



ENOGERA BAPTIST CHURCH
Jesus changes lives

EPHESIANS: PART #1 SALVATION



Ephesians #7 – We Are Reconciled (2:11-22)

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

Ephesians 2:22

NOTE FOR LEADERS

This document is intended to be used as a discussion *guide*, rather than a curriculum. As small group leaders, please feel free to lead through the topic as most appropriate for your group.

HOUSEKEEPING

Things going at the moment:

- **Church Working Bee** – 5th October at 7:30am (this Saturday!)
- **Prayer Night** – 16th October at 7:00pm. Home Group's will meet at Church instead of their usual house location.
- **Alpha Course! Thursday nights – Be praying for us**
 - **Pray** – God's Spirit to draw people and open up their hearts.



EPHESIANS #7 – WE ARE RECONCILED (2:11-22)

REFLECT

This is a time to generate some discussion by reflecting on the ideas in this week's message. Some ideas include:

- Ask the group to debrief for those who have missed the sermons on Sunday
- What stood out? Do you have any questions?
- Were there any special moments of clarity where God spoke to you clearly?

DIG INTO THE WORD

Let's dig a little deeper. Use the biblical text to discover what God reveals to us in his Word.

Ephesians 2:11-22

¹¹ Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives. Get group members to talk about the real-life implications of the study.

1. **DISCUSS:** How are we to apply these things? Are there any immediate implications?
2. **REMEMBER:** Read verse 11-13.
 - a. What common identity do all people share without Christ? (*separation from Christ, having no hope and without God.*)
 - b. What common identity do all people share in Christ? (*nearness, hope, reconciled*)
 - c. Has identity in your culture/upbringing ever been the cause of a rift in fellowship?



3. **REPENT:** Read verses 14-18.
 - a. What has Christ's work done to remove the wall between man and God? And in turn, the wall between Man and Man? (Verse 14-16)
 - b. Who are those "far" and those "near"? Do both get reconciled to God through the same way? (Verse 16 -18)
 - c. *If both Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God through Jesus' works by the Spirit, that means there is no longer a distinction between humans in ethnic background, culture or upbringing. Are there people you instinctively/subconsciously avoid or feel uncomfortable around and have set up a wall of division between yourself and them? How has that hindered you living out the Gospel? (this could be inside or outside of Christian fellowship)*
 - d. Are there people at church who you need to seek reconciliation with?
4. **REACH OUT:** Read verse 19-22.
 - a. What building work is God doing in the lives of believers?
 - b. *If we are being built together as one building where God dwells, we ought to be pursuing Unity with one another. Are you allowing nationality, social class or culture get in the way of the unity Christ has won for us?*
 - c. How can we make sure that we aren't putting up dividing walls that Jesus has already torn down?
 - d. Do you actively reach out to those who are different from the main-majority to make sure they feel united with us?

PRAY

Pray for one another as we seek to embrace our true identity in Christ.

Spend some time in prayer giving thanks to God for the salvation He has provided for us in Christ, and that Unity in our fellowship would continually strengthen as we seek to be united with one another despite the various differences we could have.

NOTES

1:3–3:21 *Calling of the Church Within Christ's Cosmic Reconciliation.* Paul unfolds for his readers God's eternal plan to unify all things in Christ, and explains how the church is to understand its call and identity—who it is, how it came about, and what its mission is within this plan.

2:11–22 *Jew and Gentile Reconciled Through Christ.* Paul now draws out the implication of vv. 1–10. As Jewish and Gentile believers are individually reconciled to God in Christ, these formerly hostile peoples are also reconciled with one another in Christ. Paul proceeds by explaining the nature (vv. 11–13), means (vv. 14–18), and consequences (vv. 19–22) of this reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles.

2:11 Therefore. Suggests that horizontal reconciliation (vv. 11–22) depends on vertical reconciliation (vv. 1–10). **remember.** Remembering God's deliverance in the past is more than mere recall of facts; rather, it should lead us to praise and obey God in the present (cf. the appeal to Israel to recall their



slavery in Egypt; see Exod 13:3; Deut 5:15). **formerly.** As in vv. 1–10, Paul employs a “formerly-now” structure in vv. 11–22, contrasting his Gentile readers’ past exclusion from the privileges given to Israel with their present inclusion as the people of God. **“uncircumcised.”** A Jewish ethnic slur for Gentiles. **“the circumcision.”** Although other people practiced circumcision, it became the defining mark of Jewish identification since it was the physical sign of the Abrahamic covenant. **done in the body by human hands.** Expresses the limitations of physical circumcision in contrast to heart circumcision (Deut 30:6; Rom 2:29; Col 2:11).

