

## **Community - Ephesians 2:11-22, 4:1-16**

### **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

#### **Notes from the Sermon**

TV comedies in our culture have changed. Shows in the brand of Cheers, Seinfeld, Friends, and Big Bang Theory have been replaced with a type of comedy called "cringe comedy", where the humor in the show comes from awkwardness in relationships as it places characters in the most embarrassing situations possible. While I know most of you find these shows funny and entertaining, I just don't get it. But I also think this exposes another issue. The first set of shows were built around the relationship and interaction of a diverse group of people. Yet, a lifetime (or up to 12 TV seasons) of doing life together led to the group having a deep knit system of relationships that made them a family. We have always longed for this. On the other hand, the new "cringe comedy" creates a system of relationships where nobody really likes each other. I wonder if the fact that we find this humorous is a sign that we also don't believe in the possibility of this level of community, a place where you are loved, and as the Cheers song claims, "Everybody knows your name and they are always glad you came." Maybe we have become cynical that there is anyplace where this is truly possible, where you can be with a group of people who love you in spite of your messes and awkwardness, and it is OK to not be OK.

Our passages this week are mirror passages in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. The first text is set in the section of this letter where Paul explains the essence of the Gospel and what Christ has accomplished for us. Chapters 1-3 are all about God's redemptive work through the cross, and therefore doesn't have a single command for us, rather it is all about what Christ has done. 2:11-22 focuses on the central point of this entire series, that in the Gospel, God has redeemed and rescued individuals, and then places them in a people who are marked by their relationships with each other by and for the glory of the Gospel. The two types of people in the text are Jews and Gentiles, those who grew up in the Old Testament covenant with God and those who had no idea that it even existed. These are the religious and irreligious at the time. Paul brings uses Temple imagery, speaking of a dividing wall of hostility(v.14), which is a reference to literal wall that kept Gentiles out of the main court of the Temple in Jerusalem. Metaphorically, Jews and Gentiles were separated by the same type of wall in culture, as Jews despised Gentiles, and vice versa. When God redeems them, He abolishes that wall and makes the two one new man in Christ, both of whom have been reconciled to God. Here is the large point of this passage, the work of God in the Gospel includes the formation of a people who are diverse in their religious, ethnic, social, and political background, but are one in Christ and created to live as a family.

In chapter 4 passage explains how we are to apply this truth. There is no room in the church for treating our Christian faith as an individual endeavor. We are interconnected, and bound together by Christ. There are two ways to maintain unity within a group of people. One is to avoid real relationships. You can get a group of people to rally around a cause without even knowing each other, and definitely not engaging in anything other than superficial relationships. Rooting for a sports team is an illustration for this. I may not know the guy next to me, but when my team hit a walk off home run I am hugging the guy and crying. At that time It doesn't matter what his political beliefs, ethnic background, religious convictions, etc., we are unified around cheering for the team. We can stay unified as long as that is all we know about each other. But this is not the type of unity that is formed by the Gospel. Rather, we are called to a depth of relationships, where, in this context, Jews and Gentiles are showing humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another in love. The unity is formed around Christ, but the call here is not to avoid relationships for the sake of unity, but to pursue deep relationships and remain unified in the Gospel. These are the types of relationships that lead to the mutual edification and growth only possible when we are really doing life-on-life discipleship together. This can't be done in a stadium, or even a room with 100+ people. In New Testament times the early church would find public places to gather, but also do church from house to house (Acts 2:42-47). This level of unity, intimacy, and growth had to happen in these smaller contexts. But it is this level of intimacy and depth that puts the glory of the Gospel on display for the world to see. When God brings people who could not, would not get along in the culture together in a church, and they genuinely love each other with this depth of love, it demonstrates the power

and beauty of the Gospel. In Christ, we were far away from God, but He has brought us near.

In these two passages, Paul uses three metaphors to make this point about the unity, community, and depth of relationships called for in Christ's church. The first is a family. God's redemption has taken people who used to be enemies and made them one household. The second is building, where God has arranged each stone and put it where He intended, built on a strong cornerstone that supports the entire building. Of course, that cornerstone is Christ, but it is the interconnectedness of the stones that makes it a Temple, a dwelling place for God. The third is a body. In a body, every member is important and must be present and function properly for the body to be healthy. And every part of the body needs every other part, and is interdependent for the body to function at all. The big truth in these three illustrations is this, we are called to a depth of relationship within the community of faith where we function as a family, a body, a building. An individual's absence will lead to unhealth because we are unified with other people and dependent on them. No way we get this by attending a church once a week. We need a place where everybody knows your name, and is always glad you came.

### **Bible Reading for the Week**

#### Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Deuteronomy 33	Deuteronomy 34	1 John 1	1 John 2	1 John 3	1 John 4	1 John 5

Reading from this past week: Ephesians 2:11-22, 4:1-16

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: 1 Peter 2:9-12

### **Family Worship**

Song - *The Church's One Foundation*

[https://youtu.be/8uuXdrcl5pQ?si=uHhKq\\_oX0lr-dGtS](https://youtu.be/8uuXdrcl5pQ?si=uHhKq_oX0lr-dGtS)

#### Gospel Project

Unit: The Warnings of Jesus

Story: People Welcomed Jesus as King

Big Picture Question: How is Jesus the Prophet?

Answer: Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and follows what the prophets spoke.

Scripture: Matthew 21

#### New City Catechism

Question #36: What do we believe about the Holy Spirit?

Answer: That he is God, coeternal with the Father and the Son.

Verse: John 14:16-17

#### Scripture

Ephesians 2:11-22, 4:1-16

- What are some ways that Paul shows us the importance of community as an expression of the Gospel in chapter 2?
- What are some of the commands and principles Paul gives the Ephesian church in chapter 4 so that they can have this sort of Gospel formed community?
- Why do we need more than attending a Sunday gathering as individuals? What is God doing through people when they live in deep community with other believers?
- What are some of the benefits that people experience when they invest in this sort of community with other believers?

#### Prayer

Pray that our church would be a place for deep, Gospel-centered community reflecting the beauty of Jesus.

\*Pray for our Community Groups as they start a new season.