

SCRIPTURES FOR 9/24/06 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 1:3-14

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the

mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Revelation 3:20

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed

LESSON 4: ABOVE ALL

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

INTRODUCTION:

This week, Jeff shared that, in order to participate with the right motives, we must understand our identity in Jesus Christ.

OUR IDENTITY IN JESUS

Have some read Ephesians 1:3-14.

This scripture makes the following claims about our identity as Christians:

He chose us.

We are forgiven, holy, and blameless in His eyes.

He loved us.

We are his adopted children.

This is His pleasure and His will.

His grace and glory are praised by our adoption.

This came at a great price.

Hearing and believing, we are sealed until the day of redemption.

Salvation was God's idea. He paid the full penalty for our sins at the cross and now we are fully justified, free to live without fear as a full beneficiary of God's eternal insurance policy.

In light of this information, do we owe Him a debt?

If we are holy and blameless in the eyes of God, why do we have so much getting along with EACH OTHER?

Have someone read Revelation 3:20.

OUR IDENTITY IN THE WORLD

We live in a consumer culture. This is not necessarily bad, but it is TRUE. We must consume to survive -- God designed us this way

– but, as Jeff shared we must consume to live, not live to consume.

Do you ever fall prey to the idea that things need to be just the way you like them?

Do you ever feel negative toward those who see it differently?

Jeff shared an article that suggested that, to many, the mall, the Wal-Mart Supercenter, or ebay have become their church.

Do you agree? Do you see this in your unsaved friends? Your saved friends?

Perhaps Jeff's toughest observation this week was that God "is not a commodity, designed to make us feel better."

Do you ever catch yourself centering on your own needs, even when meeting them clearly requires disregarding someone else's needs?

Do you ever feel humbled by the enormity of God's grace when compared to the relative smallness of your own?

If church is not just to meet your needs, what do you think it's for?

CONCLUSION

Have some read Ephesians 3:20-21.

God didn't predestine us, he predestined salvation; He chooses all who choose Him. He dwells within us to guide us to bring Him glory, which we neither earn nor deserve; yet still we complain. What more could we want from Him? The answers to this question are different for everyone, but the problem is that this is the wrong question. We should be asking, "How can we bring Him greater glory? How can we get out of the way of His plan? What part can we play to help achieve it?" Help us, Lord, to know...