

Metro Women's Bible Study
Ephesians 2:11-22

Lesson 5

Before Jesus, the blessings of God were only for the Jews. The Gentiles were not God's people. Here, in Ephesians 2:11-22, a mystery is revealed. Through Christ's death on the cross, all people, both Jews and Gentiles, have equal access to the Father. *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him* (Romans 10:12). Through Jesus, we have been invited to the kingdom. Rejoice as you study this week and think about this wonderful mystery revealed.

DAYS ONE: Read Ephesians 2:11-22

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet and another Bible translation or paraphrase.

a. Ephesians 2:11-22 has been divided into 3 sections. List below the subject(s) covered in each section.

Verses 11-13

Verses 14-18

Verses 19-22

OPTIONAL: From the list below record the key words and their symbols on the chart.

New to this lesson: *were/once, you/we*

Term of conclusion: *therefore*

Contrast: *but*

OPTIONAL: Using the symbols you have chosen, mark each of the key words every time they are used in Ephesians 2:11-22. Remember, as you mark the words: *God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit*, to mark any personal pronouns that refer to Them.

2. This portion of Scripture continues the theme of "The Great Before and After", because it vividly contrasts our lives before and after we committed them to Jesus. Record below the verses and phrases in Ephesians 2:11-22 that indicate what we were like **before Jesus**. Then record what God has now made us to be in Jesus.

WE WERE:

WE ARE:

3. Scan through Ephesians 2:11-22 and make a list of what these verses reveal about what God has done.

DAY TWO & THREE: Read Ephesians 2:11-13

1. Let's take a minute to re-read and write out Ephesians 2:10 before we jump into Verse 11.

Much of this section of Ephesians was written to remind the Gentiles that they are entitled to all the privileges of believing Jews. Verse 11 begins with the term of conclusion *therefore*. This charge; to remember, refers us not just to the preceding verses but all the way back to Ephesians 2:1 (*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...*)

2. What are the first two words of Ephesians 2:11?

The word Remember (3421) (**mnemoneuo** from **mnaomai**) means to use the faculty of memory to recall, to recollect. Paul uses the **present imperative**, thus issuing a command to **continually** remember the dismal spiritual condition you once were in as pagan Gentiles!

3. Second-generation Gentile believers, those who were reading Paul's epistle might be starting to forget their former dead spiritual condition outside of Christ. Paul desire is for these Ephesians to truly apprehend what a tremendous thing it was that they should have become Christians! Remembering should stimulate in believers an attitude of **gratitude** as well as an attitude of **humility**. Call to mind the life you used to live without Christ, and the life you now live because of His grace & forgiveness. Spend a few minutes worshipping Him for all He has done and continues to do in your life!

4. What did the Circumcision (Jews) call Gentiles?

5. What do you learn about the command by God to Abraham in regards to circumcision in Genesis 17:11?

Note: The physical sign of God's covenant with the Jews was circumcision in the flesh, by removing the male foreskin. Since the Gentiles did not have the physical mark of circumcision to set them apart as God's people, many Jews considered them to be spiritually inferior and of no concern to God.

6. What do the following New Testament passages reveal about *circumcision*?

Galatians 5:6 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love."

Philippians 3:3 ³For we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.”

7. What did Paul make clear In Romans 2:28-29 about circumcision?

Romans 2:28-29

8. There are many who may have been taught as children, and even as adults that the thing that makes them acceptable to God is the fact that they were **baptized** or that they **joined a church**, or they do good works, etc... To the Jew it was the **rite of circumcision** that gave them the false confidence that they were acceptable to God. Have you built confidence in your relationship with the Lord on the basis of anything other than the total and complete work of Christ in forgiving your sins?

9. The **physical circumcision** God had called for was always meant to be an **external sign** of an **internal change of heart** resulting in a love for God. What are a few ways your heart has been *circumcised* (fleshly behavior changed) since you have been a believer?

10. How does Ephesians 2:12 describes us in our *before* state?

11. Look up the word *Alien & Strangers* in your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Alien-

Strangers-

In respect to the nation of Israel, the Gentiles were aliens or those who did not “belong.” They were strangers and foreigners, without the rights and privileges of citizenship in the nation of Israel. As far as the community of Israel was concerned, the Gentiles were on the outside, looking in. In the OT God had a covenant with the nation of Israel and governed that state directly. Those who were not Jews were foreigners or aliens.

