

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.

April 2013

Ephesians: God's Plan For His Church

Lesson #4: One In Christ: Ephesians 2:11-22

INTRODUCTION

When have you felt like an outsider?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

Note: Paul is speaking to both Jews and Gentiles who made up the Ephesian church. It is hard to appreciate how challenging it was for the Jews to accept Gentiles as equal since their Jewish heritage and customs reinforced their role as the chosen people. Gentiles "non-observance" of the Jewish law had rendered them ritually unclean. God's moral law expressed in Old Testament law is not changed. Mt 5:17; Rom 3:31

1. How does Paul describe the Gentiles before God intervened? (vv 11-12)
2. Why was circumcision a source of pride to the Jews? Rom 2:25-29
3. What sources of pride serve as obstacles to faith today?
4. What was "the bomb" that Jesus dropped on the "religious class system" of his day? (v. 13)
5. What was "the barrier" (v. 14) between Jews and Gentiles before Christ? What barriers exist today that impede fellowship with other believers?

Note: Paul might have also had in mind the actual wall that existed in the temple in Jerusalem beyond which Gentiles could not go. It had signs in Greek and Latin that warned that trespassing foreigners would be killed.

6. What was God's purpose for destroying the barrier between Jew and Gentile? (v., 15)
7. What was the "Most Holy Place?" (v. 19) Ex 26:33, Matt 27:51; Heb 9:1-14; 10:19-22
8. How did that change when Christ died? How should that impact our attitudes toward others?
9. How does Paul describe the Gentiles' change of status in verse 19? Why is this significant?
10. From verses 18 and 22, what can you learn about the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in our lives?

APPLICATION

What can you do this week to 'put to death' any hostility you may feel toward a fellow believer?

A Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. Among people there is strife. "He is our peace," says Paul of Jesus Christ (Eph 2:14). Without Christ there is discord between God and man and between man and man. Christ became the Mediator and made peace with God and among men.

Without Christ we should not know God, we could not call upon Him, nor come to Him. But without Christ we also could not know our brother, not could we come to him. The way is blocked by our own ego. Christ opened the way to God and to our brother. Now Christians can live with one another in peace; they can love and serve one another; they can become one. But they can continue to do so only by way of Jesus Christ. Only in Jesus Christ are we one, only through Him are we bound together. To eternity He remains the one Mediator.

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), *Life Together*