

Sonrise Church
Life Group Bible Study
Ephesians: Introduction
Ephesians 1:1–6

Key Thoughts

- 1. From persecutor to apostle:** Paul's transformation from the church's chief enemy to its chief missionary proves that no past disqualifies someone from God's purpose. He even coined a word (elachistoteros) because no standard term could express how undeserving he felt.
- 2. The Ephesians started from zero:** These believers came out of the Artemis cult and Greco-Roman paganism with no Old Testament background. Everything Paul teaches about their identity in Christ was brand-new revelation, not a reframe of something they already knew.
- 3. Three movements, one letter:** Ephesians unfolds as In Christ (chapters 1–3, what God has done), Like Christ (chapters 4–5:21, how identity shapes daily life), and For Christ (5:22–6:24, where you represent Him in home, work, and spiritual battle).
- 4. 'Lord' was a dangerous word:** Kyrios was Caesar's title. Paul assigns it to Jesus without hesitation. In a Roman imperial stronghold like Ephesus, calling Jesus "Lord" was not casual theology; it was an act of defiance with real consequences.
- 5. Spiritual blessings are eternal blessings:** God's blessings in Christ are not about physical prosperity. They are about being chosen before the foundation of the world, adopted as sons, and accepted in the Beloved, realities that transcend this fleeting world into eternity.

Discussion Questions

- 1.** Read Acts 9:1–15. What does Paul's conversion from violent persecutor to chosen apostle reveal about the scope of God's grace? How should that reshape the way we view our own past or the past of others?
- 2.** The Ephesian believers came from the Artemis cult and Greco-Roman paganism. What modern cultural "religions" (wellness culture, consumerism, civic rituals) might be shaping our thinking in ways we fail to notice?
- 3.** Paul structures Ephesians around three movements: In Christ, Like Christ, and For Christ. Which of these three do you find easiest to embrace, and which is the hardest to live out consistently? Why?
- 4.** In Ephesians 1:3, Paul says God has blessed us with "every spiritual blessing." Why does Paul emphasize spiritual blessings over physical ones? How does John 16:33 help explain that emphasis?
- 5.** Kyrios (Lord) was Caesar's title. Paul assigns it to Jesus in a Roman imperial stronghold. What areas of your life function as competing "lords," and what would it look like to give Jesus that authority in those areas?

6. Ephesians 1:4–5 says God chose us and predestined us to adoption before the foundation of the world. How does that truth change the way you see yourself and your place in God’s family? What is one step you can take this week to live from that identity rather than your circumstances?

Applications

- 1. Identify your ‘Artemis’:** Name one cultural habit, value system, or routine that competes with your identity in Christ. Take one concrete step this week to reorder that area under His lordship.
- 2. Speak grace over someone’s past:** Reach out to someone who feels disqualified by their history and remind them of what God did with Paul. A text, a call, or a conversation this week.
- 3. Declare ‘Jesus is Lord’ with your calendar:** Review your week and identify one time slot currently given to a competing priority. Dedicate it to prayer, Scripture, or serving someone in the body.

Closing Prayer

Father, we praise You as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You for choosing us before the foundation of the world, for adopting us as Your children through Jesus, and for blessing us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Forgive us for the times we have allowed the world’s values to define our identity rather than Your Word. Give us the courage to call Jesus Lord in every area of our lives, even when it costs us. Open our eyes to the depth of Your grace, the same grace that transformed a persecutor into an apostle and transforms us still. Help us to live In Christ, Like Christ, and For Christ. In Jesus’ name, amen.