE. THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH IS BEING GROUNDED IN WHO WE ARE IN GOD.

EPHESIANS 1:1-14

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus,[a] the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he[b] predestined us for adoption to sonship[c] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, 9 he[d] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

11 In him we were also chosen,[e] having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. WHAT ARE YOUR OBSERVATIONS OF THE PASSAGE?

2. HOW DOES PAUL DESCRIBE OUR "TRUE SELF"? HOW ARE OUR LIVED EXPERIENCES THE SAME AND/OR DIFFERENT THAN THAT?

3. HOW CAN WE EMBRACE OUR TRUE SELF? WHAT ARE THE TRUTHS THAT ARE THE HARDEST FOR YOU TO EMBRACE? WHY?