

IMMEASURABLY MORE ..

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 study 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 mainly to provide the option, which some find useful, of the material being used as a daily study guide. It’s more difficult this week to identify which are ‘the *key* questions’, as that may vary between the groups.

Priorities!

You’ll know your own group, so use what you’ll find most helpful. There’ll be benefit in thinking through all the questions this week, so it may be worth aiming for that: even if you don’t manage them all, however, at least try and ensure that the ones you do manage include questions 4 & 6!

Prayer!

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

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7. Eph.1.13-14 [w/b Sunday 19th February]

“..You were marked in Him with a seal ..”

That we now come back to the same passage as we looked at last week should be seen as being in the providence of God! It affords us, certainly, the chance to give more thought to the Person and work of the Holy Spirit: and earlier feedback from these studies made it clear that many would value such an opportunity.

As we saw last week, it was perhaps because of what he'd found when he first arrived at Ephesus (see Acts 19.1-7) that Paul underlines this truth here: those believers had not received any instruction at all in relation to the Holy Spirit – and it plainly showed! So this study will take a tour of the Scriptures and provide a brief introduction to the Holy Spirit.

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1. **Read Acts 19.1-7.** Teaching on the Spirit. An introduction to the Christian faith should always include clear teaching about the Holy Spirit: the ministry of the Spirit is an integral part of the good news.

Why do you think this aspect of the message is sometimes so neglected in what is taught?

2. **Read Joel 2.28-29.** The promise of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been promised to believers: Jesus spoke of *“the gift My Father promised”* (Acts 1.4), a reference to the Holy Spirit coming on His disciples (Acts 1.8).

Joel's prophecy, picked up by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2.14ff) is the fullest and clearest statement of this promise: how did this promise of God through Joel represent something *new* in the experience of believers?

Read **Luke 24.45-49** & **Acts 1.8**. Why do you think that Jesus equates the coming of the Spirit on His followers with their reception of *power*?

3. Read 1 Thess.1-4-6, 1 Cor.12.3 & Rom.8.9. The reception of the Spirit. An important and basic truth to grasp is that as a believer you have been given the Holy Spirit.

From what Paul writes in these passages how is it clear that every believer has been given the Holy Spirit?

"When you believed you were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit .." Paul writes to the Ephesians: looking back on your experience in the light of these passages, in what ways are you able to see the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?

4. Read John 14.16-26. The Person of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not some impersonal 'force', but a Person; not 'It' but 'He'. The disciples will not be impoverished by the loss of the physical presence of Jesus with them – the Holy Spirit will be for them all

that Jesus Himself has been, 'another of the same sort', not just with them but *in* them.

What words and phrases in this passage highlight the fact that the Holy Spirit is a Person?

Why do you think Jesus uses the term 'Counsellor' to describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit?

5. Read Isaiah 44.1-5. The 'seal' of the Spirit. Paul writes that we "*were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit..*" and makes it clear that means we are "*God's possession.*"

What is the encouragement for us in the imagery used in vv.3 & 4 to describe the outpouring of the Spirit?

What difference does the knowledge that you 'belong to the Lord' make to your experience and your living?

6. Read John 14.26 & Luke 12.12. The work of the Spirit. We've already seen that the Holy Spirit exercises an *empowering* ministry (Luke 24.49 & Acts 1.8).

What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to which Jesus is pointing here? Have there been situations where you have experienced something of this yourself?

Read **Rom.5.1-5** & **8.15-16**: what is Paul pointing to here? And what has been your own experience of 'the Spirit of sonship'?

7. Read John 16.13-15. The aim of the Spirit. *"The essence of the Holy Spirit's ministry is, at this or any time in the Christian era, to mediate the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (J Packer, 'Keep in step with the Spirit' p.55).

If the Holy Spirit delights above all to 'bring glory' to Jesus (Jn.16.14), what implications might that have for you and the way you live your life?

How should we expect the Spirit to glorify Jesus in you and through you?