

BIRTHRIGHT

WEEK 6 GROUP GUIDE | MESSAGE BY CHAD BRUEGMAN

START

To get things started, let's go around the circle and answer this question:

What is one of your favorite bands of all time and why?

SHARE

Over the last few weeks, we have immersed ourselves in the first chapter of a letter written by the Apostle Paul to the Ephesian church where he reminded them of their true identity in Jesus Christ. That identity is not earned or manufactured, but it is a birthright for all who have called on the name of Jesus and have become a son or a daughter of the King.

It is because of Jesus Christ that we now have the birthrights of sons and daughters of God.

As a refresher, we have talked about the fact that despite our past sins, we are now called "saints." Week two, we talked about the fact that we are actually "chosen." Regardless of how we might feel in this world, God purposefully chose us to be redeemed. As a church we talked about what it means to be "holy and blameless" in the sight of God because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross. We have been adopted as sons and daughters with all the rights and privileges of a son or a daughter.

Last week we talked about being sealed once and for all by the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our inheritance; meaning that nothing can stand in the way of the promise of salvation and what God has promised to his children.

This week we continue in our series "Birthright" by talking about worship. We are designed to worship God in all that we do. We worship God in how we work, eat, drink, serve, laugh, sing, and love. In this message, Chad talks more specifically about how we corporately and privately worship God through song and what that actually means in practice.

Worship is not about you ... but there is nothing better *for* you than worshipping God.

Let's read Ephesians 1:3-14

Ephesians 1:3-14 is called a "**Doxology**" which is simply the word "*doxo*" meaning glory and "*logia*" meaning a saying and system. Ephesians 1 is essentially a systematic way that Paul is trying to glorify God and his goodness by creating these amazing sayings about what God gives us an inheritance or a birthright.

In *The NIV Commentary* on Ephesians, we read:

The prayer in Ephesians is unusual, for it contains a long doxology (actually a blessing 1:3-14) ...the whole of the first three chapters of Ephesians is filled with worship and liturgical expressions using language familiar to the church. It is virtually doctrine set to music.

When you think about worship, what is the first thing that comes to mind?

Do you naturally engage in worship during the weekend services or do you find it difficult to sing publicly and why?

What stands in the way of you engaging in worship more freely?

G R O W

According to Scripture, singing worship to the Lord is one of the most powerful tools for us to heighten our spiritual senses to remember God's value, worthiness, character and amazing attributes. Let's take a look at just a few Scriptures that point to this. Maybe have a few people from the group pick one to read.

Psalm 89:1 | Psalm 105:1-2 | Psalm 111:1 | Psalm 150

In R. Ellsworth's (2006). *Opening up Psalms* (pp. 128-130), we read about the importance of how we use our breath each day:

Praise is the suitable ending of the book; praise is what the Spirit of inspiration meant to secure in the heart and on the lips. In the review of the whole there is occasion for praise. In view of all that has been disclosed about God, about his religion, about the manifestations of his mercy and grace to this people, there is occasion for praise.'

In these verses of exuberant praise, the psalmist answers three fundamental and essential questions.

WHO IS TO PRAISE THE LORD? (VV. 1, 6) The phrase 'in his sanctuary' refers to public worship on earth. The phrase 'in his mighty firmament' refers to worship in heaven. This verse is, then, in the words of John R.W. Stott 'an invitation to both humans and angels to worship God—humans in earth's sanctuary, and angels in heaven.'

Having begun the psalm with a call to human beings and angels to worship, the psalmist concludes by urging 'everything that has breath' to praise the Lord (v. 6). How very often we misuse our breath! We do so when we take God's name in vain. We do so when we lie, complain, curse and gossip. We do so even when we mouth good and proper words about God while our hearts are far from him (Matt. 15:7-9; Mark 7:6-7). The highest use of breath is sincere praise to the giver of it!

WHY IS THE LORD TO BE PRAISED? (V. 2) The psalmist answers this question by mentioning God's 'mighty acts' and 'his excellent greatness'.

Worlds of meaning are folded into those terms! The former includes his works of creation, providence and redemption. The latter refers to God's person—that is, all the attributes that make him the unspeakably glorious God he is.

HOW IS THE LORD TO BE PRAISED? (VV. 3-5) The trumpet, lute, harp, dance, stringed instruments, flutes, loud cymbals and high sounding cymbals (perhaps the larger of the cymbals) are to be pressed into the service of praise. Stott summarizes: 'Every conceivable instrument is to be employed in the worship of Jehovah: ...'

If we truly take up the message of Psalm 1, we will end up with the praise of Psalm 150.

We all praise, whether football teams, an amazing film, a delicious restaurant, that amazing band or that frozen custard place, we all have the ability to praise these things that we enjoy. Why is it so easy to forget to praise the giver of the things we enjoy?

As a group, go around the circle and throw out some things that God made that are praiseworthy. As we keep adding words, it will become more and more evident just how thankful to God we should be.

MOVE

To wrap things up, Chad talked about the power of music and how it can influence how we feel and even how we think. It is so important what we allow into our hearts and minds. Chad spoke about the power of the tongue, that words can give such life and encouragement.

Proverbs 18:21a

The tongue has the power of life and death...

When we worship God and praise Him with songs, there is a powerful transaction taking place. We are exchanging our brokenness and in turn being encouraged in the truth of God. We get to lay down our burdens and distractions at the feet of Jesus as He lifts our face up to experience his acceptance and goodness. As we sing the truth of God, we are reminded of the life we have in Christ alone. We can sing, regardless of how we feel or what mistakes we have made because God is worthy to be praised. If you are reading this today and feel that you can't worship God because you don't qualify; understand that because of Jesus, you do qualify and God designed you to praise!

Think about some practical and specific ways you can begin to worship God throughout the week. What is one thing you can incorporate into your daily schedule as you remember to praise and thank God?

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

Psalm 111:1

Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart.

In the community of the upright, in the congregation.