**Ephesians 2:11 – 3:13**

March 29-30, 2017

*To better understand the magnitude of what Paul is writing, we should understand more fully the relationship between the Jews and Gentiles. The Jews had great contempt for the Gentiles. It was forbidden by Jewish law for a Jew to marry a Gentile- so much so that the death rites would be carried out for a Jewish boy or girl marrying a Gentile. Even entering a Gentile home made a Jew unclean. The Gentiles had no hope of a Messiah and were not included in the promises given to Israel. “There was a true spiritual deprivation involved in their being Gentiles.” (Vaughn)*

Read Chapter 2:11-22

Vs 11-12: What does it mean to be “foreigners to the covenants of the promise”? What were these promises? What does it mean to have been “without hope and without God”?

Vs 13: What does it mean to be “brought near by the blood of Christ”? Do you identify with this in your own life? When were you brought near by the blood of Christ?

Vs 14: What does it mean that “he himself is our peace”? What barriers has he destroyed? What walls of hostility has he destroyed? Why is this peace and reconciliation important?

*The “dividing wall of hostility” was likely more than a metaphor, but also referencing to the physical wall within the temple. The Gentiles were not allowed into the sanctuary proper, only the outer courts. Along the wall were inscriptions “forbidding Gentiles to pass beyond it on pain of death.”* (Vaughn)

Vs 15: Why is it that he is creating “in himself one new man (humanity) in place of the two”?

Vs 16: What does it mean to be reconciled to God through the cross? Have you experienced this reconciliation?

Vs 18: What does it mean that we have access to the Father? What is the significance of this? Why is the Spirit needed for this access?

Vs 20-22: These verses speak of Christ being the cornerstone; the apostles and prophets are the foundation, and the whole building rises as a holy temple to the Lord- What does this mean? What part do you have in all of this? What does it mean to be a dwelling where God lives by his Spirit?

Chapter 3:1-13

Vs 1-6: What is the mystery Paul is writing about? What does it mean that they are members of one body? What is the promise of Jesus? What does it mean for us to be members of one body?

Vs 7: What does it mean to be a servant of the gospel? Do you also see yourself as a servant for the gospel? How so?

Vs 8: What does it mean that he was given the grace to preach the boundless riches of Christ? What are the boundless riches of Christ? Do you identify with this in the same way Paul does?

Vs 10: What does it mean that “through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known”? What does this mean for us and how we should live?

Vs 11-12: How are we now able to approach God with freedom and confidence? Do you feel able to approach God with confidence?

Conclusion

What is necessary to understand about the Jews and Gentiles being reconciled? Why is this significant, and why do you think God set up His plan in this way?

What key truths about Christ in this passage? How has what you learned impacted your relationship with Christ?

Are you able to walk away from this study and stand with confidence and freedom before the Lord?