

Fact Sheet for **“How Great a Salvation”**  
**Ephesians 1:1-14, Part IV**

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This is Part IV of my sermons on Ephesians 1:1-14. Now you might be saying to yourself, “Didn’t he cover every word of these verses in the last three sermons?” Yes I did. This sermon however is on the application of those verses to ministry, and specifically to the ministry of Cottage Grove Bible Church.

*Begin by reading Ephesians 1:1-14.*

What should our church be about? What should we be doing? What should our activities be geared to? What should we be spending time on? Is there purpose and thoughtfulness in our activity? What has God called us to? What are we trying to accomplish? Are we doing it well? There is only one way to answer these questions and that is to look into the Scripture.

There are videos and books about preaching, teaching, evangelism, spiritual gifts, marriage, raising children, discipleship, church growth, leadership, encouragement, small groups, etc. We have access to sermons on television, on the radio and at conferences. But these are all secondary sources. The primary source of direction must be the Word of God, the Bible.

Now we can learn from these secondary sources to be sure. We can get information, creative ideas, ways to apply the Scripture, and helps on ways that seem to work in our current society. But we must always remember that those secondary sources are not scripture.

We must also remember that personal experience, ours or that of others, is also not the primary source. We all have history... what we grew up with, what we have enjoyed in life, what we are familiar with, what our spiritual gifting and training is.

The Bible is always relevant, always inerrant, and always infallible. So what does God’s Word say we should be about as a church? There are four main answers to this question... Evangelism, Discipleship, Worship, and Fellowship.

#### I. Evangelism

Note: I’m going to spend the majority of my time here, so don’t get concerned if you see the clock ticking away and I haven’t made it to discipleship, worship, and fellowship yet.

Truth about our great salvation can be found in every book of the NT. However evangelism can only be found in some of them. Evangelism was still the heartbeat of the early church. The great salvation we have in Christ was constantly in their minds. And the Gospel was on their tongues. Listen to Paul when he wrote to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Paul, the author of Ephesians, would go to where those who needed Christ were in order to share Christ with them (Illustration: Paul going to synagogues). He would make use of opportunities he found himself in to share Christ (Illustration: Philippian jail, Acts 16:16-40). He found creative ways to share Christ (Illustration: Mars Hill, Acts 17:16-34). He recognized opportunities from God (Illustration: Paul’s defense before Agrippa, Acts 26). Others funded his evangelistic efforts (Illustration: Philipians 4:10-20).

When Paul and others found themselves where non-Christians were they pleaded with them to believe in Christ, to come to faith in Christ (Illustrations: Peter on Pentecost, Paul in Acts). However, when Paul wrote to churches and Christians he did not invite them to receive Christ. Read through Ephesians. You will not find one invitation to receive Christ there. What you will find is Paul teaching them about their

great salvation (1:3-14). In writing to them about their great salvation in Christ he will go on to encourage them in the Lord. And he will press them to live in a manner pleasing Christ.

Now, let's take some lessons from the early church and Paul for our church. What should we be about?

1. Evangelism should be the heartbeat of our church. We need to seek out and make use of every opportunity God has given us to share the Gospel. And we need to think about the best ways to do this.

2. When we speak to Christians we should speak about our great salvation in Christ, and encourage them to live for him.

Are we evangelistic? The answer to that can be seen in how many people regularly come to Christ through the ministry of our church. It is regularly 5-10 a year. One year it was 29. But when you look at the evangelistic efforts of our church there are changes we need to make.

1<sup>st</sup> Change – All of our structured church evangelistic efforts are directed toward children. We've had a lot of success there, but we don't have an evangelistic effort directed towards adults in the Cottage Grove community. We need to change this. Every activity should have at least a short devotional. That devotional should be about our great salvation in Christ. But if there are non-Christians there it should also include a clear Gospel message and invitation. For as many activities as possible we should be inviting people to come. Then if those who need Christ come they can hear the Gospel clearly presented and given an invitation to respond. This should be true for life groups, senior luncheons, youth outings, etc. Also we should get solidly behind the Summer 2018 evangelistic festival in Eugene being designed by the Louis Palau Association. And we should invite people to attend.

2<sup>nd</sup> Change – All of our structured church evangelistic efforts are designed to benefit the broader Christian community in Cottage Grove. That is why we are not seeing those who receive Christ getting baptized and sitting under the discipling ministry of this church. Kids are getting saved and going to church where their parents attend. In order to have a balanced evangelistic ministry we need to also think about folding new believers into the ministry here. This will be a lot easier when we see adults accepting Christ.

This may seem self-serving but it is necessary for a sustainable and healthy evangelistic ministry.

## II. Discipleship

Discipleship stands on two legs. The first leg is God's truth. And the only authoritative source of that truth is the Bible. We do well as a church in helping people grow in their knowledge of God's Word. The second leg is the application of that truth to our lives. Without the application of God's Word to our life the knowledge of God's Word accomplishes very little.

## III. Worship

We have a tendency to identify music with worship, and in particular the musical notes and style. But worship is not the musical notes; it is what happens in the heart and mind of the worshipper. Worship may or may not involve music. Paul mentioned praise three times in Ephesians 1:3-14, none of which involved music. This was still worship. Worship is more than music. It is what happens in the heart all through the day, all through the week.

## IV. Fellowship

Fellowship can happen when we get together as a church (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25) or as individuals.

Teaching like that in Ephesians 1:3-14 had a clear place in Paul's mind for the church. Evangelism was his heartbeat also. It all depended upon his audience.

How are we doing as a church? We have some needed changes in evangelism to make. We do well at teaching. We always need to press forward with application.