

The word "blueprint" is written in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are overlaid on a grid of white dashed lines. The grid consists of vertical lines that align with the vertical strokes of the letters, and horizontal lines that align with the horizontal strokes. The background is a solid blue rectangle.

BUILDING A STRONGER CHURCH

**The Church Is a Changed People**  
**September 13, 2020**

Text: Ephesians 1:3-14

Opener:

- If you were buying a different house, what would be the one thing that you would be looking for? What's most important to you?
- Plans are important in building, and that's why having good blueprints and keeping them handy really matters. In this series that we're calling *Blueprint*, we're seeking a biblical plan for building the church, and to find that we're studying the first three chapters of Ephesians. In some ways, Ephesians comes down to us as an ancient handbook for the church so it is an important text for understanding the nature of the church.

Discussion:

- As Paul opens this letter/handbook, he leads with some clarification of what changes within us when we choose to become followers of Jesus. Our text for this lesson lays that out.
- Read Ephesians 1:3-4. In what sense are we "holy and blameless" in Jesus' sight? Clearly we are not perfectly sinless so what does Paul mean?
- Read Ephesians 1:5-6. What does it mean for us to be adopted into sonship? Why does it matter that we are children of God?

- In *The Kingdom New Testament*, a fresh translation of the New Testament from its original Greek, verses 8b-10 read this way: “Yes, with all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the secret of his purpose, just as he wanted it to be and set it forward in him as a blueprint for when the time was ripe. His plan was to sum up the whole cosmos in the king-yes, everything in heaven and on earth, in him.”

In this reading, which reflects the language of the original well, God’s blueprint of his kingdom is revealed and is summed up in Jesus as king over all things, in heaven and on earth. It’s a concept we don’t often think about though it is central in Paul’s understanding of Christianity. Jesus has become Lord of all things. This is not to happen in the future; it is a present reality.

- If this is so, what do you think it means for us to say that Jesus is now, at present, Lord of all things? Does this concept raise any questions for you? If so, what are they?
- Read Ephesians 1:11-14. List some of the gifts that God has given those who follow Jesus that are mentioned in these four verses.

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### **Following Jesus means something changes.**

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- Do you sense that God is at work making changes in you? If so, what are they?
- This passage points to the fact that the church is composed of people who are being changed by God. That means that we are imperfect but that God is not finished.
  - What does this say about how we think about ourselves?
  - What does it say about how we treat others in the church? Or what we expect of them?

Spend a few minutes sharing prayer requests from group members. Remember that prayer requests can involve many areas of life, not just health needs. The group leader or a volunteer may lead the group in praying over these needs.