

IMMEASURABLY MORE ..

[Part 2]

learning from the letter to the Ephesians

“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! [Eph.3.20f]

The letter to the Ephesians sets out for us ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ’ (Eph.3.8), and assures us that God is ‘able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine’ (Eph.3.20): this set of studies is intended to help us all enter into and enjoy that ‘immeasurably more’.

You can find the background to this series [here](#).

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No pressure!

As always there are 7 [sets of] questions in this study: that’s to provide the option, which some find useful, of the material being used as a daily study guide.

Priorities!

You’ll know your own group, so use what you’ll find most helpful. There may not be time in the Community Group to address all the questions, but try to ensure in your Group that at the very least questions **4, 6 & 7** are all covered.

Prayer!

Do try also to make a point in your Community Group of leaving time for praying together!

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1. Eph.2.11-22 [w/b Sunday 23rd April]

“.. no longer foreigners and aliens ..”

The first three chapters of this letter see Paul setting out clearly and fully all that God has done for us in Jesus: only as we learn to understand the truth about ourselves ‘in Christ’, are we then in a position to translate that truth onto the canvas of our daily living – which is the focus of chapters 4-6.

God’s dealings with us are part of a glorious plan formed before the world came into being, and carried out with nothing less than the same power which was exercised in raising Jesus from the dead: and necessarily so, because our first need was to be made alive spiritually – and that’s what the Lord has done for us in and through His Son (Eph.2.1-10). Being made alive is only the start, though! In the passage we look at in this study Paul shows how we’ve been made to *belong* as well.

1. Read the whole passage (Eph.2.11-22). The need to ‘belong’ is an important part of the way we’re made.

To what different groups of people can it be said that you belong? Try listing them all.

What, where and when have been your best experiences of ‘belonging’?

2. Read Ephesians 2.11-12. The exhortation to *remember* is one which is regularly addressed to us in Scripture: it helps remind us of the essential 'before-and-after' contrast in our experience which lies at the heart of the gospel.

Between Jews and Gentiles there was a lot of 'name-calling': what might parallel this in society today?

What are the five ways Paul characterizes the former experience of these Gentile believers to whom he was writing?

3. Read 2 Corinthians 5.17-6.2. 'Reconciliation' is an important and very basic theme running through the proclamation of the gospel (Paul describes it here as 'the message of reconciliation' – 5.19).

How has God 'reconciled us to Himself'?

And if God has reconciled us to Himself why does Paul implore his readers to "be reconciled to God" (5.20)?

4. Read Ephesians 2.13-17. In these verses Paul is speaking about not only the relationship between God and ourselves, but also that between Jew and Gentile; in both regards Paul stresses that we "*have been brought near*".

How does Paul describe Christ's purpose in the ministry He exercised?

How did Jesus destroy the barrier (v.14) and put to death the hostility (v.16)? Why is the cross so central to that work?

Those, like Jew and Gentile, who have been distanced from each other, may (in theory) be reconciled to one another through and in Jesus: but how is such reconciliation effected in our actual relationships with one another?

5. Read Ephesians 2.18. Paul uses the language of the family to stress the privilege of belonging.

'Access' is perhaps the essence of all prayer: what is this 'access' to which Paul refers? Why does prayer involve Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

How does this statement of Paul's tie in with the thrust of his argument in this whole section (2.11-22)?

6. Read Ephesians 2.19-20. Paul switches his imagery in v.20 from the family to the temple: from the 'household', as it were, to the 'house'. His point, though, remains the same – those who have trusted in Jesus now belong, and belong together.

What does Paul mean by speaking of the apostles and prophets as the foundation of this building – and Jesus Himself as the ‘cornerstone’?

7. Read Ephesians 2.21-22. This illustration, whereby the people of God are likened to the temple of God, is one which Paul uses elsewhere (e.g. 1 Cor.3.9ff).

What two pictures does Paul use to underline what these believers were becoming (“.. *to become .. to become..*”) in Christ?

How do these two pictures help us understand God’s purposes for us and through us?