

Ephesians

Week 06 – United in Christ

Transition: Last week we began studying the body of this letter from Paul to the church at Ephesus. He began by speaking about their old life (before they trusted in Jesus), reminding them of what God did to save them, and then addressing the future—that God is not merely interested in saving people from His wrath, but desires for each one to discover (and do) His eternal purpose for them.

Context: This week we are focusing on a topic that is in the Old Testament Scriptures but was not clearly understood until God revealed more implications for humanity after Jesus died, rose back to life, and ascended to heaven. Specifically, Paul informs/reminds the church that both Jews and Gentiles (who formerly were hostile to one another) are united together in one body through their new position in Christ.

Opening Questions:

- Have you ever experienced different treatment based on your color, gender, race, size, age, class, ideology, appearance, nationality, etc.? What was it? How did it make you feel? How did it influence you afterward?
- Have you ever made peace with an enemy? If so, how did it happen? Has an enemy ever become a friend? How did that happen?

Scripture/Storying: Ephesians 2:11-22

Discipleship Questions:

- Prior to the first coming of Jesus, why was there mutual animosity between the Jews and the Gentiles?
- Why do you think Paul starts by reminding the Gentiles (v11-12) of their position before God before they came to Christ? What does he say specifically? Why is this an important first step for everyone in that church to hear?
- What specifically did Jesus do to resolve the animosity between the Jews and the Gentiles (v13-17)? What walls between believers in Jesus have you personally experienced? What happened?
- What do both Jewish and Gentile believers have in common thanks to their trust in Jesus (v18-22)? In what ways do these realities influence your decisions today?
- What does Paul mean that Jews and Gentiles together are being built into a temple? Why would this have been challenging for an observant Jew (who has trusted in Jesus) to hear? What would he/she now need to do?
- Describe a time when you were gathered with other believers and the presence of God was real/palpable. What's your explanation for how it happened? What role do we play in becoming "a dwelling place for God?"
- What is the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to today's discussion?

Prayer time: This week we are praying for Favor International, a ministry in Africa that Providence Church supports.

- Pray for the girls who have been rescued from sex trafficking and brought into the GIFT Program – God's Institute For Transformation.
- Please pray that they will grow healthy physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually as they begin their new life in Christ.