

RICH *in* GRACE

Sermon Series in Ephesians

Preparing for Small Group: Read the passage below, and answer the following questions.

- (1) What do these verses tell me about God?
 - (2) What do these verses tell me about sinful humanity?
 - (3) What do these verses tell me about Jesus?
 - (4) What does God want me to know?
 - (5) What does God want me to do?
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“Supernatural Citizenship”

Ephesians 2:11-22

Main Point: Jesus is the way for people from every nation to become the people of God.

Realities to remember:

Before Christ, we were hopeless and godless (11-12).

- *Separated from God.*
- *Alienated from the people of God.*
- *Strangers to the promises of God.*

Paul continued his contrast of who the Ephesian believers were before Jesus and who they were after Jesus. While their sin separated them from God, their separation from God was seen in the very nature of their relationship to the Old Testament covenant and the people of God. The believers in Ephesus were predominately Gentiles, and before they had an understanding of the implications of the gospel, they were considered unclean. They were alienated from the people of God and from the covenants of God. They were separated from God and were separated with hostility from the people of God. The very dividing wall of race and nationality pointed to sinfulness and to brokenness in the world, and in a real sense, there was a deep sense of hopeless and of godlessness apart from God's redemptive work in Israel. Paul said, “remember” that this was the reality of life before Christ. You were hopeless and godless! Today, this is the reality before Christ, hopelessness and godlessness in the sinfulness and brokenness of life in this world.

1. Discuss the reality of your identity before Jesus that Paul reveals in these verses. Share testimonies of how you felt these realities in your life before your salvation.
2. What are some of the ways that those without Christ try to fill the hopelessness that godlessness brings deep into the heart? Make a list.
3. Who is someone you know who is trying to fill that hopelessness in one of the ways that your group identified? Take time to share initials or first names, and then pray for each individual that your group identified.
4. How can you share these verses with that person this week, sharing your testimony perhaps as a way to allow God through His Word to convict their hearts and lead them to the truth?

In Christ, we have hope, and we have God (13-18).

- *Jesus brings peace with God.*
- *Jesus brings peace with the people of God.*

Paul shifted from reminding the believers of who they were before Christ to reminding them of what had been accomplished in Christ. For the Gentile, who was separated from the people and the promises of God, the message in these verses was extraordinary! In Christ, all that separated the Gentiles from the people of Israel and from the God of Israel had been demolished and cleared away. In Christ, even the Gentiles — all people — have a way to peace with God and to unity with the people of God. Moreover, in Christ, all believers are made one as the people of God! Where there was hopelessness in separation and division before Christ, there is complete hope in Christ. Jesus brought the way to peace with God for all who believe, and Jesus brought the way to peace with the people of God for all who believe.

1. Read these verses again, and make a list of all the things that Jesus accomplished for the Gentiles. Take time to ask questions and to discuss the list to make sure that everyone understands all that these verses reveal.
2. Why do you think God wanted to make sure that Gentiles and Jews understood what Jesus had accomplished in terms of their relationship to one another? Why is this important for the church still today?
3. Thinking about the individuals you identified and prayed for, what would you share from these verses with them? Why, and how?

After Christ, we belong to God (19-22).

- *We are the people of God.*
- *We are the children of God.*
- *We are the temple of God.*

Paul concluded this section by shifting to remind the Ephesian believers of who they now were after their lives had been united with Christ through God's gift of faith. They weren't second class citizens, but in Christ, they had full citizenship in God's Kingdom. They weren't disregarded and discounted children, but in Christ, they were equally children of God in the family of God. In Christ, the Gentiles were now counted as recipients of all that God had promised through the prophets. The Ephesian believers weren't foreigners on the outskirts of town, but in Christ, they were now the very temple that God dwelled in! Oh what a beautiful grace God's plan of supernatural citizenship still is today! What an important reminder for the church still today. After Christ, together we are God's!

1. Put yourself in the position of a first century Gentile. Discuss how radical these truths would have been to hear and to be reminded of. Nothing has changed. Why is it still important to remember the depth of what Jesus accomplished for the Gentiles?
2. What are the implications of being a citizen of God's kingdom? What about the implications of being a child of God? How should that play out in your life, in your small group, and in our church?
3. What does it mean that believers are a holy temple and that they are being built up into the dwelling place of God? What does this say about our relationship with God through Christ? What does this say about our relationship with each other through Christ?
4. How do these verses address hopelessness and godlessness in the life of someone who is separated from God? What's your testimony in experiencing these changes in Christ in your life? How can you share that with the individuals that you identified and prayed for today?