

**BRIARCLIFF CHURCH**  
**Small Group Study Guide: Ephesians**  
Week of October 1 (Week 5)  
Ephesians 2:11-22



## REVIEW OF CHAPTER ONE

In Ephesians 1, Paul begins with a brief introduction (1:1-2), followed by two significant sections. First, in his doxology or praise (1:3-14), Paul describes the act of the Triune God in our salvation. God the Father chose us in love for adoption before the foundation of the world so that we would be blameless. God the Son redeemed us with his blood and provided us forgiveness of sins through the riches of his grace. God the Holy Spirit sealed us, ensuring our inheritance in God. All of this was done by God "to the praise of His glory." The second section (1:15-23) concentrates on Paul's prayer for the Christians. Paul is thankful to God for the believers' faith in God and love for one another. However, he feels the need to pray that the eyes of the believers' hearts will be enlightened to know the hope of their calling, the riches of the glorious inheritance they have in God, the greatness of God's power that resurrected Christ from the dead, and put all things under his feet and made him as head over all things to the church.

## BIG IDEA

Regardless of our ethnicity, social status, differences, and alienation from one another, we are brought near to God and to one another through Christ and we have become members of the same body of Christ - the church.

## OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

Eph. 2:11-22 has similar structure and thought as the previous section – Eph. 2:1-10. Both halves of Ephesians 2 begin with a description of life without Christ: dead (vv. 1-3) and separated (vv. 11-12). Then in both cases we have the great reversal: "But ... God" (v. 4) and "But now" (v. 13). The main distinction is that in the second half, Paul is stressing the Gentile experience. So, what we read in Eph. 2:11-22 is that the Gentiles who were one time outside the covenant of God and alienated from his promise (2:11-12) are now brought near to God through the blood of Christ (2:13). This work of God also gives them a radical new relationship with their Jewish believers in Christ; the gospel has broken down the wall that previously separated them (2:14-18). In place of the previous brokenness and alienation, the Jews and Gentiles are now part of the same "household of God" that is built as a dwelling place for the Spirit (2:19-22).

## OBSERVING THE TEXT

### Starting with God

1. Let us start by observing what Ephesians 2:11-22, says or describes, particularly about Christ the second person of the Godhead. Read the passage carefully. How is Christ's nature and work described?

### Continuing the Conversation

Paul stresses three themes in Ephesians 2:11-22. These themes, in the words of John Stott are:

- a. the portrait of alienated humanity, or what we once were (2:11-12)
  - b. the portrait of the peacemaking Christ, or what Jesus Christ has done (2:13-18)
  - c. the portrait of God's new society, or what we have become now (2:19-22)
2. How does Paul describe the condition of the alienated humanity in 2:11-12?
  3. We might say that Ephesians 2:13 is a watershed in this passage. Paul shifts the focus of alienation of the Gentiles to reconciliation with God and the Jews. What are the things that Christ did to bring about the change of the alienated humanity in verses 13-18?
  4. As we read Ephesians 2:13-18, we can see that there exists an atmosphere of hostility and tension between Jews and Gentiles. But Paul reminds both the hostile communities that in Christ such hostility should not exist anymore. He stresses that the barrier, both literal and symbolic, that divide the two is broken down and the two ethnicities have become one humanity in Christ. What words or phrases describe or imply tension, and peacemaking or unity in verses 13-18?
  5. In the preceding verses (2:11-18), Paul describes how God made the two hostile communities into one new humanity/society. How does Paul picture God's new society in verses 19-22?

## CONNECTING WITH OTHER TEXT

1. When you read Isaiah 57:19, Acts 2:39, and Ephesians 2:13, what common theme do you find in these passages?
2. Compare Ephesians 2:21-22 with 2 Corinthians 6:16 and 1 Peter 2:5. What similar theme do you notice in these passages?

## APPLYING THE TEXT

1. Paul begins Ephesians 2:11-22 by calling the Ephesian believers to “remember” – to look back and consider their lives before coming to Christ. Why can it be good for you to consistently do some gospel “remembering”? How could a consideration of who you were apart from Christ strengthen both your faith and your relationship with other believers?
2. In what way could this passage encourage you to pursue deep and meaningful relationships with believers who come from different cultural backgrounds or social groups? What might it look like for you to take some initial steps in this direction?

## PRAYER

### PRAYER GUIDE

October 2-6, 2023

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

Paul gives a panoramic view of God's salvation: Past - *at that time separated from Christ*; present - *through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father*; future - *In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God*. Amazing!

**Monday:** <sup>12</sup> *you were at that time separated from Christ ... having no hope and without God in the world*. Think about total separation and no hope. We have been saved from that and saved for a life of growing in him. Write a thank you note to Jesus right now. Let it be your prayer. Also, pray for a person still separated and without God.

**Tuesday:** <sup>13</sup> *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ*. Meditate for a moment on the cross where Jesus shed his blood. He died for you! What do you have to say to him. How will you now live for the one who died for you? Tell him now.

**Wednesday:** <sup>17</sup> *through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father*. What a privilege to have personal access to God! How will you take action on that great privilege right now? Write your thoughts down.

**Thursday:** <sup>19</sup> *you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God*. As believers we have dual citizenship, here for now but eternal citizenship in the *household of God*. Look around. Everything you see is temporary except for people in the *household of God*. Who could you invite to this new citizenship? Begin by praying for them now!

**Friday:** <sup>22</sup> *You also are being built together into a dwelling place for God*.

Think about that! Every believer is a stone in God's dwelling place that he is building. Consider this. Every material thing you are building today will be gone tomorrow. Who might you reach that is not a believer and could become a future rock in the building. Pray for them now!

For more resources, visit [www.briarcliff.church/ephesians](http://www.briarcliff.church/ephesians)