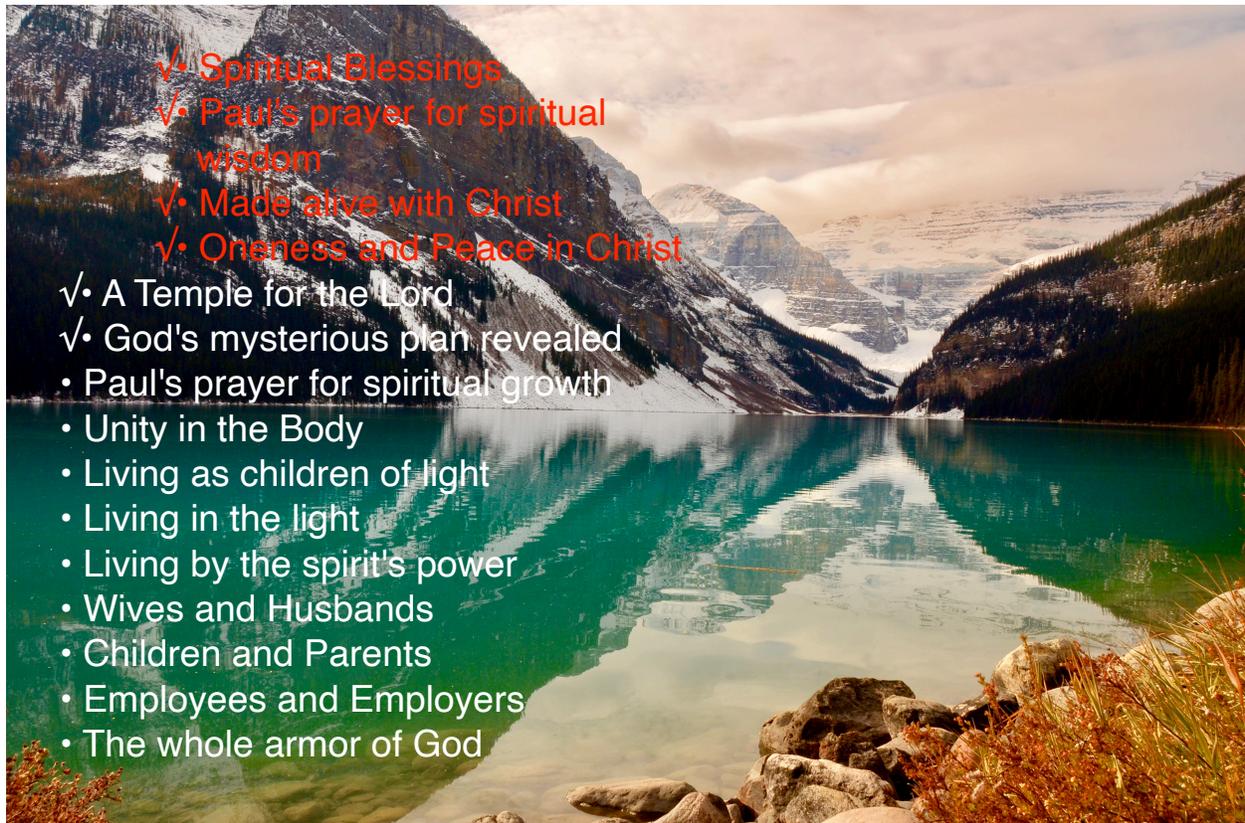


**Pathway Visalia Men's ministry:
May 2nd 2022-"God's mysterious plan revealed"
"EPHESIANS"**

On the first Monday of every month, our Pathway Men's ministry meets at 6:30 pm. Our next meeting will be on MAY 2nd. For those who were unable to attend and for anyone that is interested, we post the study on our Pathway Visalia website. I pray that you will be able to join us. It is such a blessing to share with one another. Below is an overview of the topics that we will discuss as we work our way through the book of Ephesians.



CONTINUED FROM THE APRIL MEETING:

11 Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts.

12 In those days you were living apart from Christ [excluded from any relationship with Him]. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises [with no share in the sacred Messianic promise and without knowledge of God's agreements] God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.

