



To Sum Up All Things - Eph 1:1-14

Oct 6 - Dave Navarro

INTRO

This Sunday, we began with the first of three letters from Paul to the church he planted in Ephesus - the Book of Ephesians. The first part of Ephesians is about how God is creating a new people for himself, among whom he will dwell as if in a Temple. He begins that argument in today's passage by recounting the way that God has blessed Christians through Jesus. He does that by re-telling the story of Israel, showing how that story all comes together in Jesus.

Open with prayer¹, then read Eph 1:1-14 together as a group. Consider dividing it by paragraph. It's helpful to use the same Bible translation. SLC uses the NLT.

SERMON RECAP

1. Intro: The middle of a math problem / intro series.
2. Second-Temple Judaism's great discontent
 - a. Cultural Distance ("Mr. Stark, I don't feel so good...")
 - b. Paul & many readers were 1st-century Jews.
 - c. Exile, return, Temple rebuild, no glory!
 - d. Exile, Exodus, and forgiveness of sin.
3. Blessing in Christ (V3)
4. Israel's Story Re-Told
 - a. Chosen / adopted / inheritance /redeemed.
 - b. Paul is re-telling Israel's story with Jesus as the fulfillment. (2 Cor 1:20)
5. What is God doing in history? (V10)
 - a. Summing up / bringing unity / re-telling.
 - b. All things.
6. We are "summing-up-all-things" people.

¹ Some groups prefer to begin with a longer time of sharing and prayer. This is a good instinct and ensures that prayer time doesn't get shortened by time constraints.

BONUS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If you're covering 2 sermons in 1 Life Group meeting, skip to the Core Discussion Questions to save time. Otherwise, start here.

1. Dave talked about the difficulty of math problems in grade school. What school subject was your least favourite, and why?
2. Paul opens his letter with praise and thanksgiving God (V3 and following), even though later he'll express needs (V17 and following). How might an emphasis on praise and thanksgiving change one's prayer life?
3. The expression "in Christ" is used about 25 times in Ephesians. What are some possible ideas behind this expression? (You may be helped by similar expressions found in John 10:38; 14:10-11; 17:21)
4. We modern people love to accumulate possessions. Read Acts 4:32-5:6. What are some of the evidences of the Holy Spirit's coming? In Acts 4, how has the "spiritual blessings in the heavenly places" affected the church's economic practices here and now?

CORE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Sometimes life is like the middle of a math problem - it's chaos and heartache, and the answer is nowhere in sight.
 - a. If you're willing, share about a time when life felt like this for you.
 - b. Was the problem solved or "summed up" in the end? If so, how? (It's okay to share if it wasn't solved, and it's okay if the answer to the problem seems unspiritual or ordinary.)
2. Ephesians was written by Christians to Christians, and the Old Testament was written by Jews to Jews.
 - a. Read the following verses: Deuteronomy 4:21, 4:37, 7:8, 14:1; Isaiah 41:14; Exodus 6:8, 19:5. For each verse, find the echo (the shared language or idea) in Ephesians 1:3-14.
 - b. Is God's work in Christians *separate* from his work in the Old Testament, or is it *continuous*?
 - c. How might this affect how we read the Bible?
3. Eph 1:11 speaks of our "inheritance" in Jesus. What is this inheritance? (Read Romans 8:18-24 for the answer.)
4. What is one way you can be a "summing-up-all-things" person this week?



ACT & PRAY

1. What is one key takeaway from today's study, which will cause you to think or act differently this week?
2. As a group, share areas of praise and need. Write them down so you can be praying for them during the week.
3. Remind yourselves of your Adopt-a-Missionary, and any prayer requests you've seen from them.
4. Spend time praying, either all together, or in smaller groups. Feel free to experiment with silent prayer, written prayer, etc.
5. If appropriate, have someone close your prayer time with this prayer:

*Lord God, bring us together as one,
reconciled with you and reconciled with each other.*

*You made us in your likeness,
you gave us your Son Jesus Christ.
He has given us forgiveness from sin.*

*Lord God, bring us together as one,
different in culture,
but given new life in Jesus Christ,
together as your body, your Church, your people.*

*Lord God, bring us together as one,
reconciled, healed, forgiven,
sharing you with others as you have called us to do.*

In Jesus Christ, let us be together as one.

Amen

(Bishop Arthur and Mrs Colleen Malcolm, A Prayer Book for Australia
p.203)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Christmas Tales Dinner Event is Nov 30. Tickets on sale now. Reserved seating. Professional dinner theatre. Visitor-focussed, so invite friends!
2. Baptism and Membership class is Oct 20 & 27 after church. Lunch provided. Is someone in your group ready for one of these next steps? Talk to a pastor or visit Welcome Centre if you're interested.

