

COMMUNITY GROUP WEEKLY DISCUSSION GUIDE
WEEK OF MAY 4, 2009

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Praise to our Saving God (part 2)

"To say that God foreordains all that comes to pass is simply to say that God is sovereign over his entire creation. If something could come to pass apart from his sovereign permission, then that which came to pass would frustrate his sovereignty..."

"If there is any part of creation outside of God's sovereignty, then God is simply not sovereign. If God is not sovereign, then God is not God."

-R.C. Sproul, *Chosen By God*

"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."

Romans 8:29-30

THIS WEEK'S TEXT

Ephesians 1:3-14

RELATED TEXTS TO EXPLORE

John 20, Mark 16, Revelation 1:17, Daniel 7:9, Daniel 10:6, Mark 9:3, Isaiah 22:16, Romans 10:15,

STUDY GUIDE

- **What observations can be made about:**
 - The greatness and stature of God in view of his sovereignty
 - The emphasis in this passage on how he works all things by his will, for his glory (v. 5-6, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14)
 - The ways he has included us in bringing glory to himself
 - How richly we are blessed by his greater plan to exalt *his* name (v. 3, 5, 7-8, 11, 13-14)
 - The graciousness of God to build his greater pursuit (his glory) through the great love he shows us
 - The confidence we can have as his children knowing that God rescues us through Jesus and we do not have to earn his approval
- **What does each of these things mean? What did they mean for the church at Ephesus then, what do they mean for us now?**

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 is the main point of this passage?
- What does this passage reveal to us about Jesus?
- How does this passage enhance our understanding of the Gospel?
- 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?
- How do we need to live out the meaning of this text in our city?
- Were we able to stand back and see God as more loving, more powerful, and more glorious through the study of this passage?
- What is said of God's character in his willingness to rescue us when we are incapable of rescuing ourselves?
- Why are "we most satisfied when God is most glorified"?
- How does God work his plan both for his glory and by lavishing on us a great "inheritance" or "blessing"?
- Have you had trouble seeking Jesus and his gospel before getting caught up in the intricacies of knowledge? (1 Tim 6:20-21)

"A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word, 'darkness' on the walls of his cell." – C.S. Lewis

MEMORY VERSES

Last Week: Eph 1:7-8

This Week: Eph 1:13-14

PRAYER FOCUS

For the Vision and Direction of the church (May):

Apostles Church wants to be a people who intentionally connect others to Jesus. We will authentically, compassionately and intelligently dialogue with the culture about the Gospel of Jesus.

In Response to the Text:

- Praising God as the sovereign Lord and Master of all things in heaven and things on earth
- Thanking God for his supreme love, goodness, humility, and justice, most clearly seen in Jesus putting on flesh to dwell and serve among us, die our death, and rise to invite us into new life
- Worshiping God for bringing glory to his name by also granting us ultimate joy
- That we would find our confidence and trust in the God who loves and chooses us without regard to our own merit
- That we would seek God and know him as the gracious Father he is to us before losing our focus in the intricacies of knowledge
- Thanking God that he has sealed us with his Spirit and sent him to be the Teacher amidst our growth

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDY AND PREPARATION

- *Chosen By God* – R. C. Sproul
- *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* – J.I. Packer
- *The Justification of God* – John Piper
- *A Royal Waste of Time* – Marva Dawn