

# EPHESIANS 2 : 11-22

ONE IN CHRIST

## BIBLE STUDY



### Introduction to the passage for leaders

**Before you start - reflect on the passage – why is Paul writing it?**

*In the time Paul was writing his letter, Jews and Gentiles were not used to being part of the same team. For many years, Jewish people had felt like the superior group, knowing that God had chosen them as his people, but maybe not remembering that he had done so in order that ‘all other nations (would) be blessed’ by them (Gen 12 v 3).*

*Now in Jesus all peoples are united, and Paul longed to show them how their faith in Jesus meant that they were brought together because of him.*

*As you start the study today, pray that Paul’s cry for unity would show the group ways in which unity may still be a challenge, both to the worldwide church and to our own congregation. Pray too that we would remember what a precious gift our salvation is, and long to share it with others.*

**Starter: Find as many things as possible in common with each other.**

*Some questions are inspired by  
Ephesians: Wholeness in a broken world (Lifebuilder series)*

# EPHESIANS 2 : 11-22

ONE IN CHRIST

## BIBLE STUDY



### Read: Ephesians 2 : 11-22

#### Let's unpack the passage.....

*In verse 11, we see the two groups that Paul is addressing – the ‘uncircumcised’ (Gentiles, or those who were not born into the Jewish faith), and ‘those who call themselves ‘the circumcision’ (in other words, those who were born as Jews and who relied on this physical symbolism to give them status).*

*The aim of the passage is to show the two groups how they are now brought together in Christ.*

1. What boxes might we put other Christian believers into today which show that we see them as different from us despite sharing our belief in Jesus?
2. Circumcision is actually a minor physical and superficial difference between the two groups. In verse 12, we see some other real divisions that separated the two groups. What were they?
3. What is the significance of the ‘blood of Christ’ in verse 13?
4. Look at the vivid imagery in verse 14-18. How should being reconciled to God through Christ affect how we are reconciled to others?
5. How are we helped to do this often very challenging thing (verse 18)?
6. How do the images that Paul uses in vv 19-22 show us the powerful image of unity that Christians can have with one another? Think or pray through what this means for us as a church as we strive to become a closer family.

# EPHESIANS 2 : 11-22

ONE IN CHRIST

## BIBLE STUDY



### So what?

7. Who do we gravitate towards in church?  
Who do we shun? Why is that?
8. Who is God calling you to get to know better or show unity with, regardless of background or cultural differences?
9. Read the Ephesians verse of the Year (Ephesians 4 v 16) and talk about what it may mean for us as a church to grow and be built up together.

**“From him the whole body,  
joined and held together by every  
supporting ligament, grows and  
builds itself up in love, as each  
part does its work.”**

**EPH 4 : 16**

# EPHESIANS 2:11-22

*ONE IN CHRIST*

## GOING DEEPER

Different denominations have different practices.  
What are some of the ways we can find unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ in spite of this?

What practical steps could you take as a home group to welcome those with a different background to you into your group?





# EPHESIANS 2:11-22

*ONE IN CHRIST*

**PRAY**

Ask God to show you areas in your life where you need to be reconciled to other Christians. Ask God for the humility and readiness to work on ways to break down divisions between you and your brothers and sisters in Christ. Despite potential discomfort, what are some of the ways in which you could work towards this?

Think of a relationship in your life which may be broken. Ask God to increase your compassion and understanding for that person.



# EPHESIANS 2:11-22

ONE IN CHRIST

## WATCH



*From the Bible Project*

Watch the first 4'20 of this video to set the passage in context  
<https://bibleproject.com/church-at-home/week23-ephesians/>

## Questions to reflect on:

1

Reread Ephesians 1:9-10 and 2:11-22 and note all the words that communicate unity (both, all, together, etc...).

2

What are two groups in your community that disagree with one another about a current issue?

3

Growth in Jesus requires speaking the truth in love (see Ephesians 4:15). Think about the two groups that came to mind in the previous question.

What happens in these groups when truth is not spoken in love or when love is spoken without truth?

Can you think of other places where this has happened in society or in the news, to the detriment of those involved?

4

Consider the needs of the person or group that has opposite views from you.

