

Transition:

So far in the letter to the Ephesians, Paul has taught concerning our adoption in Christ, the mercy and grace of God, and our unity in the Body. Because the new Church was comprised of Jews and Gentiles, Paul had to remind them quite often that both groups were saved in the same way. Whereas the Pharisees were quick to trace their heritage to Abraham and believe they were justified by their bloodline and obedience to the Law, Christ taught them that God could raise up sons from rocks if He wanted to. Paul spent much of Romans 5 teaching that both Jew and Gentile were saved in the same way – by grace, through faith.

Tell the story:

Summarize verses 1-13 the best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story. Perhaps leave some parts out or make a mistake, just to see if your group catches it!

Rebuild the story:

Rebuild this section by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the section. Then have someone else summarize the section as best they can – just like you modeled the first time.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did Paul have to remind the Jews so often that the believing Gentiles would have the same inheritance as believing Jews?
2. Four times in Ephesians Paul has said “according to [his] purpose...” – Can we thwart God's purposes? (Isa 44:28, 46:8-11; Ps 33:11; Pro 19:21; Heb 6:17)

Fundamental:

Faith – Faith is the conviction of the truth of anything; for the Christian, the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. He who truly believes in Christ has a new heart (2 Cor 5:17), is a holy person (1 John 3:3), works godly works (Gal 5:6), overcomes the world (1 John 5:4), has the witness of the Holy Spirit and regards Christ as precious (1 Pet 2:7). Habakkuk, Galatians, Romans and Hebrews all say, “the just shall live by [his] faith.”

1. Where does our faith come from? (Matt 16:17; Eph 2:8) Is this different from the “gift of faith” mentioned in 1 Cor 12:9?
2. Why should repentance and obedience always accompany faith? (Mark 1:15; John 14:15; Luke 6:46; 1 John 3:9)
3. Paul says in Rom 3:28 that, “one is justified by faith apart from works...” but Jam 2:24 says, “a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.” Are these different types of faith? Or different types of works? How can we reconcile these verses?

Homework/Challenge:

1. Paul says in the letter to the Philippians to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” Take time alone with the Lord to give thanks for the faith within you and tremble before Him.
2. Please read Ephesians 4 in preparation for next week.

Discipleship Tip:

The relationship between faith and works can be complicated for Believers. At the heart of it, if someone has a genuine saving faith, then they will be doing the works of God. Much like the fruit of the Spirit – we cannot try to practice them more in order to be saved. On the contrary, if we have been born again, then we will display the fruit of the Spirit.

Prayer:

Pray that your people will have faith like children. Jesus says, if we don't, we will never enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 18:3).