

Ephesians: Living a Life In Christ

Ephesians 2:11-22 | United in Christ

→ *Survey: Let's understand the background and context of the passage.*

While under house arrest in Rome, a man named Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in the city of Ephesus - this letter is the book of Ephesians. In the first half of the letter, Paul teaches the Gospel of Jesus, explaining how God's family is now a unified, multiethnic community of followers. The second part of the letter explores how this Gospel should affect every part of our lives, as Paul urges these followers of Jesus to "live a life worthy of the calling you received" (Ephesians 4:1).

Remember that Ephesus was a major hub in Asia Minor, now modern day Turkey. In this city was the Temple of Artemis, one of the 7 ancient wonders of the world, and this goddess was central to all aspects of life for the Ephesians. In this place of idol worship, Paul urges God's people to live according to God's will, to bring unity to all things everywhere under Christ (1:10). Paul wants them to recognize every spiritual blessing they have received through Jesus, as they have been chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, and promised an inheritance of life eternal with God.

Last week we saw the miraculous work God has done in the life of Christians, as we have been saved by grace through faith, not by any works of our own, so no one can boast. Rather it is the free gift of God in Christ Jesus that invites us to live in unity with each other. Tonight we will see how our individual salvation intersects with the practical reality of reconciliation through the church.

So whether you feel near or far to God tonight, you can be welcomed into God's family by putting your faith in what Jesus Christ has done on the cross. Let's marvel at all that Christ has done for us and the world as we study the book of Ephesians.

Read: Ephesians 2:11-22 (NIV)

→ *Observe: Let's take a close look at what the text is saying.*

1. When you read the first word of verse 11, what question does it make you ask?
2. What two groups of people are contrasted (v. 11)? Which one are the Gentiles?
3. What 4 things used to be true of the Gentiles (v. 12)? Why did those things change (v. 13)?
4. What did Christ do (v. 14)? What were his two purposes (v. 15-16)?
5. Who did Jesus preach peace to (v. 17)? Who is given access to the Father (v. 18)? How?
6. Because of Jesus, what is now true of the Gentiles (v. 19)?
7. What image is being described (v. 20-22)? What is the foundation of this building (v. 20)?
8. What results from Christ being the chief cornerstone (v. 21)?
9. Is this a physical building? What is important to note about the unity of believers (v. 22)?

→ *Interpret: Let's seek to understand the meaning of this text in its original context.*

1. Who are the two groups that Paul is describing in this text? What do we know about them?
How do verses 11-12 help us understand the former contrast between Jews and Gentiles? Why then would the statement in verse 13 have been so profound to the Jewish Christians?
2. Does anyone remember what God's will was from Ephesians 1:10? How does this passage convey Jesus's purpose in fulfilling God's will? What are some key verses that demonstrate this?
3. How would you summarize what Paul is describing in verse 19-22? What vision does Paul give for how God's people are supposed to be? How would this challenge the Jewish Christians understanding of a holy temple? How does this challenge our own understanding of church?
4. What do we learn about God in this passage? Jesus? The Spirit? The Gentiles? What did they do to become a part of God's household? How does this passage help explain the Gospel?

→ *Apply: Let's explore where the text intersects with our lives and our world.*

1. How does this passage help teach you your identity apart from Christ? How does it help you understand what God has done for you and for those around you? How does it help you tell the story of the Gospel? Are there ways in which you want to grow in sharing the Gospel?
2. Where have you set up a dividing wall of hostility (v. 14)? Are there people that you see as outsiders or undeserving of God's love? Why? How does this passage challenge you?
3. How well are you contributing to the unity of the church? Jesus reconciled us to God - are you pursuing reconciliation with those around you? Why or why not?