

A SAVED PEOPLE

—WEEK 1—

You've seen the sign. "No Trespassing!" It's a sign that people post when they want you to stay off their lawns or when they don't want visitors on their front porch ringing their doorbell—that is, unless you want a pitbull leaving his teeth marks on you. This sign is proclaiming loudly and clearly: "You don't belong here!"

The truth is none of us naturally belong in the body of Christ. We are "by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind," (Eph. 2:3). "All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," (Rom 3:23). And "the wages of sin is death," (Rom 6:23). For all of our many sins, we have earned a paycheck and it's called death. We deserve nothing but eternal separation from God in hell. That's where we belong.

And that's how we would spend eternity, except for two little words. Two little words that brought a radical change in our lives: "But God." Listen to Ephesians 2:4, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses and sins, made us alive together with Christ."

This is amazing news that a holy God would save rebel sinners like you and me! And the good news of the gospel is that he doesn't just save us *out of* something but *into* something. The Lord doesn't just save us *out of* our sins but he also saves us *into* the body of Christ.

Our Church Covenant reads: "Having, as we trust, been brought by the grace of God to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and believing that Christ has lead us to become a part of this fellowship, we do now solemnly and joyfully covenant together."

We belong now! We are part of the family of God—not because of our works but because of his grace. Church is not something we do. It is who we are. Church is not a nice activity that we place on our calendars once a week like gymnastics or soccer. Church is the family of God saved by His grace, doing life together for His glory.

I love what Pastor Dhati Lewis says, "Church is not like a family. . . it is family." Do we see church like it's family? Do we see church like our brothers as family that we need to pray for us? Do we see the church like our sisters that we need to encourage us to hold fast to Jesus when our faith is weak?

Our Lord Jesus lived a righteous life, died a sinner's death, and rose again not so we could be individual, isolated Christians. He redeemed us to be a part of His family.

This whole semester we are going to spend time together reading the Bible and thinking about the commitments we have made to one another. The Lord is calling our church to not just a Sunday activity but to be a covenant family that treasures Christ together.

Meditate on God's Word

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” —Acts 2:42-47

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” —1 Peter 2:9-10

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” —Ephesians 2:8-9

Questions for Application

1. What would it look like to constantly remember and rejoice in the gospel that saves us and unites us? How can we grow in this as a church?
2. Think about the early church we see above in Acts 2. What do you notice about the early church that should shape Christ Fellowship today?
3. Do you see the church as your faith family? What would change about your life if you saw church less as what you do and more as who you are?

Close your Community Group by praying that we would grow as family together.