

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

SESSION 4

Letter to the Ephesians: Ephesians 2:11-22 - LEADERS GUIDE

ICE BREAKER

Start off with an ice breaker to get everyone warmed up.

HANGOUT NIGHT

Hangout Night is next week March 17th. Spend time discussing with your group.

WELCOME

Last week we spent a time in [Ephesians 2:1-10](#). [Ephesians 2:1-10](#) depicts the spiritual condition of all of man – once dead in trespasses and sins, captive to the ways of the world and influenced by evil. All of this separated us from God – the Jew's heritage could not bridge that gap. Only by God's grace and the work of Jesus Christ can believers be brought from spiritual death to life, redeemed and reconciled with God.

Today, we're going to complete the second chapter of Ephesians. In [Ephesians 2:11-22](#), Paul talks about a deep and complex rivalry between Jews and Gentiles. This rivalry involved religious differences, as the Gentiles were not familiar with the God of Israel, and it was also influenced by cultural distinctions of that time. The Jews had unique rituals, feasts, and ceremonies that set them apart. Additionally, there was a racial aspect, with the Jews boasting about their lineage from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Despite all of these "differences," there is one thing that brought them together – the blood of Jesus Christ. Through the cross, they were not only reconciled to God, but they were also reconciled to each other – OR united to each other.

QUESTIONS

Ok, before we begin – a quick question - why is a unified church a great witness to the unbelieving world?

- What's happens when a church is not unified?
- What kind of witness does the church have then?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read [Ephesians 2:11-13](#)

EPHESIANS 2:11-13

In [verse 11](#), Paul begins this section of the letter with "therefore," indicating a direct connection with the previous section. In addition, he calls the Gentiles in the church at Ephesus to **"remember."**

- To **remember**, who they once were – dead in their sins and trespasses.

Everything looks bad – even worse than the beginning of [chapter 2](#) - but then Paul throws in [verse 13](#), "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

- Only by the **blood** of Jesus Christ can we be made clean and brought near to God.
- Only by His **blood** can we be reconciled to God.
- Only by His **blood** can we be regenerated.

QUESTIONS

How does it affect you to “remember” your past life before you came to faith in Jesus Christ [2:11-12]?

- According to Paul in **2:13**, how have the Gentile believers now been brought near to God and to the church?
- Personally, what comes to mind when you see the words in **verse 13** “but now in Christ Jesus”?

Just like the Jews and Gentiles in the church at Ephesus, today’s church also has “friction.” In what situations, and for what reasons, does the church experience tension and friction?

- What kinds of things tend to cause friction between believers?
- Does social media help or hinder friction in the church?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 2:14-18**

EPHESIANS 2:14-18

In **verses 14-18**, Paul takes time to show how the church’s **reconciliation** with God [*often referred to as the **vertical***] described in **verse 13** leads to reconciliation with each other [*often referred to as our **horizontal** response*]. Although in our text, Paul doesn’t refer to our reconciliation as *vertical and horizontal* – NOPE he uses a much cooler term **“the dividing wall of hostility.”**

Now imagine if that was hostility – and that hostility was so prevalent that it became a dividing wall.

- With God [*the **vertical***] - our sin is the dividing wall. Christ is our redeemer who came to break down that dividing wall and redeem us from our sin.
- Now with each other [*the **horizontal***] – **what is the dividing wall of hostility AND is it always the same...or does it change.**

QUESTIONS

What work does Jesus’ death on the cross accomplish for those people who were alienated from Him? [2:14-16]

- How does Paul explain the implications of Christ’s death for Jews and Gentiles together?

What word pictures does Paul use throughout this passage to illustrate our separation from one another [before Christ] and our unity with one another [through Christ]?

- What metaphors or pictures from these verses are particularly powerful?

How does Paul say that we – the church [horizontal] – overcome the “dividing wall of hostility” when it exists between believers?

- Throughout Scripture, how are we instructed to overcome this division?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 2:19-22.**

EPHESIANS 2:19-22

Paul goes on and uses additional pictures and metaphors concerning our relationship with one another. He uses three pictures in this section:

- Citizens, Saints & Family
- A Building
- And, a holy temple

QUESTIONS

How might these new labels and titles that are given to those who have come to Christ – the Gentiles - be deeply encouraging to these new believers? [2:19-20]

Which of the three illustrations of the church in 2:19-22 [*“family – members of the household of God,” or “stones – cornerstones,” or “a temple - dwelling place for God by the Spirit”*] made the biggest impact on you? Explain why.

BONUS CONTENT

Revelation 7:9-12 points out to this absolutely beautiful day when the “multi-ethnic” bride of Christ will gather before His throne and eternally sing praises to His Name! What a beautiful picture of the church!! Just think about this for a moment – do you see any dividing walls of hostility in this verse?

What ALL do you see in these verses?

QUESTIONS

In what way should these verses in Revelation shape your expectation of heaven – and eternity?

What impact should this vision have on your understanding of what the church of God is like even today?

CONCLUSION

I would really encourage you to read **Ephesians 2:11-22** next week. Really spend time on them and study them. Work through those verses, and if you have questions – write them down. Also, don't read those 11 verses in isolation. Go back and re-read **chapter 1 & 2:1-10** with them. This is a good practice as we make it through Paul's letter. The church at Ephesus would have read all six chapter as one letter. They would not have had chapters or verses to slow their reading OR pause their reading.

Outline for how we will study Ephesians:

- **March 17th: Hangout Night**
- **April 7th: Ephesians 3** – *The gospel call to share the gospel and prayer for spiritual strength.*
- **April 14th: Ephesians 4** – *Live in supernatural unity to the glory of God.*
- **April 21st: Ephesians 5–6:9** – *In regeneration, walk in love toward one another.*
- **April 28th: Ephesians 6:10-24** – *Strength through the whole armor of God.*
- **May 5th: Hangout Night or Content Make-Up**