

Discussion Guide

Week of January 12, 2014

Community

Passage Overview: In Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul calls the Ephesian Christians to remember what they once were before God saved them. In vv11-18, Paul repeats that basic message, but looks at how the gospel affects the ethnic groupings in the church of Jew and Gentile. On the cross, Jesus makes peace between Jew and Gentile to unify both in the church. It is this new, unified group—the church—that is being brought near to God and experiences his peace. In vv19-22, Paul draws out several implications of the peace that Jesus brings. In particular, he points out that Christians need to know and be thoroughly convinced of their new corporate identity in Christ (as saints, members of God’s family, and God’s temple or dwelling place) in order to live for Christ. Here we see that God’s new community (the church) is created *by* the gospel and *for* mission.

Understanding God’s Word—Read Ephesians 2:19-22.

- In vv19-22, how has our identity (who we are) changed as a result of Jesus’ work on our behalf?

Living and Applying God’s Word

- Think about the spiritual building that is being constructed. How are the apostles and prophets the foundation (v20)? Why is Jesus the chief cornerstone of this building?
- Consider how the church is described in this passage. Then compare this to how we normally think of the church.
 - Citizens of God’s kingdom (v19)
 - Members of God’s family (v19)
 - The dwelling place of God (vv21-22)
- What does this passage say about how we grow in the Christian life?

Turn to God in Faith and Repentance

- The church is called “the saints” and when we become Christians we become “fellow citizens with the saints” (v19). Yet, as Christians we know that even though we are now saints, we remain sinners as well. Discuss how Christians are simultaneously saints and sinners and what this looks like in your life. Practically speaking, how do you fight sin and live for God?
- Christians are the temple of God corporately (indicated by “joined together”; v21). Therefore, belonging to and rooting yourself in a local church is not optional for followers of Jesus. How might you need to change in order to live in light of this truth?
- What difference does this passage make to your understanding of the church?
- In what practical ways will this teaching affect how you live, both individually and as a church?

Prayer: Pray this truth together: *“You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God . . . being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit”* (Eph 2:19, 22). Give thanks for Christ’s new community—the church. Ask God to help you live in light of the truth of what Christ has done in your life, both individually and corporately.

Announcements

- Young Adult Bible Study (Jan 23, 7pm)
- Missions Conference (Jan 24-26)
- Baptism Sunday (Feb 8)—email Wayne if you are a follower of Jesus and haven’t been baptized