

A STUDY ON EPHESIANS

Week 2

Ephesians 2-3

**Being the true Church
through the members of the Church**

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Ephesians 2:1-10, Crossing paths with God changes you

Ephesians 2:1-3

- vv. 1-2 - It is sometimes a good thing to think back, and if we do that spiritually we'll discover what all God has done for us. God found us when we were like dead people as far as it would concern God and all that belongs to Him. Our ugly lives, that would go against God and how He would want us to live, would testify to that. During that time we pleased the devil, leader of unseen spirits who were all totally committed to serve this evil master. This same devil is still active amongst all who don't listen to God.
 - v. 3 - While we were lost our human and sinful nature would keep us stuck in sin, constantly seeking self-centered desires and thoughts. And of course, the wrath of God waits upon all who lives like this.
- ❖ What was your life like before you met Christ? Is it radically different since you've entered a living relationship with your Lord?
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Ephesians 2:4-6

- vv. 4-5 - Our God is so amazing! Rather than letting us be in our pitiful state, He loved us enough to reach out from His overflowing goodness and pull us out of this deep, dark, self-centered, miserable life where we follow the father of lies. This is GRACE...a VERB...a DIVINE ACTION. Grace is something that gets DONE. It reaches into a complete mess that deserves God's wrath, judgement and death, and it cleanses us up IN CHRIST, renewing you from head to toe, starting over, a fresh start, never to take you back again, but moving you forward. GRACE is not a one-time, done and forgotten action, no it is a CONTINUOUS ACTION that works in every area of the believer's life on a daily basis. Grace is such a powerful, continuous action that the receivers of this constant grace are moved to talk about it, to go and DO GRACE. How can one receive such a life changing DIVINE ACT that you have done absolutely nothing to deserve it, and have no desire to share it with the world?!

- v. 6 - IN CHRIST you are now truly alive, you belong to Jesus, and everything that belongs to Jesus now also belongs to you!

❖ How has this passage helped you to define grace better?

Ephesians 2:7-10

- vv. 7-10 - What God had done for us IN CHRIST, the Gift that we have received IN CHRIST, is at the same time incomprehensible and incomparable, but also solidly proven IN CHRIST. It stands as truth, and will stand till we experience the goodness of God in all its glory at the end. We truly have nothing to boast about, as we did no work(s) to deserve any of this goodness. Yet at the same time we have been saved, grace changed us forever, and therefore IN CHRIST we can look at ourselves and realize that the God who made us new, is also the God who made us right from the start, and is also the God who prepared us even before creating us, to be us...today...new IN CHRIST...thus useful, extremely useful...as "God's workmanship", created so that IN CHRIST we can NOW do truly good. This God has prepared for us, works that will now not be self-seeking and sinful, but reflecting God's image, and showing off His glory!

❖ How did this passage help you to understand the deep theological concept of "IN CHRIST" better?

Ephesians 2:11-18, Jesus repairs what broke down

Ephesians 2:11-13

- vv. 11-12 - There is a huge contrast between who we are outside versus inside the Church/ Body of Christ. Once we were all on the outside, and not even Jews—in other words without the sign of the circumcision we were “foreigners to the covenants of the promise”, “excluded from citizenship in Israel”, we were “without hope and without God”. Not knowing God, means that we were simply ignorant of the great covenants and promises that the people of God are being blessed with!
 - v. 13 - Now though, being IN CHRIST JESUS, there is a stark contrast! It is an entirely different story: Once we were “far away” from God, but now we are His Church, His Body, we have shifted, we are now “NEAR THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST”! Now, everything has changed! The covenant now does apply to us, the promises are now also ours, and we suddenly are people with...HOPE!
- ❖ What could our lives look like if we would truly believe and remember who we were outside of Christ, and *who* and *where* we are...IN CHRIST?
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Ephesians 2:14-18

- v. 14 - Jesus is the true Peacemaker. We saw that clearly in how He brought down the “barrier, the dividing wall” between Jew and non-Jew. And the cost of this demolition project? Huge! It cost Jesus His life. And the result of this costly Jesus-encounter? Huge! There is now only one group, the JESUS GROUP.
- v. 15 - Jesus also swallowed up the law in His death. With Jesus’ fulfilment of the law (Matthew 5:17), we can now fulfill the full intent of the law by being IN CHRIST, because IN CHRIST we can do everything, and by following Christ we are also following the law—now though not anymore as a dividing wall, not as a rigid code fulfilled in external ordinances, but truly following the heart of the law, thus enabling this one group, the JESUS GROUP, the

Church, the one Body to love the HEAD with heart and soul and mind, and to love the different parts of the Body as each part of it loves itself!

