



“Grafted Through Grace”

Ephesians 2:11-22

Main Point: Believers get to live in unity through Christ's work.

We're not entitled to salvation (11-12).

Prior to Christ's coming, there was a massive division between the Jews and the Gentiles. Along the way, the Jews began feeling entitled to their salvation based on their genealogical tie to Abraham, after all they were God's chosen people. They had the distinct privilege of receiving the law of commandments and ordinances, not the Gentiles. A line that we modern day believers have to walk, by and large being Gentiles, is understanding that we aren't of that lineage. Paul is writing this to us. Many of us have grown up in the Church and have never known anything other than that way of life, so when we read in the Old Testament of "God's Chosen People," it can be really easy to understand that as being us. In a lot of ways, we've adopted the same kind of entitlement toward salvation that the Jews of the day had. Paul puts us in our place here, reminding us that we were foreign to the ways of God, living in a world without hope and without God in the world. In reality, our standing with God is equal with the Jews in regard to eternity. Us Gentiles and the Jews are equally sinful and all need redemption equally, regardless of lineage (Matthew 3:7-10). This was hard for the early church Jews to reconcile. Peter struggled with it a lot, as did other laymen of the day. This was no small issue, as it dealt with the question of whether Christ's sacrifice was truly sufficient to cover the sins of everybody, and to convince Peter and some other Jews with him, they had to witness the Holy Spirit descend upon Gentiles to truly believe that they could be saved.

1. What are some ways that the attitude of entitlement towards salvation can manifest itself?
2. Are there individuals that you find it difficult to worship with, whether due to theological or practical reasons? Why?
3. Have you ever felt that someone was too far gone for God to save them?

Christ has unified all believers (13-18).

Honestly, there's not really much to say here. Paul sums it up well when he says that Christ broke down the dividing wall between us Jews and Gentiles. This is just simply a beautiful picture of the work that Christ completed so that all those that would ever come to believe in Him could truly live in unity. He fulfilled the law by living a perfect, sinless life, culminating in His death on the cross. In that perfect sacrifice, He killed (not do away with or weaken) the natural hostility that existed between Jewish and Gentile believers. Here's the best example of this:

1. How often do you ever think about whether or not someone can be saved because of their ethnicity?

We never think about that! That is how complete and perfectly Christ has abolished any form of separation between people groups. There may still be differences in worship practices from culture to culture (We don't have a Maranatha concert every week), but in these different practices, rarely do we call into question the sincerity of their worship or the authenticity of their faith. Instead, we all have the freedom to worship God individually and corporately through one Spirit, that being the Holy Spirit.

1. Who are the people that you know of that are far off that we should pray for God to draw near?
2. What is the significance of Jesus Christ himself becoming our peace?

All believers have been adopted into the household of God (19).

This is the highlight of the entire text and sums it up perfectly. Through Christ's finished work on the cross, we have the right to become Children of God (John 1:12). When we accept the free gift of salvation, we are not simply brought into the kingdom of God as lowly individuals who don't know God personally. We are brought in as members of God's household! We're made family! We by no means were entitled to this. God did not have to bring us in to his family, but it pleased him to do so because of the great love with which he loved us (Ephesians 2:4) in that while we were actively rejecting him and choosing to pursue the ways of the world instead of his ways, he brought us into his family and called us his sons. There was nothing inherently valuable about us either. He didn't choose us based on our own merit, talents, or skills. He chose to adopt us simply because of his great love for us. This same point is beautifully conveyed in Romans 8:14-16. We're not adopted into a human family by human parents that have their own flaws. God's love for us is perfect and with that adoption he promises that he will never leave us, nor will he forsake us, and there is nothing that will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:38-39).

1. Does anyone have/know of a wonderful adoption story?
2. Take time to define and discuss each of the three ways that believers are described in verse 19 (citizens, saints, and members of the household of God). What are the rights, privileges, and blessings of each of these? Why does God use all three to describe who all believers are in Christ?
3. Which of these three descriptions encourages you the most today? Why?
4. Do you know someone who is a stranger and alien to the kingdom and household of God? How can you share Ephesians 2 with them this week? Will you? Pray for them right now.

As a member of the household of God, we have responsibilities (20-22).

All of this only matters because God laid the foundation of the faith by which we receive the grace of God. Jesus is the cornerstone which supports the entire household, and the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostles and the Prophets to predict Christ's coming and reveal God's character to us so that we could know him. Arguably the best part about it all is that we get to take part in all of it. As members of the household of God, just like any other family, we have responsibilities. God is joining us together into a structure that has the privilege of honoring and glorifying Him. This isn't a suggestion either. When we accept Christ's gift of salvation, we die to ourselves so that he may live through us. The life we live, we are now to live in the service of God primarily. In this service we are being built together, further adding to the image of a unified body of believers. A single brick doesn't do much good, but a couple platters of bricks can build a house, which serves many purposes and can serve in a vast variety of ways.

1. Are you aware of anyone who doesn't live out their faith?
2. Where do problems arise with the notion of nominal Christianity?
3. The Lord now uses the picture of a holy temple to describe the identity of believers. How does this image help you understand your connection to other believers? How does it help you understand your role and purpose as the church?