

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 is a solid blue rectangle.

BUILDING A STRONGER CHURCH

The Church Is a Community
September 27, 2020

Text: Ephesians 2:1-10

Opener:

- What is your go-to multi-purpose tool, the thing you try to fix everything else with? Have you ever done damage to it because you were using it for something other than its intended purpose?
- In this series, we've talked several times about the fact that God has given us a purpose. We are called to bear his image in the world, to show the world who he is. When we stray from our purpose, we do ourselves and others damage. What are some of the other purposes that we might pursue?
- How do they do us and others damage?

Discussion:

- Read Ephesians 2:1-2. Paul says that we were dead in our transgressions and sins. How does sin lead to death?
- Pastor James said that he hadn't really thought through the meaning of grace very carefully and often used it as a synonym for forgiveness. When you hear the word grace, what comes to mind?
- At its core, grace is an undeserved, unearned gift. Read Ephesians 2:4-5. What "gift" do you think grace gives us? What do we receive in grace?

- Read Ephesians 2:8-9. Paul is clear that we can't earn grace, which makes sense because we don't "earn" gifts that people give us. Paul says this in several different ways, which means he's putting stress on this point. Why do you think it mattered so much to Paul?
- Read Ephesians 2:10. This is the verse Pastor James started with in the lesson. Paul tells us that we were created for good works. He's just made the point that we can't earn grace, so what are these good works for? What are they all about?

Grace calls us into a community of service.

- The earliest Christians fulfilled their purpose as a community; they would never have thought of operating as independent agents. So, why is it important for Christians to serve as a community? What is different about serving together?
- As you think about being a community of service, why do you think we need each other?

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.