



Growth Group Questions
September 13, 2026
“It Starts With Praise”

CONTEXT

Paul spent nearly three years in Ephesus, helping form a church in one of the major cities of the Roman world. Unlike many of his other letters, Ephesians is not specifically responding to a particular problem or conflict. The letter allows us to get a glimpse of how Paul felt the church should reflect God’s glory and goodness. Most scholars believe this letter was not written to one congregation in Ephesus but would have been read in churches surrounding Ephesus as well.

Chapters 1-3 look at what God has done in and through Jesus Christ, while chapters 4–6 consider the life, unity, holiness and wholeness of the church. The church is a result of the work God is doing and it not something we created.

Verses 3–14 contain over 200 words in the Greek language and is notably one long sentence! Paul writes with great exuberance, and though it is not a song technically, it sounds a lot like a song of praise. Paul’s language is extravagant as he tries to describe all that God has done.

The movement of the passage can be followed through its verbs in verses 4-9. God blesses, chooses, destines, bestows (gives to us), lavishes, and makes known. The emphasis is on God’s initiative rather than ours. Paul wants to emphasize the idea of the abundance of the God who holds nothing back for our sake.

As we move toward verses 9–10, we see the mystery of God’s will being made known. His desire is to gather up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth. The mystery is not a puzzle because God’s once-hidden purpose is now revealed in Jesus. The tone of the passage is adoration. Everything begins with God and moves toward the praise of God’s glory.

SCRIPTURE AND QUOTES

Acts 19:8-12

⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

¹¹ God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

Ephesians 1:1-10

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus,^[a] the faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Psalms 51:15

¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

Bono, *Surrender: 40 Songs, One Story.*

"I've always loved the big music. Songs are my prayers. Songs are also where I live, and if you live in your songs, you want to make sure there's enough room. The size of the song is important. Your emotional life has to fit into it..."

Luke 1:26-28

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Ephesians 1:13-14

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

QUESTIONS

1. The title of this week's sermon is "It Starts with Praise." What does it mean to praise God?
2. Is there a difference between praising God and worshipping God?
3. The Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:5 that God predestined us "for adoption to sonship." What does this tell us about our belonging and security in God's family?
4. In Ephesians 1: 3-10, the Apostle Paul lists several things for which we should praise God. What are they? What other things do you praise God for?
5. How does praising God impact your relationship with Him?
6. How does praising God impact you?
7. What expressions of praising God have you found to be most meaningful?
8. What Bible verse(s) speak to you the most about praising God?
9. Pastor Paul said that we are to reflect God's glory in our lives. What does that mean to you?

PASTOR PAUL'S SERMON QUESTIONS

1. Who around me might need to experience some of the kindness and generosity God has shown me?
2. Prayer Practice – Praise – What would it look like for me to be intentional about praising God this week?