

## Small Group Meeting on

### Celebrating the God who redeems

#### Review (20 mins)

Reflect together on your experiences over the last week. What has God been teaching you? Where have you been growing in your walk with Him? Did you take part in the creativity challenge – why/why not? Share those experiences with your small group.

#### Read (10 mins)

Recap on the sermon from last Sunday. Try to give a summary to those who were not able to be present.

#### **Ephesians 2:1-10 (Galatians 3:10-14)**

Read both Bible passages slowly and prayerfully. It might help to use your imagination to picture the letter being read for the first time to the church. The 'Setting the Scene' section gives some context for the passage.

As you read, look out for *shockers* and *blockers*.

*Shockers* – a phrase, word, image or something from the text that resonates, stands out or connects with you.

*Blockers* – something from the text that raises questions for you.

#### **Setting the scene:**

- Ephesians begins with a great praise prayer (1:3-14); and an intercessory prayer (1:15-23). In both, Paul is urging his

readers to realize what God *has done* in Christ, and what he *will do* in Christ, for all who believe (both Jew and Gentile)

- Chapter 2 will continue with the good news that in the redeemed people of God there is now neither Jew nor Gentile, but one people of God.
- In Galatians, Paul is counteracting those who want salvation to be by works rather than grace. In that context he spells out that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of performance related salvation which is no salvation at all, rather it is through faith in that redeeming act of Christ that brings us freedom.

## Reflect (20 mins)

After you have all had time to read the text, pause and be still to listen to God through the Scriptures.

Begin your reflection time by each naming your *shockers* and *blockers*. Listen carefully to each other, share your thoughts and reflect on this passage together.

You might also like to explore these questions:

Q1. How do you experience the redeeming love offered in this passage? What difference does it make to how you view life?

Q2. How would you respond to the charge that we offer 'cheap grace' when we say (with Paul in v5) that God does not wait for us to change before acting?

Q3. When people look at the way you live (your attitudes, your language, your viewing habits, your approach to others) what do they see – 'good works which God has prepared for you to walk in' or something else?

Q4. If you believe the good news of transformation from death to life in this passage is true, who are you sharing it with?

## Respond (20 mins)

As you draw near to the end of your session, consider how you might respond to your reading and reflection by “walking the talk”. What are you going to be doing this week that will help you live out what you have discussed? It may be a challenge or activity that you are currently engaged with over many weeks. Be prepared to share how you are growing in that.

## Some new challenge ideas

### 1 Sharing with others

An Alpha course is being planned for the autumn term. Who will you invite to come to it? Could you come as a group with friends and neighbours?

### 2 Good works to walk in

Take time to review your attitudes and actions: where are they in step with being ‘in Christ’; where do they need to change (see Galatians 5:13-26)? Who can you ask to pray with you for those areas you struggle with? (See Hebrews 10:24-25)

## Group Prayer

As a group, pray for one another this week as you seek to grow in holiness by doing the good works ‘God has prepared in advance for you to walk in’. Pray, too, as you seek to share the good news with others.