

COMMUNITY GROUP WEEKLY DISCUSSION GUIDE  
WEEK OF APRIL 20, 2009

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Introduction to Ephesians

"For many believers, the concept of grace goes little beyond the basic definition of 'unmerited favor' or 'the free gift of God'. But since grace is at the very heart, indeed, it is the very foundation and fountain of true Christianity, we should have a better grasp of this important word and its truth."

-J. Hampton Keathley

"Man is not at peace with his fellow man because he is not at peace with himself; he is not at peace with himself, because he is not at peace with God."

-Thomas Merton

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'")

And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

John 1:14-17

THIS WEEK'S TEXT

Ephesians 1:1-2

RELATED TEXTS TO EXPLORE

1 & 2 Cor 1:1-3; Col 1:2; Rom 1:7; Rom 16:20; Gal 1:3; Phil 1:2; 1 & 2 Tim 1:2; Rev 1:4; John 14:27

STUDY GUIDE

The letter to the church at Ephesus was written around A.D 62, the time Paul was held in Rome (Acts 28). Several major themes are advanced in this Epistle, including (1) reconciliation to God by grace alone, (2) reconciliation of people to one another by the cross through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in his church, (3) restoration of all things in Jesus, and (4) Christ being exalted above all things in creation and empowering his people to overcome .

Key Words:

Apostle – One who is sent with a special message or commission

Saint – One who is called by God and set apart for holiness

- **What observations can be made about:**
  - Paul's office and motivation
  - The intended recipients of this letter
  - Paul's syntax in this greeting (specifically v. 2)
  - For whom Paul presumes to speak
  - How Paul viewed these Ephesian Christians he was writing to
  - How these "saints" were spoken to
  - Paul's credentials
  
- **What does each of these things mean?**

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Use any or as many of these questions as will be helpful for your discussion.

- What has God spoken to you about this week regarding the sermon or passage?
- What does this passage reveal to us about Jesus?
- How does viewing other Christians primarily as “saints” and “faithful” affect the way we interact with them?
- What does this text mean for us as a community? Individually? How does it free us to be the people God intends for us to be?
- In what ways have you experienced “grace and peace” in Christ?
- How do we need to live out the meaning of this text in our city?

“It is difficult for our pride to rest on grace. Grace is for other people – for beggars. We don’t want to live by a heavenly welfare system. We like to think that we will go to heaven because we deserve to be there.” – R.C. Sproul, *Suffering and Merit?*

## MEMORY VERSES

**Last Week:** Rom 8:34

**This Week:** Eph 1:2

## PRAYER FOCUS

**For the Vision and Direction of the church (April):**

Apostles Church will be a people who experience life-change together. We will seek to become more like Jesus as we experience the transforming grace and power of His Spirit.

**In Response to the Text:**

- That we would view ourselves as “sent ones”
- That we would view others in the church primarily as God does: saints in Christ Jesus
- That we would understand and experience the grace and peace that is found in Jesus
- That we would be people who extend grace and peace to our city

## FURTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDY AND PREPARATION

- *What’s So Amazing About Grace?*– Phillip Yancey
- *Transforming Grace*– Jerry Bridges
- *Ephesians Bible Study: Our Immeasurable Blessings in Christ*– John MacArthur
- Monergism Online Commentaries:  
[http://www.monergism.com/directory/link\\_category/Commentaries/](http://www.monergism.com/directory/link_category/Commentaries/)