2:12 Christ. The Messiah and king of Israel. **foreigners to the covenants of the promise.** Gentiles were excluded from the covenants that promised salvation to Israel. **without hope.** No expectation of receiving salvation (cf. 1 Thess 4:13).

2:13 But now. Contrast: Gentiles who *once* were “far away” have *now* been “brought near” through Christ’s sacrificial death. Although rabbinic literature uses “brought near” to describe proselytes to Judaism, the present context refers to Gentiles having access to God without conversion to Judaism.

2:14 he himself is our peace. Christ not only brings peace and reconciliation (Col 1:20) but is the embodiment and personification of peace (Isa 9:6; Mic 5:5). The focus here is the peace between Jewish and Gentile believers (“two groups”); however, Eph 2:16–18 shows that the vertical peace that believers have with God is foundational for this horizontal peace. This horizontal peace is not just the absence of hostility; it involves mutual acceptance and love (4:16, 32). **the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.** May refer to the railing in the Jewish temple that separated the court of Gentiles from the inner courts with a sign prohibiting Gentiles from entering on pain of death. Nevertheless, the fundamental reason for this barrier is the Mosaic law with its holiness code that separated Israel from the other nations and caused hostility between Jews and Gentiles.

2:15 setting aside ... the law. Christ sets aside the old covenant with its Mosaic law and replaces it with a new covenant for all believers. Consequently, the Mosaic law cannot serve as a barrier between Jewish and Gentile believers. Although new covenant believers are not under the Mosaic law, they are under “Christ’s law” (1 Cor 9:21; cf. Matt 5:17; Rom 3:31; Gal 6:2). **his flesh.** Christ’s physical death. **create ... one new humanity.** As a new creation, this new humanity comprising all believers is distinct from Jews and Gentiles (1 Cor 10:32). It is a community in which Jews and Gentiles are united in peace. See notes on Eph 2:10; 4:24.

2:16 reconcile. Bring two estranged parties into a peaceful relationship (Rom 5:10–11; 2 Cor 5:19; Col 1:22). Christ not only reconciles Jewish and Gentile believers “in one body” (the church), he also reconciles “both of them to God.” The cross destroys not only the “hostility” between Jewish and Gentile believers but also the hostility between humanity and God.

2:17 preached peace ... far away and ... near. Using the language of Isa 52:7; 57:19, Paul affirms that Jesus preached peace to those “far” (Gentiles) and “near” (Jews).

2:19 Consequently. The reconciliation described in vv. 19–22 is dependent upon what Christ accomplished through his death described in vv. 14–18. **foreigners and strangers.** Generally looked



upon with contempt and suspicion in the ancient world. **fellow citizens.** Instead of their disenfranchised status, Gentile believers now share in the rights and privileges of God's people.

2:20 foundation of the apostles and prophets. In 1 Cor 3:10–17, Christ is the foundation upon which the apostles build. Here, Paul employs a different imagery. The foundation is now the apostles and prophets of the first-century church because they are the first to proclaim the gospel. The message they preach are the very words of God, revealed to them by the Spirit (Eph 3:5). In this imagery, Christ is the “chief cornerstone”—the first stone to be laid and the stone that determines the placement of the foundation and all other subsequent stones. **apostles and prophets.** Can refer to (1) NT apostles and OT prophets, (2) NT apostles who also prophesy, or (3) NT apostles and NT prophets. There are difficulties with the first two options. In 3:5 this same phrase refers to people in the NT era. In 4:11 (and 1 Cor 12:28–29), Paul distinguishes apostles from prophets, viewing them as two separate groups. Thus, the last option is preferable.

2:21–22 holy temple ... being built together. Paul metaphorically describes the church, Christ's body, as a temple. Christ's physical body is the ultimate fulfillment of all that the physical temple in Jerusalem was meant to be (John 2:19–21). At the same time, as Jewish and Gentile believers are incorporated into Christ's body, they are “being built together” (Eph 2:22) as “living stones” (1 Pet 2:5) into God's temple (1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16). This new multiethnic temple, the church, is the fulfillment of Isa 56:3–8; 66:18–20. **in the Lord.** Existing in the Lord, this temple is not a physical building. **dwelling in which God lives.** Just as the presence of God in OT times filled first the tabernacle and then later the temple, so also God now dwells in the church “by his Spirit”.¹

REFERENCE:

Developed with the help of the following:

- ESV Study Bible, Crossway.
- NIV Zondervan Study Bible.

¹ Moo, D. J. (2015). [The Letters and Revelation](#). In D. A. Carson (Ed.), *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message* (pp. 2402–2403). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.