

The word "blueprint" is written in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are overlaid on a grid of white dashed lines. The grid consists of vertical lines that align with the vertical strokes of the letters, and horizontal lines that align with the horizontal strokes. The background of the logo is a solid blue rectangle.

BUILDING A STRONGER CHURCH

**The Church Is the Body of Christ**  
**September 20, 2020**

Text: Ephesians 1:15-23

Opener:

- The pandemic brought lots of people some extended down time and allowed for some reflection. Has living through the pandemic caused you to rethink your priorities? If so, how have your priorities changed?
- Have you added or ended some activities in your life during the pandemic? If so, what? And why?

Discussion:

- In Ephesians 1:15-23, Paul lays out several components of the purpose of the church. He begins in verse fifteen by praying that his readers will know God better. That's a phrase we might use without thinking much about its meaning. So, what do you think it means to know God better? What would it look like for you to know God better? How do we get to know God?
- Paul describes the purpose of the church in more detail in Ephesians 1:18-19. He prays that these Christians will know three specific things. Identify them and talk together about why these specific things are important in the life of the church.

- Paul lived in the Roman Empire, a culture based on the exercise of brute force. They were focused on who held the power and how it was used to subdue others. Paul wants these Christians to know the power of God, most clearly seen in Jesus. Verses 19-21 speak of the power of the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus. For Paul, Jesus stands above all other powers of his day and ours, both physical and spiritual. If Jesus is that powerful, why do you think we deal with some of the ugliness that is present in our world?
- Paul applies his understanding of the power of Jesus to who we are as a community in Ephesians 1:22-23. We (the church) are an expression of Jesus to the world around us. How do we/should we express the power of work in Jesus to the people in our lives?

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**Our mission is to show people the king.**

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- If our mission is to show people the king, how does this relate to our mission statement to **love God and love others** that we draw from Mark 12:30-31? How can we show the power *and* the love of Jesus at the same time?
- Part of Paul's point here is that the church is the body of Christ. Jesus is not present on earth physically as he was in the first century. So, what does it mean for us to be the physical expression of Jesus? What responsibilities does that give us?
- What does our identity as the body of Christ say about our relationship with one another?

Spend a few minutes sharing prayer requests from group members. Remember that prayer requests can involve many areas of life, not just health needs. The group leader or a volunteer may lead the group in praying over these needs.