12. Verse 12 concludes by saying, “*having no hope and without God in the world.*” Define the word *hope* from your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Hope

13. What do these passages teach about hope? Underline or highlight what you learn.

Romans 5:2-5 ²through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵Now hope

does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

Romans 15:13 “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Colossians 1:27 “To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

14. Contrast the *hope* of the believer to the *hope* of the unbeliever.

15. Since you, as a believer, are no longer without *hope*, what are some things that you *hope* for?

A living hope motivates a "looking" hope" so that believers are those who are (at least they should be) waiting eagerly, expectantly and anxiously for Christ's return at any moment!

16. Ephesians 2:13 says, *We who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.* Read what the Commentator Barnes writes about the description of one who was *afar off*. **The object of the Paul is to remind them of the deplorable condition in which they were by nature; and nothing would better express it than to say they were “without Christ,” or that they had no knowledge of a Savior. They knew of no atonement for sin. They had no assurance of pardon. They had no well-founded hope of eternal life. They were in a state of darkness and condemnation, from which nothing but knowledge of Christ could deliver them. All Christians in like manner should be reminded of the fact that, before their conversion, they were “without Christ.” Though they had heard of him, and were constantly under the instruction which reminded them of him, yet they were without any true knowledge of him, and without any of the hopes which result from having embraced him. Many were infidels. Many were scoffers. Many were profane, sensual, & corrupt. Many rejected Christ with scorn; many, by simple neglect. All were without any true knowledge of him; all were destitute of the peace and hope which result from a saving acquaintance with him.**

a. How can the one who is far from Christ be brought near? See verse 13.

b. What does Peter write about the death of Christ in 1 Peter 3:18?

c. What does Peter explain about believers in 1 Peter 1:18-19

d. What has the blood of Christ done for you personally?

DAY FOUR: Read Ephesians 2:14-18

1. Ephesians 2:14 says, *“¹⁴For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation.”* How does this verse describe Christ's great act of reconciling the Jews and Gentiles? Also compare it with Romans 10:11-13. (Two peoples at enmity no longer need to be because of the *blood of Christ*.)

Romans 10:11-13 ¹¹For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

2. How is Jesus described in verse 14?

a. We often think of *peace* as a result of circumstances going the way we want them to. (a lack of turmoil or stress) Yet, this verse tells us that *peace* is not a feeling that results from outward circumstances, but that *peace* is in the **person** of Jesus Christ. Describe the *peace* that you have found in your relationship with Jesus.

3. Christ has given us peace with God and with each other; whether they be Jew or Gentile. Christ is not just our Peace-maker, but our very Peace itself! What did Christ *break down* according to verse 14?

Ray Stedman writes that...In this very remarkable passage, the apostle gives us the way of peace. He uses as an illustration the fact that Jesus Christ bridged the widest chasm which ever has existed between men -- the gulf between the Jew and the Gentile. If you don't think that conflict can claim title to being the most difficult gulf to bridge, I suggest you consider why it is it has been so difficult to settle the Arab-Israeli problem in the Middle East. The greatest minds of our day have tried to work that out, and no one has gotten anywhere near a settlement. It is because this conflict is extremely difficult to bridge. Paul describes how Christ actually does it. And this is a wonderful picture for us of how peace can be brought in any area of conflict or hostility, whether among individuals or groups or nations.

4. After reading this quote, is there a need for peace to be brought into an area of conflict, or hostility towards someone in your life? Today is the day to settle this issue in your heart!

5. In *breaking down the middle wall* (partition) of separation, verse 15 tells us that, *Jesus abolished...the law of commandments contained in ordinances* (not necessarily the Ten Commandments, but the laws the Jews added). What does Hebrews 7:19 & Romans 3:20 tell us?

Hebrews 7:19 "for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God."

Romans 3:20-22 ²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. ²¹But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe."

