

Hands - application

- Take time to thank God for choosing us, that He has a plan, and to ask for renewed "hope in Christ".
- Share an instance over the past week of something in your life which has been "for the praise of His glory".
- Pray for a renewed knowledge of, and confidence in the 'seal' of the Spirit, and for a filling with the Spirit for those who don't have that confidence.

Further notes

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Spring 2014

20th May

Ephesians 1:11-14

Sealed with the Spirit

Background for leaders

This week is the start of our series on Ephesians. Paul's letter was to the Christian church at Ephesus, in modern day Turkey.

The opening chapter and a half (from 1:1 - 2:10) is one long expression of praise and prayer at the good news of the Gospel. Paul explains what Christ has done for His people, and what the implications are before going on in the rest of the letter to encourage Christians in their response.

In this week's passage (1:1-10), Paul articulates God's method in the completed work of our salvation, climaxing with the work of His Holy Spirit.

Conversation starters

- Can you think of an instance when you thought you had planned something well, but everything got completely out of control?
- How about a situation where you would have been out of control if it weren't for someone with a plan who knew what they were doing?
- What does it mean for an organisation to be inclusive?

Head - context and culture

Read Ephesians 1:11-14 — discuss the passage

- What phrases does Paul use to emphasise God's sovereignty?
- How does Paul describe Christians in v13?
"In Christ". We are 'included' in Him, and 'marked' in Him.
- How are we "included in Christ"?
- What's the ultimate goal of God's plan? v12 & 14
For the praise of His glory - mentioned twice.
- What are the different uses for a seal, today and in Paul's time? What do these tell us about the work of the Holy Spirit?
- What other words describe the ministry of the Spirit? How does that tie in with your current understanding?
"Promised", "who", "deposit", "guarantee"
- Where in the passage are the different persons of the Trinity mentioned? What are their different roles in the work of salvation?

Heart - what does this mean for us?

- As you think of your own Christian journey, do you feel as though you can see where God has been 'working out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will'?
- How do you respond when you can't see how things are working out?
- How should the church be inclusive?
- Do you feel you are marked and sealed with the Holy Spirit?
If not, take time to pray for this - He is 'promised' after all!
- What difference does this deposit make day to day?