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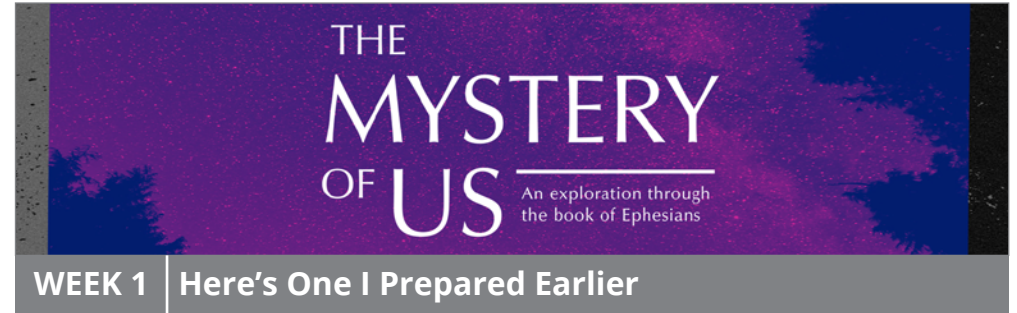
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PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I am thankful that in You I have every spiritual blessing. Keep us in You. For when we stray far from your presence, we are left desperately wanting, in need of REDEMPTION. Not only are we thankful that we are REDEEMED, but that you adopt us as your own sons and daughters. We find truly who we are in Your grace, and in the name of Jesus, Amen.

WARM UP (OPTIONAL)

Are you the type of person who likes to prepare as much in advance for something, or do you prefer to be spontaneous and enjoy it as it happens along the way? Why/Why Not?

NOTES

WORD

¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

EPHESIANS 1:11-21

The topic of election is bound to raise questions for listeners. In a culture where equality is held up as an ideal, talk of election sounds privileged and elitist. Other concerns are raised about morality. If people view themselves as elected or chosen, then won't they presume upon God's grace and lead dissolute lives? Teachers and preachers have long faced such excellent questions. It might be helpful to review some of Paul's responses to the anxiety stirred up by election.

First, remind the people that Paul's use of election reflects his own heritage as a Jew. The people of Israel were God's elected people. But note that they were chosen by God so that the whole world would be blessed through them (see the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3). In other words, election is for the sake of the world and not a separation from the rest of humanity. It is not supposed to feed speculation about who is "in" and who is "out." Nor is it license to simply sit on our hands and not do anything. Rather, election implies a significant responsibility. One is chosen so that one might be an instrument of God's purposes in the world. But always keep in mind that it is God's purpose and not our own. We tend to get the two confused!

Second, election is meant to be comforting. Notice Paul's stress that we are "chosen in Christ" (Ephesians 1:4). The one who has chosen us is the very one who dies on the cross for us. Anxiety about whether or not one is chosen is really a bigger

question about God's mercy. Can I really trust God with my salvation? There is only one possible response to this: "Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:24-25). All fear about election is put into proper perspective when we realize that the one coming to judge is the one who was judged for our sin.

Mark Tranvik - Working Preacher Commentary on Ephesians 1

GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale from 1-10 (1 being never/not at all and 10 being always/extremely) how much do you plan your growth in the different areas of your life (educationally, vocationally, physically, spiritually)? Why might you say this?
2. Adoption in the time of the writing of Paul's letter to the Ephesians implies this: that since God has created you and sealed you as his own child, he saw you as predestined to carry His name. What does this mean for you?
3. If you are a follower of Jesus, when you consider Paul's commendation of the church at Ephesus in vs 15, do you think the people around you consider you a person whose faith is shown in the love towards other Christians? Why/Why Not?
4. If you are not yet a follower of Jesus, consider that God has every spiritual blessing for those whom he has chosen and adopted through this message of his purpose being made known. As this is being made known to you, are you willing to trust him in all areas of your life? Why/Why Not?
5. Would you like to follow Jesus, enabling him to call the shots in your life? Ask your Life Group leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Saviour. In Jesus' name, Amen.