



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

1. Mission of God

- a. The Mission of God is based on the nature, person, & community of the Triune God
 - a. "Mission is essential to God's very nature & expressed in the being & actions of God [from] eternity & made known by the sending of the Son & the Spirit into the world... 'Mission' entails a sending & being sent. The sending of the Father & the 'sent-ness' of the Son point to the being & action of the triune God as both sender & sent. Mission is an attribute of God & thus descriptive of God's very nature... [it's] an essential aspect of the divine nature." [John R. Franke, *Four Views on... Church's Mission*, p.]
 - b. "Perichoresis is the circulation of divine life within the Trinity in mutuality and fellowship, openness..." [M. S. Dehmlow Dreier, *Created & Led by the Spirit: Missional Congregations*, p. 13]
 - c. The divine Trinity's Perichoresis: "Each of the divine persons centers upon the others... Each voluntarily circles the other two, pouring love, delight, & adoration into them. Each person of the Trinity loves, adores, defers to, and rejoices in the others." [Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God*, p. 215]
- b. God's mission is to unify all things in the universe (earth & heaven) in Christ. (Eph. 1:10)
 - a. God's purpose is "to bring everything together... both things in heaven & things on earth in [Christ]." "The verb used here is an alternative to 'reconcile.' In Christ the diverse elements of the cosmos are integrated and harmony restored... [This] removes the... fear of hostile cosmic forces." [G. Hawthorne (ed.) *Dictionary of Paul & Letters*, p.]
 - b. "The goal of [God's mission] is to incorporate people into the Kingdom of God and to involve them in his mission." [Arthur Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, p. 245]
 - c. "The overarching narrative [is] that God is in mission to renew the whole creation." [T. Keller, *Center Church*, p. 255]
- c. The mission reaches us & then we, the church, are called to join in God's mission.
 - a. God's mission reaching us, changes us & changes the way we see ourselves
 - a. "This passage [Eph. 1:3-14]... describes the eternal plan of God to create a family of adopted children (Eph. 1:5), God's very own people, who have been redeemed and forgiven in Christ (Eph. 1:6-7) & who are marked with the Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14) as heirs of a salvation that will encompass not merely all humanity, but the entire cosmos (Eph. 1:9-10)." [Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel*, p. 188]
 - b. "Ephesians 1:3-14... function[s] to transform the imagination of the people of God... The function of this section is to form the identity of the people of God, shaping the way they envision what God has done & how they play a central role in the work of God to recapture and redeem the world." [Timothy G. Gombis, *Drama of Ephesians*, p. 67]

b. We participate in a 'perichoresis' with the Trinity

a. "It is suggested that [human's being made in 'God's image' (Gen. 1:26)] includes the capacity to be indwelt by a spiritual being. As the Son is in the Father & the Father in the Son, & as the Spirit is in the Father & the Son & bears them in himself (as 'the Spirit of Christ' & 'the Spirit of the Father')—[i.e., perichoresis.] As each member of the Godhead mutually inhabits the other, in a similar way the human being is structured perichoretically, [i.e.,] for the indwelling of another [i.e., God, Christ, the Holy Spirit] (Jn. 17:20-26)...The divine image includes not only personhood but also the capacity for indwelling by another [i.e., God] as a reflection of divine perichoresis" [J. Scott Horrell, "In The Name Of The Father, Son & Holy Spirit: Constructing A Trinitarian Worldview," Bible.org]

c. it changes us today & changes our future

d. Eph. 1:3-14 shows how we, the church, are qualified to join God in His mission

a. A "perichoresis...exists among the persons of the Trinity reveal[ing] that the nature of God is communion. The church, when it reflects God's glory likewise participates in this unity. The church thus is a finite, temporal echo of the eternal community that God is." [G. Van Rhee, "From Theology to Practice...Missio Dei," *Missio Dei*, 1 (Aug. 2010) p.]

b. "The church...is sent...not only to proclaim the gospel but [also] to bear in its own life the presence of the kingdom... Paul wanted the communities he addressed not merely to believe the gospel, but to become the gospel & in so doing participate in the...mission of God." [John R. Franke, in J. S. Sexton (ed.) *4 Views on the Church's Mission*, p.]

c. "The mission of the church is to join in the triune mission...The church is the very form [God's mission] currently takes...The church is to participate & display...the love the Father has for the Son &...the obedience the Son shows the Father...The goal of these missions—of Son & Spirit, of Scripture & of the church—is the sharing of the triune life: fellowship with God & with one another...[as] a community of truth & love." [K. Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, p. 72]

2. Qualified by the Trinity

a. The Trinity works together to qualify us to join God's mission

a. In ourselves we are not qualified

a. not holy, not blameless, not a 'son,' without an inheritance

b. The three do not work independently. (e.g. rugby)

a. "Classic...theology...say[s]...the works of the Trinity towards the outside...cannot be divided. It is therefore not correct to say that God the Father is at work in the whole of creation, while the work of the Son & the Spirit are limited to the church. Both the Son & the Spirit are also active in creation & in the world...Some [wrongly] assert that Christ's spirit is present [saving] in all religions & thus sever Christ from Jesus of Nazareth...We...do not accept this...The unity of the Trinity in God's mission has to be maintained. This also means that...neither the Father nor the Spirit can be known apart from the Son." [T. ENGELSVIKEN, "MISSIO DEI: UNDERSTANDING & MISUNDERSTANDING OF A...CONCEPT..." *INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF MISSION*, Vol. XCII, #367, (2003) pp. 491, 493]

c. Their work is not random, but planned – 'God...works all things according to the counsel of his will' (Eph. 1:11b)

