

The Church Is A Body – Part 1 Ephesians 2:1-18

Icebreaker:

What's the best part of going to the County Fair?

The Study:

Paul wrote Ephesians to teach us to see the Church through God's eyes. In Ephesians 1 showed us that from the very beginning of creation, God's plan was to create a community of beings with whom he could share a relationship of love, and through whom he would fill the earth with his beauty and goodness. In our rebellion, we tried to blow up this family. But in Christ, God made a way to recreate it once again – through the Church.

The proof of this is what Paul now teaches in chapter 2: that the Church, the Body of Christ on earth, is to represent the fulness of humanity, by including people from every tribe, tongue and nation.



Lesson 1: The Bad News – Read Ephesians 2:1-3

Each one of us, Jew and Gentile alike, share a common condition and a common need.

1. In these three verses, how does Paul describe the spiritual condition of the Ephesian believers before they came to Christ? Write out some of the words or phrases he uses.

2. How else does Scripture talk about a human's natural spiritual condition outside of Christ?

Romans 7:18-20

1 Corinthians 2:14

Ephesians 4:17-19

3. Paul says we are "children of wrath", meaning outside of Christ we deserve God's judgment, not eternal life. What has to happen for us to be saved?

Psalm 51:7

Ezekiel 36:25-26

John 3:16

Lesson 2: The Good News – Read Ephesians 2:4-10

Each one of us, Jew and Gentile alike, share a common Savior.

4. The great Protestant reformer Martin Luther used verses like this to create a famous statement describing how we are saved:

Christ alone, Grace alone, Faith alone

Christ alone

Skim through chapter 1, then through verses 4-10 again. Underline all the times when Paul refers to Christ either by name or pronoun.

How many did you come up with? What do you make of this? Write out 2-3 observations.

Grace alone

Skim through chapter 1:1-10, then through 2:4-10 again. Underline the times when Paul mentions grace.

Now take 3-5 minutes, and Google, "What does the Bible mean by grace?" Write down some answers that stand out to you.

What are some ways you've experienced God's grace in your life?

Faith alone

Re-read verses 8-10. Based on these verses, how would you define "faith"? And what is the relationship between saving faith and good works? Write out a short paragraph, then compare yours to the one below.

Faith is our response to God's grace which takes hold of the free gift of salvation Christ is offering. This isn't something we produce. "*This is not your own doing.*" Remember, we were *dead* in our sins. God's grace is what enables us to even respond. So we can't jump and down, and say, "Look at how smart I am for believing in Jesus!" Neither is faith another work we do. It's "*not a result of works.*" But saving faith makes a new life possible and leads to works. Good works are the fruit of the seed of faith. Yet even here we cannot boast, for God is helping us, even preparing works in advance with our name on them. It's grace from start to finish. Like the psalmwriter said, "Not to us, O Lord, but to your name give glory." (Ps.115:1).

Lesson 3: The Great News – Read Ephesians 2:11-18

Each one of us, Jew and Gentile alike, share a common community and family.

5. In the Old Testament, Jews were commanded by God to keep separate from the Gentiles in a variety of ways. What were some of those ways? And why did God command these things? (You may want to review the last ten minutes of the teaching here.)

6. Now in Christ all those walls of separation were to come down. From here on out Jews and Gentiles were to share together in Christ's body, as one community.

Look at these verses again, but now think of all the divisions that exist in our world today. What can the Church do, and what can *our church do*, to be a source of hope and healing in our community?

7. *Common condition – Common need – Common Savior – Common community.* As you go through this week, every time you cross paths with someone different from you, or someone who irritates you, or someone whom you'd like to ignore or judge or think poorly of, repeat these 4 truths from Ephesians 2. If you made this a habit, what do you think you would learn and experience?

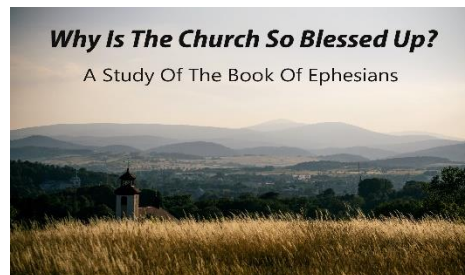
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