

Small Group Guide

January 21, 2024

1. Time for community and sharing (10 minutes)
2. Short opening prayer
3. Does anyone remember the sermon from last Sunday?
4. Go over the sermon
 - a. What was it about?
 - i. In case they don't remember: Paul uses a doxology to praise God for God's salvific work through Christ and that we have new life (abundantly free of our failures).
 - b. Scripture
Ephesians 2:1-10 (NRSV)
1 You were dead through the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world,[a] following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.[b] 3 All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, doing the will of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else, 4 but God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us 5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ[c]—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places[d] in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— 9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.
 - c. What questions or thoughts did you have about the scripture and message?
 - d. Did it impact you any when you left?
 - e. Did you see any other messages in that scripture other than what I found?
 - f. Paul doesn't explicitly say it here, but he definitely thinks that humans have a sinful nature. This sinful nature separates them from God. In other scriptures, he more profoundly suggests that we were powerless to even make a choice to follow/trust God/Christ. Talk about Calvin's theology about people being so evil that God has to help us choose faith and to walk in the path of Christ. Discuss.
 - g. https://youtube.com/shorts/KUoPDZ-a4kE?si=6c3s-Xmbr_sC9qjw
 - i. Make our own video of Ephesians 2:1-10.
 1. Get them to say whatever they want about the scripture. I can record them, or I can take everything they all said and put it on video and upload it (with permission).
5. Scripture notes
 - a. In verses 1-3 you will note an odd shift between pronouns (you and us) ... sometime that change indicates that two different groups are being referred to (Gentile, Jews, etc.) Sometimes it is for no known reason. Makes it hard to know who Paul is talking about many times. This happens often in his writing. Happens in vv.5-10 also.
 - b. In v.1 Paul considers the spirit to be what is alive ... not the body. So, when our spirits are not aligned with God, they are basically dead (the whole body is dead).