d. God works all things in our life 'for good' – Rom 8:28

b. The work of the Father

a. Blessing us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly sphere, in Christ

a. "The key to the whole is given by the tenfold repetition of one of Paul's distinctive phrases, 'in Christ.' But equally significant is the God-centeredness of the whole passage, marked...by the repeated... 'to the praise of his glory' (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14)." [James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, p. 1109]

b. Choosing us 'in him' to be holy & blameless

c. Predestinating us for adoption as sons 'through Jesus Christ'

d. lavishing the riches of his grace upon us 'in the Beloved' [Son]

e. making known to us the mystery of his (Trinity) will which he set forth 'in Christ'

c. The work of Jesus Christ

a. redemption through his blood

b. forgiveness of our trespasses

c. richly pouring out ('lavishing') his grace on us

d. The work of the Holy Spirit

a. "Those who encounter the Holy Spirit are encountering the Spirit of Christ through whom they are drawn, by grace, into union with Christ & thus into a...relationship [as sons] with the Father (Rom. 8:14-17). This is the...process [of salvation] by which humanity is drawn into the life of God, by which we know him & thus are saved." [Lucy Peppiatt, "That We May Know Him..." in L. Harvey (ed.) *Essays on the Trinity*, p. 78]

b. Sealed with the Holy Spirit

a. After hearing & believing the word of truth

a. God does his part—choosing, working all things, etc.

- b. Our part—to hear & believe
- b. The Holy Spirit is the 'seal' signifying ownership & security
 - a. "The seal is...the Holy Spirit Himself, & His presence in the believer denotes ownership & security. The sealing with the Spirit is not an emotional feeling or some mysterious inward experience." –A. Gaebelien
 - b. "The sealing ministry of the Spirit is to identify believers as God's own [people/possession] & thus give them the security that they belong to him." –Harold Hoehner
 - c. 'Sealed' can mean either that the Holy Spirit protects & preserves Christians until they reach their inheritance (see Eph. 4:30, etc) or that he 'certifies' the authenticity of their acceptance by God as being genuine—they bear the 'royal seal'. The first interpretation seems best here, though both ideas are biblically true. [ESV]
- c. The Holy Spirit keeps & preserves us 'until the day of redemption' – Eph. 4:30
- d. The Holy Spirit is a 'down-payment' (deposit, guarantee, pledge) of our inheritance
 - a. Two Groups of Believers inherit—"We" (Jewish Christians) & "You" (Gentile Christians) (Eph. 1:11-14)
 - a. "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to [God's] purpose...so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, & believed in him, [you] were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory." (Eph. 1:11-14 ESV)
 - b. "Paul celebrates the fact that 'we,' meaning Jewish Christians...have 'obtained an inheritance.'...Jewish believers in Christ have finally entered into their long-awaited inheritance in Christ. [In him you (Gentile believers) also were sealed with the...Spirit...the guarantee of our inheritance' (1:3-14)]...In Ephesians Jews & Gentiles share the same benefits in Christ. (Eph. 2:11-3:13)." [P. S. Williamson, Ephesians, p. 40 & n. 16]
 - c. "The Gentiles are fellow heirs...& partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus thro' the gospel." (Eph. 3:6 ESV)
 - b. All believers are given something now, but there's more to come
 - a. "already, but not yet"
 - b. "Through the Spirit, Some Blessings of the Christian's Inheritance as Already Enjoyed, Whereas others are Not Yet. 'In Christ' believers enjoy 'every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places' (Eph. 1:3b) ...This refers to blessings 'pertaining to or belonging to the Spirit'— i.e., all the blessings that the Spirit of Christ secures for the saints whether those already enjoyed like election, adoption to son-ship, redemption, forgiveness & sealing, or those not yet enjoyed like full inheritance (Eph. 4:4-14)...While all God's promises find their 'Yes' in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20), we enjoy some already, while others remain in the future; 'You...were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit...[who] is the down-payment [guarantee] of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession' (Eph. 1:13-14)." [Jason S. DeRouchie, "Is Every Promise 'Yes'?", Themelios, Vol. 42, #1, pp. 26-7]
 - c. we enjoy our inheritance (in part) today, but the majority will come thro' our future resurrection, glorification
 - d. "As the down-payment or 1st installment, the Holy Spirit not only guarantees, but also gives us a foretaste of the glorious life to come." [NIV Zondervan Study Bible]
 - e. "God pours out his Holy Spirit on all of his children to guarantee (or 'down payment' on) their share in his eternal kingdom because he applies to them all God's powerful working in redemption. 'Until we acquire possession of it.' This phrase can also be rendered "until God redeems his possession" [ESV Study Bible]
- c. Our Inheritance (Eph. 1:11, 14)
 - a. We have the assurance of a coming inheritance because we are God's children (Rom. 8:16-17)
 - b. 'inheritance' assumes we have the position of a son, qualified to inherit (Eph. 1:5)
 - c. "What is the 'inheritance' that Paul mentions? It is the fullness of redemption that God has promised us, our eternal relationship with God in a new resurrection body, and in the new heaven & earth." [David Brickner, Christ in the Feast of Pentecost, p. 131]
- e. What else is the Spirit doing?
 - a. Empowering to participate in God's mission – "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you'll be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem...Judea...Samaria, & to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)
 - b. Teaching – "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things & remind you of everything that I have told you." (John 14:26)
 - c. Witnessing with our spirit that we are a children of God & heirs –"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, & if children, then heirs..." (Rom. 8:16-17)
 - d. Leading –"For all who are led by God's Spirit are God's children." (Rom. 8:14)