6. Look up the word *Abolish* in your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Abolish-

The word abolish simply means "to nullify." The Law no longer holds sway over either Jew or Gentile, since in Christ believers are not under Law but under grace.

a. Describe what your life would be like, if you believed that you had to keep all of the religious laws to draw near to God?

7. What does Ephesians 2:15 say *Jesus created in Himself*?

a. How does Galatians 6:15 help clarify Ephesians 2:15?

“But now.” When Christ died on the cross, He broke down every barrier that stood between Jews and Gentiles. In the Jewish temple, there was a wall that separated the “Court of the Gentiles” from the rest of the structure; and on this wall was a sign giving warning that any Gentile who passed beyond it would be killed. Jesus Christ tore down that wall! He tore down the physical wall, for in Christ all are made one (v. 15, and see Gal. 3:28-29). He tore down the spiritual wall and brought the “far off” Gentiles near (v. 13). He tore down the legal wall, for He fulfilled the Law in Himself and ended the reign of the Mosaic law that separated Jews and Gentiles (vv. 14-15). Christ not only made peace between sinners and God (Rom. 5:1), but He also made peace between Jews and Gentiles. He took sinful Jews and sinful Gentiles and through His cross made a “new man”— the church.

8. According to Ephesians 2:16, how are we *reconciled* to one another and to God?

Reconcile (604) *apokatallasso* is an intensified reconciliation and pictures the total, complete, and full restoration of the relationship of disturbed peace. When we think of an illustration in the New Testament, one of the illustrations that comes to my mind is the parable of the forgiving father, often called the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). The important person in the parable is not the son, the important person is the father. The climax of the parable is when the father sees the son finally returning, and races down the road in order to fall upon his neck. It’s Jesus Christ’s picture of God!

a. Underline or highlight what you learn about *reconciliation* from Colossians 1:19-21 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.

Colossians 1:19-21 ¹⁹For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. ²¹And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled.”

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 ¹⁸Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

9. To whom did Christ *preach peace*? verse 17

a. To whom should our *ministry of reconciliation* be extended?

b. What do you think of when you think of *those who are afar off* and *those who are near*?

c. How might you speak differently about Christ with those who are far off and those who are near?

10. Now all of us, both Jews and Gentiles, may come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us (Ephesians 2:18 NLT). Ephesians 3:12 and Hebrews 4:16 use a similar word to describe how we may approach God because of the access we now have. What is it?

a. Describe this *boldness* in your own words.

DAY FIVE: Read Ephesians 2:19-22

1. Verse 19 begins, *Now, therefore*. Because Jesus made a way for all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, to have *access to the Father*, what transition has occurred? verse 19.

a. According to Philippians 3:20 where is our new *citizenship*?

b. Many *foreigners* come to the United States as citizens of another country. They often seek to change their *citizenship* to officially become an American. How might a person's life change when their *citizenship* changes?

c. How should our lives change as we recognize we are *citizens* of heaven?

2. We are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself (Ephesians 2:20 NLT). What does Psalm 118:22 say about the chief cornerstone?

a. How much of a building is dependent upon the *chief cornerstone*?

b. What does Matthew 21:42 say?

3. Read Ephesians 2:21-22. This *building*, made up of believers and Jesus, grows into a *holy temple in the Lord*. For what purpose are we *being built together*?

a. God does not dwell in the church as a physical building. Rather what do the following verses teach about God's *dwelling place*?

John 14:17

1 Corinthians 3:16

4. What does it mean to you that God dwells in you?

DAY SIX: Review Ephesians 2:11-22

1. How does the gospel break down religious and social barriers?

2. In Christ, what is every Christian's relationship to other Christians?

3. Describe the access a believer has to God.

a. What is one of your favorite things about having access to God?

4. There are several Scriptures that teach us of the believer being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. When God repeats something, we would be wise to pay attention. Why do you think God wants us to know that we, as believers, have the Holy Spirit inside us?

5. Record in your Worksheets "**Truths about God, Truths about Jesus, Truths about the Holy Spirit, Truths about the Believer, and Instructions.**"

This includes you who were once so far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions, yet now he has brought you back as his friends. He has done this through his death on the cross in his own human body. As a result, he has brought you into the very presence of God, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. - Colossians 1:21-22 NLT