

Life Group Topic #44
Cinderella with Amnesia
Ephesians 1:3-10

WELCOME: (15 minutes)

What is the most valuable thing you have ever lost? Tell the story.

WORSHIP: (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

WORD APPLICATION: (45 minutes)

Read and meditate together on **Ephesians 1:3-10**. The facilitator can then briefly read or paraphrase the following summary or else go into a time of sharing what the group discovers in the passage. Go then to the application questions below.

On this advent weekend we focus on love and it is revealed in different ways in Scripture: God's love motivated Him to send His Son Jesus and we need a new paradigm built around that reality. Ephesians 1 provides some building blocks for that new reality.

1. WE HAVE BEEN CHOSEN...v 4

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes...

Before the founding of the world, God chose you! He determined to make us, who didn't exist yet, to be His children through Christ's redeeming work on the cross, which hadn't happened yet!

2. WE HAVE BEEN ADOPTED...v 5-6

God decided in advance to adopt us unto his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do and, and it gave Him great pleasure.

We struggle with these thoughts because we think that we chose Him and we did do it freely but only because, in eternity past, God chose us! He chose us and adopted us...placed us in His family as adults and full heirs...because He loved us, not because of any merit that we have and that motivates humble adoration. We have the same rights as a natural child, so He not only justified me and cleansed me, He received and accepted me fully. None of it was due to my human merit and human pride hates that thought!

3. WE HAVE BEEN FREED...v 7-8

He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins. He has showered His kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

He redeemed us—He delivered us by a payment of a price! There are three different words used for *redeem or purchase our freedom*

In this text, the redemption is *lutruo*, the redemption payment paid to liberate us from the condemnation of sin. It was only accomplished by Christ's shed blood and it bought us forgiveness for our sins but even more, it bought us freedom from condemnation...freedom from any thought, any lie that says I can lose my relationship with Him by my mistakes and sins

4. WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL...v 9-10

God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill His own good pleasure. And this is the plan: At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.

The word *mystery* speaks of an open secret...something that is not understood until it is revealed. It is not a mystery that it is merely progressively understood information. This mystery demands revelation from God! History is neither meaningless nor purposeless but is moving toward a goal. Ephesians 3 says one phase of that mystery is that God was going to bring the Gentiles into His family and then eventually bring all things in heaven and on earth under one Head---Jesus Christ! Christ is pre-eminent and as His body we rule with Him in the heavenlies----He wants us to embrace our position and all that we are in Him!

So, have we been Cinderella with amnesia?

Word Application Questions:

1. As you consider what God has done for you, apart from any effort on your own, how do you respond?
2. When you celebrate Christmas, do you connect Christ's birth with God's plan to free and adopt you before the creation of the universe?
3. Today we see only part of God's loving plan revealed (our adoption). What is still to come (vs. 10) is the bringing of everything in heaven and earth under the authority of Christ. What do you imagine that to look like?
4. How do we express our praise to God in response to all these blessings in Christ? Is praise confined to music and prayer?
5. How do you honestly view yourself? How would you describe yourself? After answering that- how close does that match up to who God declares you to be in this passage?
6. If your discussion as a group reveals negative feelings, guilt, or self-critical spirits; help each other repent and encourage each other, and speak the truth of this passage personally into our lives.

WITNESS: (15 minutes)

This section is a vision-casting time designed to get the group strategizing and making concrete plans towards reaching outward to a lost world. Relational outreach always has the goal of ultimately enfolding those we reach into the Life Group.