

***The Beauty of “My Church”: “The Household of God”***

***Focus Passage: Ephesians 2:11–22***

***Larger Context: Ephesians 2:1–10***

***Other Passages Referenced: Genesis 2:24–25; Matthew 27:35;***

**Sermon Recap**

We glimpse the beauty of the Church in Ephesians 2. Paul contrasts who Church members used to be with who Jesus had recreated them to be. Gentiles, who were once separated from Christ, alienated from God’s people, strangers to God’s promises, Godless and without hope, have been brought near, given peace, made new, and have access to the God and Father of all creation.

The sermon highlighted three common contemporary attitudes that hide the beauty of the Church.

1. The Church exists to improve my life and so is viewed as a self-help agent.
2. The Church is not necessary for someone to have a personal relationship with Christ.
3. Differences with other Church members make it too frustrating to commit to a local church.

For some professing Christians, church is one item on their self-help playlist. Ephesians 2:4-5 reveal that we don’t need help, we need resurrection. The Bible is not a book of good advice. It is a book of good news about what God has done. We miss the beauty of the church when we don’t acknowledge how lost we were. The church is exceedingly more beautiful than a place to come and get life hacks and good advice, it is resurrected lives gathered to celebrate.

The idea of having a personal relationship with Christ that has no need of the Church is seen in the question, “Why would I want to be a part of the church, when I can just worship and pray to God directly myself?” Scripture teaches that each individual needs to personally repent and trust Jesus for salvation. However, the words “personal relationship with God” are not found anywhere in the Bible. God’s word is clear that any so-called personal relationship with God has public implications. Salvation involves two reconciliations or unions: union with God and union with others who have union with God.

We also miss the beauty of the Church when we let our frustrations with the Church prevent us from committing to it. Paul says that Christ’s work has made individual followers of Jesus into fellow citizens of the Kingdom of God as well as members of God’s household. God essentially turns believers into citizens and siblings that become a sanctuary in which He dwells. We don’t reject our citizenship when we are frustrated with our country. We don’t renounce our family members when we are frustrated by them. We will not fully mature in Christ without one another—even and especially without those who frustrate us most.

**DON’T MISS THE BEAUTY OF THE CHURCH!**

**Interpretation Helps**

- **“Therefore”** — A clever teaching aid states, “When we see the word “therefore” in the Bible, it is **there for** a reason. Rather than seeing “therefore” as a transition, we need to consider what was previously written that it refers to. “Therefore” often calls us to a truth that impacts how we are to think and live in the present.

- **“You”** — In English we use the same word “you” to describe both singular and plural pronouns without a way to distinguish between the two. That leads to creative regional attempts to clarify when someone means to address more than one person like “y’all”, “you’uns”, “yous guys”. In reading the Bible, the tendency for most in America is to see the word “you” and receive it as if the intended referent is “me.”

### **Group Gathering**

**Group Check-in** — Care, Celebration, Encouragement (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Informal conversation to allow individuals to catch up with one another.
2. Ask if anyone would share how they’ve been hearing and obeying God’s direction.

**Allow the Word to Speak** — Be Hearers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

**READ Ephesians 2:1–22**

1. What from the passage or sermon was most impactful to you?
2. Were you left with any questions or confusion about the passage or sermon?
3. What truth(s) does “therefore” point to in Ephesians 2:11? Make a list of them.
4. Paul commands his readers to “remember” in Ephesians 2:11 and again in 2:12. What are they to remember?
5. The word “you” occurs 9 times in Ephesians 2, and every single time it is plural rather than singular. Find all 9 occurrences and check each one to see if reading it in the plural changes your understanding of what is being said.
6. To whom did Jesus reconcile us?

**Put the Word into Practice** — Be Doers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Take some time to remember and reflect on who you were before coming to follow Jesus and then think on what He has done to reconcile you to Himself and others.
2. What strikes you about the three common attitudes mentioned in the sermon and recorded in the recap that keeps us from seeing the beauty of the Church? Do you need to confront or turn from any of those attitudes?
3. How does reading each of the passages of “you” as plural impact your understanding of God’s Church? Can you identify any adjustments you need to make to align your life with God’s design for His Church?
4. What are some things you can and will do to join together with others at Church to grown with fellow citizens and siblings into the sanctuary that God desires to form us into?

**The Big Question:** What do you sense God’s Spirit saying to you and what concrete action will you take in response? Share your answer with the group or another trusted Christian and ask them to pray for you.

**What We Hope Members Glean from the Passage**

1. No set answer.
2. No set answer.
3. The main point is Paul’s description of everyone’s condition before being born again in Christ and his description of what Jesus did. Some highlights of the before: “dead in sin” (2:1,5); under the influence of the “prince of the power of the air” (2:2), “carrying out the desires of the boy and the mind” (2:3). After Jesus: “made alive together with Christ” (2:5), “raised up with him and seated in heavenly places” (2:6), “saved by grace through faith” (2:8), recreated “for good works” (2:10).
4. That as Gentiles they were separated from Christ and strangers to God’s covenants made with the Jews, without hope, and without God. But now “in Christ Jesus” they have been “brought near to God

“by the blood of Jesus.” They are to remember that Jesus “broke down ... the diving wall of hostility” between Jews and Gentiles.

5. No set answer.
6. To God and to one another.

**SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES:** Click [here](#) for some good opportunities.