√-QUESTION: "Don't forget"-What do you tend to forget when it comes to what the Lord has done and is doing in your life?

√-QUESTION: "Don't forget"-Why is it easy to forget? What can you do to help you to remember?

√-QUESTION: Vs. 11 speaks about bodily circumcision vs. spiritual circumcision or the cutting away of a piece of your heart/spirit. Can you share specifically what the Lord had removed in your life after you were saved?

QUESTION: Citizenship is a big topic in the US today. Our citizenship is describes as "a share in the sacred Messianic promises from God-living in this world with God and with hope through our relationship with Christ."-(paraphrased)-Let's talk about living in this world as aliens (we don't speak the same language, we have different currency, etc.) Share an example where you felt like an outsider/alien.

QUESTION: We are set apart (became aliens) by design when we were saved. Share how you balance ministering in this world without being a part of it.

13 But now [at this very moment] you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

QUESTION: The Amplified version of the Bible adds "at this very moment"-What can you point to as something new that the Lord is ministering to you today (at this very moment)?

14 For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. 15 He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. 16 Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. 17 He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. 18 Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

QUESTION: Much of this chapter in Ephesians emphasizes unity through Christ. Share the contrast between the current world view (at least in the US) on separation into different groups and the Biblical view of humanity.

QUESTION: vs. 15 talks about the work of Christ ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. How would you describe God's grace to an unbeliever?

QUESTION: "system of law with its commandments and regulations"- what are some current examples of religious laws, commandments and regulations"?

QUESTION: What are some examples of social "laws, commandments and regulations"?

QUESTION: Paul includes the word "peace" 4 times in these verse's, What "peace" do you think Paul is talking about?

EPHESIANS 2:19-22

A temple for the Lord:

19 So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. 20 Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. 21 We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord **-[a sanctuary dedicated, set apart, and sacred to the presence of the Lord]**. 22 Through him **[and in fellowship with one another]** you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

QUESTION: Think how important a strong foundation is in constructing a home. Vs. 20 states: "Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. Share some of the building blocks that the Lord has used in your life to make a spiritual foundation.

QUESTION: Vs. 21 speaks of how we are "becoming a holy temple for the Lord **-[a sanctuary dedicated, set apart, and sacred to the presence of the Lord]". What would you say your walk with Christ has set you apart from? What are you now dedicated to that you weren't previously?**

QUESTION: Let's talk about fellowship with other Christians. Share some notable changes in who you fellowship with since becoming a Christian.

God's Mysterious Plan Revealed:

3:1 When I think of all this, **[because I preach that you and believing Jews are joint heirs]** I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of you 2 assuming, by the way, that you know God gave me the special responsibility of extending his grace to you Gentiles. 3 As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me. 4 As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. 5 God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets. 6 And this is God's plan: Both

Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus.

QUESTION: Vs. 1 speaks of how Paul is in prison because he was faithful to the stewardship that God called him too: which was to preach that gentiles and Jews are joint heirs (all who believe and have put their trust in Jesus). So what would you say (specifically) that the Lord has entrusted in you to be faithful too?

QUESTION: "assuming, by the way, that you know..."- Paul is specifically addressing one issue (the fact that Paul was given by God, the responsibility to extend His grace to Gentiles)-We can often assume that people that we encounter know more about the good news of Christ than what we assume. What are some good questions that we can use to dig deeper with others?

7 By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News. 8 Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. 9 I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning. 10 God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

QUESTION: "Endless treasures available to them in Christ."-Can you list some of the treasures that we have through our relationship with Jesus?

QUESTION: It is interesting that God's plan seems totally mysterious prior to salvation and a portion of it seems simple following salvation. Why do you think that is?

QUESTION: Can you list some of the remaining areas of mystery re. God's plan?

12 Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence-[that is, our faith gives us sufficient courage to freely and openly approach God through Christ].. 13 So please don't lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored.

QUESTION: "Come boldly and confidently into God's presence."-Do you ever come timidly into God's presence? why do you think that is?

QUESTION: We have the wonderful advantage of the Holy Spirit ministering to us- Share a time or times where the awesome power of the Holy Spirit was ministering and opening doors for you.