

GOD'S PLAN AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- Have you ever asked, “How can we know it’s true?” about a Christian teaching or belief? Recall that situation. What led you to ask the question? Was there anything in your circumstances or experience that contributed to your questioning?
- Can you remember a time you were super excited about your faith? What contributed to your excitement? How did you feel? How did your excitement impact how you lived out your faith?

The culture of first-century Ephesus was not unlike what many of us experience today. Cultural traditions and values promoted greed and idolatry and made it difficult for Christians to live out their new faith. The Ephesian Christians daily encountered situations that left them wondering how they could remain faithful or feeling hopeless. The Apostle Paul opens the book of Ephesians by teaching the new believers biblical truths that provided them with reassurance and encouragement for their faith. By studying Paul's teaching in Ephesians 1, we gain a deeper understanding of God's salvation plan. And we see how God's timing and continued involvement in his creation provide reassurance for our own faith yet today. And finally, we discover the spiritual blessings we can have because of God's gift of the Holy Spirit.

Listen: [*God's Plan and Spiritual Blessings*](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- Is it reassuring to you that God is not simply reacting to what happens, but that he “is proactively involved in all of creation” (quote from host Darrell Delaney)? Why or why not?
- In segment 2, hosts Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney discuss God's promise to give us the Holy Spirit. Have you ever thought about the Holy Spirit as the guarantee that God will follow through on his promises and on deliverance, as Scott states? How does this perspective help in times when you wonder if God will change his mind or give up on his people?
- Think about a current struggle you have. Consider Darrell's statement that the Holy Spirit: “is the down payment and the guarantee that God is going to redeem all things, starting with us on the inside; and that gives the Ephesians hope. Even in their own personal struggles, they can think about how the Spirit is in them at work.” Think about the Holy Spirit being at work within you as you consider current struggles you have in your life. How or why does it help?
- Reread the prayer found in [Ephesians 1:17-21](#). Note all of the things Paul asks God to give the Ephesians: the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to know God better (17), enlightenment of the eyes of their hearts (18), knowledge of the hope to which God calls them (18), knowledge of the riches of his inheritance (18), and knowledge of his incomparably great power. Paul knows God lavishes these things upon his people, those who believe in him and in Jesus. As you reread those gifts, which do you long for more of? For whom do you want to pray this prayer today?

Related Passages

- **Romans 8:18-30**
- **Colossians 1:15-23**
- **Luke 11:9-13**
- **2 Corinthians 1:18-22**

Conclusion

This episode begins by studying Paul's teaching that God has a plan to redeem all of creation ([Ephesians 1:1-10](#)) and ends with Darrell saying, "we need to take hope in the fact that that resurrection power that he used to raise Jesus from the dead is at work in us and among us and around us; and he likes to use that power to help this world get back to right."

Think about your personal life, your local community, and the broader world. Where do you see the need for God's resurrection power? How does remembering that God has a plan to redeem his world give you hope? Close your time of reflection in prayer for the needs you identified and consider closing your time of prayer with the words Paul prays in [Ephesians 1:16-22](#).

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/gods-plan-and-spiritual-blessings>

Printed on April 20, 2024