

# Community Group Study - Winter/Spring 2018

## Ephesians 2

Theme: How the Gospel Makes Us Partners

### Winter/Spring Study: Gospel Partnership

This semester we're going to be doing a study on "Gospel Partnership" that ties in with our preaching series on Philippians. Paul thanks the church in Philippians for their "partnership in the gospel" (1:5). Today, our relationships in the church are still built on this "gospel partnership."

### Study Overview

In order for us to be gospel partners we need to understand what unites us. This foundation study will explore the details of how the gospel brings us together. If your group has new folks this is an important lesson in helping them feel part of the "gospel partnership" in the group. If your group has been together for a long time this is an important reminder the foundation of our unity isn't simply a long history, or common interests, but the gospel.

### Text

Ephesians 2: 11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,<sup>[d]</sup> but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by<sup>[e]</sup> the Spirit.

### Introduction

Tonight we'll answer the question: "How does the gospel make us partners?" All of us as Christians start in very different places, from very different backgrounds, and yet in the end we stand together in the gospel. How does this happen? And how does understanding this help us stay together when things get difficult? That's what we'll explore tonight.

### **Study Questions**

These verses reference specifically how Jews and Gentiles are brought into unity by Christ. While that's often not the "dividing wall" between us today we still have plenty of "dividing walls" that must be broken down in order for us to be in unity.

1. Look at verses 11-13. Paul makes some strong statements about who we were before coming to Christ.... How is what he's saying true?
2. Look at verses 14-16. What did Jesus do to give us peace with God?
3. How does Jesus' work also give us peace with one another according to verse 16?
4. Verse 18 references the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Why does Paul reference all three and what is his point?
5. Verses 19 shows us a new identity that we all share in common. What is that new identity?
6. Verses 20-22 point to the purpose of God bringing us together. What are we meant to do together?
7. Looking at this passage as a whole what are the things that are the same about every Christian? What are the things that are probably different about each Christian?

### **Application**

- Last time we shared stories of God's grace in our lives. What were some of the common themes in our stories? How do you see those things reflected in this passage?
- What are some of the "dividing walls" that divide people in our world today? How does the gospel help overcome these obstacles and give us unity?
- Why would remembering the purpose we are together for (verses 20-22) help us pursue unity with one another?
- How would this passage help you if you struggle to want to get connected in Christian community?
- How would this passage help you in a situation where you find yourself in conflict with another Christian?

### **Prayer**

- Spend time in prayer thanking God for the things we all share in common in Christ
- Spend time in prayer for any specific needs in the group