"Closer Than You Think"

Session 3: Ephesians 2:11-3:21

Movement: Grounded
Theme: Belonging to God means belonging to each other — and that changes everything about how we live.

Check-In | *DO IT follow-up from Session 2 • ~3 minutes*

1. Last week you chose a Do It option. Did anyone try theirs? What happened . . . or what got in the way?

OPEN IT | *Icebreaker • ~5 minutes*

2. Think of a time you were the outsider . . . a new school, a new job, a new city, a room full of people who all seemed to know each other. What did it feel like? And what changed the moment you actually belonged?

READ IT | *Scripture • ~4 minutes*

SAY IT:

Paul is about to describe the most dramatic social barrier of the first-century world — and what Christ did to it.

- Ephesians 2:11-22

EXPLORE IT | *Discussion • ~14 minutes*

3. Paul says the Gentiles were once *"separated from Christ, excluded from citizenship . . . foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world."* That's a brutal description. Have you ever felt spiritually homeless . . . like you were on the outside of something everyone else seemed to have? What did that feel like?

★ 4. Verse 14 says Christ *"himself is our peace"* . . . and that he made the two groups *"one."* He didn't broker a truce between people who were different. He created something entirely new: one body, one Spirit, one humanity. Who in your life represents the kind of person you'd least expect to be in deep community with? What would it take for that to actually happen?

5. Verses 19-22 describe the church as a building . . . a temple being constructed with Christ as the cornerstone and every believer as a living stone fitted together. You're not just a member of a group. You're a structural piece of something God is building. What part of that image is most challenging to you personally?

READ IT | *Scripture • ~3 minutes*

SAY IT:

In 3:1-13, Paul describes his own calling to bring this message to the Gentiles — people who were never supposed to hear it. He calls it 'the mystery': that Jews and Gentiles would become one body together. He says he's the least deserving person to carry this message, and yet that's exactly who God chose. That's worth sitting with. Then in verse 14, Paul drops to his knees and prays. That's where we'll pick up.

- Ephesians 3:14-21

EXPLORE IT | *Discussion • ~14 minutes*

6. Paul prays that his readers would grasp *"how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ"* . . . and then immediately says it *"surpasses knowledge."* He's praying they would know something that can't be fully known. What do you think he means? And has there been a moment in your life when you felt the edges of that love — when it was bigger than you could explain?

★ **7. Verse 17 says Paul prays that we would be *"rooted and grounded in love"* — and that phrase is where the title *Grounded & Sent* comes from. Being grounded in this series doesn't mean staying put. It means being stable enough to move. Where in your life right now do you feel most ungrounded . . . most easily shaken? What would it look like to let Christ's love be the thing that steadies you there?**

★ **8. Paul closes his prayer with one of the most audacious statements in Scripture: God *"is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine."* He's not just saying God is powerful. He's saying our imagination is the limiting factor, not God's ability. What are you currently not asking God for because you've already decided it's too much?**

SAY IT | *Leader Teaching • ~3 minutes*

Here's what Paul is doing across these two chapters: he's showing us that the gospel isn't just personal. It's cosmic. Christ didn't just save individuals. He created a new kind of community — one where the dividing walls that make perfect sense in every human culture have been demolished. Not lowered. Not made optional. Demolished.

And then he prays. Not for programs or strategies or better small groups. He prays that Christ would take up residence in His people so deeply that they become **rooted and grounded** in love. Stable. Immovable. Not because the world around them is stable — it isn't — but because the love underneath them is.

That's the whole series in two chapters**. Grounded & Sent**. You can't be meaningfully sent if you're not genuinely grounded. And the thing that grounds you isn't a discipline or a doctrine. It's a Person. Christ dwelling in you. Love going down like roots. And then — only then — are you ready to move.

DO IT | *Application • ~6 minutes*

Choose one of the following this week:

- **Pray the Prayer.** Read **Ephesians 3:14-21** slowly, once a day for the next seven days. Don't just read it — pray it. Let Paul's words become your words. Pay attention to what shifts in you by day seven.
- **Take Down a Wall.** Think about the person from Question 4 — the one you'd least expect to be in deep community with. Do one thing this week to move toward them. It doesn't have to be dramatic. A conversation. A text. Showing up somewhere you normally wouldn't. Just one move toward the wall Christ already demolished.
- **Ask the Bigger Thing.** Write down the prayer you've stopped praying because it felt too big or too unlikely. Say it out loud to God this week. Then read **Ephesians 3:20** over it: *"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine."*
- **Find Your Stone. Ephesians 2:22** says you are being *"built together"* with other believers. This week, identify one person in your group or at Brazos Pointe whose faith has steadied yours. Tell them. Specifically. Don't just think it — say it. (or text it)
- **Reflect On It.** Write "Rooted and grounded in love" at the top of a page. Below it, answer honestly: What does my root system actually look like right now? What am I drawing stability from? Is it Christ's love . . . or something else?

PRAY IT | *Closing Prayer • ~3 minutes*

Father,
We were far off, and you brought us near.
We were strangers, and you made us family.
We were divided, and Christ became our peace.
Tonight we heard that you want to dwell in us so deeply
that we become **ROOTED AND GROUNDED** in love . . .
stable enough to withstand whatever comes,
and secure enough to move toward whatever you're doing in the world around us.
We confess that we often draw our stability from things that can't hold us.
Tonight we ask for the real thing.
Root us in your love.
Ground us in your presence.
And when you're ready to send us . . . may we be ready to go.
In Jesus' name, Amen.