- vv. 16-17 - In peace and love, one group, one Body, can now follow one Lord, Who gave His whole Body, for all, to break down all “hostility”. This is why true peace is now available for all, for those “far away”, and those who are “near” to God.
 - v. 18 - IN CHRIST the path to God is wide open, and through the Holy Spirit anyone can now get near to the Father.
- ❖ Following in the footsteps of Jesus: How can we be peacemakers?
 - ❖ Explain the truth of Jesus *abolishing and fulfilling the law at the same time* to someone else.
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Ephesians 2:19-22, Believers are the Family of God

Ephesians 2:19-22

- v. 19 - A status change in life is a big deal! We constantly experience these: You are now a “teenager”, or an “adult”, or a “manager”, a “pastor”... I remember how special our naturalization ceremony was when we became citizens of the United States of America—what a special “status change” that was! Here is another one that tops them all: IN CHRIST you are “no longer foreigners and aliens” but you are now “fellow citizens” with God’s people and “members of God’s household”, “a holy temple in the Lord” (v. 21), “a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit”—wow! Isn’t that something?! All of this is trying to say just how powerful our “status change” was IN CHRIST. We have shifted from strangers, from standing outside in the cold, to INSIDERS in the full sense of the word, we’re sitting around the fireplace, in the presence of the Father...ONE FAMILY OF GOD!
- v. 20 - Paul jumps to using the metaphor of a building. As a building God’s family has been built on the Gospel Message, brought to us by the faithful and truthful messengers of God. A building with Jesus Christ of course as the most important stone—without Him the entire building will collapse!

- vv. 21-22 - In Jesus this entire building can stand solidly, and it is not simply *any* building for *any kind of use*. No, it is a building dedicated for special use to the Lord, it is as if people can use it as a MEETING PLACE with GOD, and His Spirit will direct people on how to get close to our Father!
- ❖ How would you describe your “status change” IN CHRIST, and how can this help you to share your faith with others?
- ❖ How does it make you feel to realize that *in you as a meeting place* people can be led to encounter the Living God?

Ephesians 3:1-13, The “JESUS NEWS” is meant for ALL!

Ephesians 3:1-6

- vv. 1-3 - Paul ends up in prison for being faithful to the vision and calling from the risen Lord to go and tell even non-Jews of God’s grace, His goodness that is meant for all!
- vv. 4-6 - What was once a mystery, God has ordained to now be made known to all through His Spirit: All who put their faith in Christ Jesus can now become a child of God, an heir of God with Israel, part of the one body of Christ, receiving all that has been promised in Christ.
- ❖ It is clearly a BIG DEAL that the JESUS NEWS is *out* and meant for *all!* Why would someone not want to be a part of this? How can you participate in getting this Best News Ever out to all?

Ephesians 3:7-13

- v. 7 - Paul sees it as a gift of God's overflowing goodness to be tasked with sharing the Gospel! It is like an undeserving servant, experiencing the power of the Master at work through you as you go to fulfill the most important task on behalf of the Master. Who would not be thrilled about that?!
 - vv. 8-9 - Paul feels that such a task was given to him even though he is "less than the least of all God's people". For Paul this call on his life is an indescribable privilege, to go and share with people that the depths of God's goodness, in the salvation through His Son, is also meant for them!
 - vv. 10-12 - The Church now has the opportunity to show to all, even the unseen powers and rulers in the heavenly realms just how different the wisdom of God is, and how He has planned everything out since the beginning of time. In Christ Jesus His eternal purpose for all will be accomplished: That everyone who is willing to receive Christ as Lord can now be in a close relationship with God. God is now approachable without being fearful or hesitant.
 - v. 13 - To be a part of this great plan of God is so amazing that Paul has no problem to even end up in prison because of it—nobody should get discouraged because of his suffering, as it actually shows just how important the receivers of this incredible Jesus News are!
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- ❖ How does knowing something more about Paul's calling and the suffering he experienced in fulfilling this calling, change the way that you look at yourself, and your walk with the Lord?
 - ❖ Are you still excited about just how incredible the JESUS NEWS truly is? What about it struck you again after working through this passage?
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Ephesians 3:14-21, A prayer worth praying!

Ephesians 3:14-21

- vv. 14-15 - This calling on Paul's life brings him to his knees before God, His Father. It is amazing to think about it: All believers, whether in heaven or still on earth, are who they are because of their God, their Father in heaven.
 - vv. 16-17a - Paul's prayer is now that God, Who is so amazing and strong, will empower the believers through His Spirit so that they can stand strong in their faith when it is being challenged/ attacked. In this way Christ will simply be a part of the believers' lives, as they put their complete trust in Him.
 - vv. 17b-19 - Paul continues to pray that believers will build their lives on love: Loving others will bring the stability and strength to their lives that they need, so that they can experience with other believers just how incredible the love of Christ for them is! To wrap your mind around His love for us is simply impossible. All you can do is to let it wash over you, and fill you so that the presence of God fills every inch of your life...
 - vv. 20-21 - None of us can even try to begin to grasp or explain the power of God, and what He can and has done for us. All we know is that this indescribable power is at work in us! This is why He truly deserves all the honor and glory IN CHRIST JESUS through all generations throughout all time—past, present and future—may this be so!
- ❖ How might things be different if we would start to pray this prayer over ourselves, over everyone we know and stand in a relationship with, and every area we work and live in?
