

# 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. Don’t feel any pressure to answer *every* question in your Community Group – almost certainly there won’t be the time for that!

### **Priorities!**

You’ll know your own group, so use what you’ll find most helpful. Hopefully you’ll find some benefit in thinking through all the questions this week, but the key questions which it would be good for us all as a fellowship to look at are 3, 5 & 6: try to cover all the questions, but ensure you cover at least these!

### **Prayer!**

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

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## 6. Eph.1.11-14 [w/b Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February]

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

These verses are still part of a great single-sentence salvo from Paul which runs from v.3 right through to the end of v.14: so the train of thought is the same as in the verses we've already looked at in the last two studies.

Here, however, Paul both *personalizes* the general truth he's been unfolding (by reference first to himself and then to the Christians to whom he's writing), and then also *analyses* it, helping believers to understand how God's having chosen them 'before the creation of the world' has actually found expression in their experience.

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**1. Read Ephesians 1.3-14.** These verses elaborate on the theme of our having been chosen in Him, and see Paul applying that truth to himself and to the believers in Ephesus.

How does the knowledge that God has chosen you affect the way you see yourself?

How has it affected the way you view other believers?

2. **Read Acts 9.15f, 22.14f.** Paul understood his own faith in terms of being 'chosen' (Eph.1.11), as the accounts of his conversion make clear.

Which aspects of his being chosen (as expressed in the verses from Acts) were unique to him as an apostle, and which are applicable to all believers?

Read **Acts 26.15-19.** How do you think the knowledge that he was 'chosen' affected Paul's perspective and helped him in the ministry he exercised?

In what ways does his experience of being 'chosen' in Christ encourage and help you?

3. **Read Eph.1.11-12.** Paul rejoiced in the assurance that God 'works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will' – a truth which the rest of the Bible illustrates regularly.

Read **Genesis 45.4-8 & 50.20.** The story of Joseph shows this truth in the experience of God's people. What other Bible stories can you think of which illustrate this truth?

Can you think of comparable situations in your own life, situations which at the time puzzled and pained but in which you see now that 'God intended it for good'?

4. **Read Eph.1.13** along with **1 Thess.1.1-10**. Believers are described as being ‘in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ’: we were ‘included in Christ’, Paul declares, when we heard the message.

How does hearing the message include us in Christ? When did that happen for you?

What they heard is described in two ways by Paul: what are those two descriptions? Why do you think both of them are important?

5. **Read Eph.1.13-14**. In line with the prophecy of Joel (see Acts 2.17) the Holy Spirit has been given by Jesus (see Acts 2.33) to all believers: it may have been in part because of what he’d found when he first arrived at Ephesus (Acts 19.1-7) that Paul underlines this truth here.

What do you think Paul means to convey by saying, in relation to the gift of Holy Spirit, that we were ‘marked with a seal’?

Read **Isaiah 43.1-7**. Believers are spoken of by Paul in Eph.1.14 as “God’s possession”: how does that encourage and re-assure you?

6. **Read Eph.1.13-14.** The gift of the Holy Spirit is described by Paul as “a deposit, guaranteeing our inheritance”: our present experience in Christ, in other words, is but a pointer to much fuller future blessing.

What ministry does the Holy Spirit exercise in our lives?

And how will that find fuller expression in the ‘inheritance’ of which Paul speaks?

7. **Read Eph.1.11-14.** What Paul says about himself (vv.11-12) is matched by what he says of the believers to whom he is writing (vv.13-14): and very deliberately he concludes what he writes in each case with the same phrase – “*for (to) the praise of His glory*” (echoing v.6)

What are the ‘attributes’ of God which will be seen to be so glorious in His dealings with His people?

Read **1 Pet.1.3-7** where similar sentiments and language are found. How and why will our lives ‘result in praise, glory and honour’?