

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 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. Because there may not be time in the Community Group to address all the questions, try to ensure in your Group that at the very least questions **2, 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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11. Eph.2.1-5 [w/b Sunday 19th March]

“.. But .. God .. made us alive with Christ ..”

This is one of the classic passages in the New Testament, which repays careful study. The gospel, Paul declared to the church in Rome (Rom.1.16), is ‘the power of God unto salvation’: having prayed that the believers in Ephesus might grasp just how great that power of God is, Paul now illustrates it by reference to their own salvation.

An understanding of our natural condition is necessary if we are rightly and fully to appreciate what makes the message of the Bible ‘good news’: God has acted to save us from the dreadful predicament we were in!

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1. Read Ephesians 2.1-10. The change involved in conversion is variously expressed – sometimes in terms of being set free from an enslavement, sometimes in terms of sight to the blind, sometimes, as here, in terms of life from the dead.

It need not be (and often isn’t) a dramatic thing, but how would you describe your own ‘conversion’?

2. Read Ephesians 2.1. Our natural condition could hardly be put more starkly than in the statement Paul makes here.

In what sense are we naturally 'dead', and how does that find expression in our experience? Consider, for instance, the parable of the 'prodigal son' (Luke 15.11-32) and the father's words there in **Luke 15.32**.

Read **Romans 6.23**. Why, according to Paul, are we 'dead'?

3. **Read Ephesians 2.2**. Paul here describes how once these believers had conducted themselves when they were 'dead'.

What does 'following the ways of this world' mean in practice?

Who is 'the ruler of the kingdom of the air'?

In what ways was he 'at work' in our lives while we were 'dead'?

4. **Read Ephesians 2.3**. What Paul teaches here is that this being 'dead' is the *universal* condition of humanity ("*all of us..*").

What two characteristics of that fallen humanity does Paul highlight in this verse? In what ways did these find expression in your own life?

In our natural condition we are all not only dead, but also 'objects of (God's) wrath': what are the consequences of that?

5. Read Ephesians 2.4-5. At the heart of the good news is the declaration always that our predicament has been met by the activity of God Himself.

What three 'qualities' in God does Paul indicate lie behind what He has done for us in Jesus?

How would you describe the difference between each of these 'qualities'?

6. Read John 3.13-21 & 36 along with **Numbers 21.4-8.** An experience of the people of Israel from the Old Testament provides an illustration of our experience in Christ as that of being brought from death to life.

Does that OT narrative help you understand how "*God .. made us alive with Christ*"? And if so, in what ways?

Against the backdrop of these passages why do you think we can often be slow, or even reluctant, to point people urgently to Jesus?

7. Read Ezekiel 37.1-14. God reveals Himself throughout the Scriptures as the One who 'gives life to the dead' (Rom.4.17).

The prophet Ezekiel is here enabled to be the instrument of God giving life to the dead bones: what is he called upon by God to do?

What encouragements, and what challenges, does this passage present to ourselves as we seek to see those who were 'dead' being 'made alive'?