

25 August 2024
Ephesians 2.1-10
Small Group Questions

Some possible small group questions arising from Sunday's sermon:

1. Tell me one thing that stands out for you in Eph 2.1-10 (all participants to answer).
 - Leaders' note: if appropriate, try to draw out why a particular point is important.
2. Do you think our society is - in general - quite pessimistic or quite optimistic about the human condition, and the associated outlook for our society?
 - Leaders' note: by "human condition" we mean the way people are, their propensity for good and evil, and (following from that) the kind of future we might realistically expect to hope for and to work for.
3. Why is the Bible so dark in its assessment of the human condition, but still can be read without falling into despair?
4. What are the words Eph 2.1-10 uses to describe God's character as shown in his actions toward us in Christ Jesus?
 - Leaders' note: love, mercy, kindness, grace.
5. What do these words mean in Eph 2.1-10? Pick a word and discuss it in pairs, and report back to the group.
6. Discuss the meaning of salvation in Eph 2.1-10, paying attention to the particular emphasis of the term in this section.
 - Leaders' note: it has to do particularly with "rescue" or liberation from the tyranny of the world, the flesh and the devil; being released from the control of these evil forces.
7. Why is salvation as "liberation"/"rescue" so important to the argument in Ephesians?
 - Leaders' note: because Paul is about to call us to a radical new way of life and a radical new form of community, which the devil would never allow to happen if he had the power to stop it. In our salvation the devil/world/flesh/sin lose their power to direct/control our lives, so that new life, new community becomes possible.
8. Have you ever thought of the church as God's own handiwork (Eph 2.10)? Why might we naturally think about ourselves individually as God's workmanship?
9. Think about the *church* (not just an individual) being God's workmanship (2.10) and the formation of the *church* as a display of the incomparable riches of God's grace (2.7). What can people see in the formation of the church (universal) that they would not see in the spiritual experiences of an individual?
10. What is the importance of God having prepared, before the world began, good works for us to do (2.10)?
 - Leaders' note: since God has prepared these works for us to do, as we step into these good works, we are experiencing the grace of God more deeply. Even these works are "grace", a gift from God to a people who otherwise have nothing to offer to God.