What truthful and loving words do you think would most benefit them today?

# EPHESIANS 3

IMMEASURABLY MORE

## BIBLE STUDY



### Introduction to the passage for leaders

*Twice in this letter Paul reminds his readers that he is imprisoned - a prisoner for the Lord at the beginning and an ambassador in chains at the end of the letter. Why is he a prisoner? Why would God allow this? In today's passage, Paul explains his situation and also one of the greatest truths in this letter - "the mystery of the church".*

*In the New Testament, a mystery is not a something mysterious or unfathomable, but a truth that was hidden in the past by God but now revealed to those who are in his family. It is a "sacred secret" that is unknown to unbelievers but treasured by believers.*

*As you start the study today, pray that you will be struck by a fresh vision of what God's church represents, and by the potential that comes from a united, Spirit-filled church in our town and community.*

**Starter:** What do you think people in our community think of when they hear the word 'church'?

What about you – what does church mean for you? When has it felt difficult and when has it felt special?

We join Paul now as he talks about the early church. He was certainly someone who got very excited about the place of the church in God's plan!

# EPHESIANS 3

IMMEASURABLY MORE

## BIBLE STUDY



### Read Ephesians 3

#### Let's unpack the passage.....

1. Look at verses 2-6. Explain the meaning of the mystery revealed to Paul.
2. We talked about the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles last week. Why was it so important to Paul that the Ephesian believers fully took hold of what he was saying as the church was born?
3. How would you describe the role of the church, as seen in verse 10?
4. a) What role do you think Jesus plays in accomplishing God's 'eternal purpose' in the church (verse 11)? (see also chapter 2 vv 21,22)  
b) Why do you think it is important to understand Christ's role before we can go on to claim the truth of verse 12? (What does it mean for us as believers? You could consider what the church would be like without Christ as its single head.)
5. Verses 14-21 mention 'love' and 'power' three times as being things that Paul prays for the church. In what context does he mention them? Why are they essential to the life of a church?
6. We saw in verses 10-11 that the church's role to show God's wisdom as a model of unity under Jesus. How is Paul's prayer in verses 14-21 asking God to fulfil that purpose?

# EPHESIANS 3

*IMMEASURABLY MORE*

## BIBLE STUDY



### So what?

7. What implications does Paul's passion for unity continue to hold for us at Emmanuel today? In what areas might we struggle to be united?
8. How have you witnessed God's love and power in the life of your church?
9. How is God's wisdom being revealed by the church to the world at the moment?
10. Sometimes when we ask God to change us we can doubt if it's really going to happen.

If we could really grasp the words in verses 20-21, how would that level of faith impact the way we pray and worship Him?



# EPHESIANS 3

IMMEASURABLY MORE

## Read Ephesians 3 : 14-21

### Looking at verses 14-16:

The Greek word for “inner” (as in “inner being”) means heart or soul which refers to our mind, will and emotions.

We know that our outer being becomes weaker as we grow older, but Paul prays that the mind, will and emotions might be strengthened by His Spirit (v.16).

**Q: What are some of the ways the Holy Spirit can strengthen you in your mind, will or emotions as you grow older? Can you describe a time in your life when the Holy Spirit strengthened your inner being in this way?**

# GOING DEEPER

*Inspired by Small Group Bible Studies*  
[\(Click link for details\)](#)

### Looking at verses 16-17:

Paul says that when His Spirit strengthens our inner being, or ‘soul’, Christ can dwell or take up residence in our inner being (our mind, will and emotions) in a greater way.

**Q: You may be experiencing Christ influencing your life for right living, or you may not be. Either way, what does it look like for you, in this season of life, to live in openness to His influence?**

# EPHESIANS 3

*IMMEASURABLY MORE*

## GOING DEEPER

### **Looking at verses 17-19:**

If we replace harmful thoughts and emotions in our inner being with the Holy Spirit's influence, and live according to Christ's governance, Paul says we'll have a greater capacity to receive His love. What are some harmful thoughts and emotions in your soul right now that you feel are blocking you from Christ's influence and the power of his love?

**Pray through verses 20-21 for yourself  
and where you are right now as you finish.**



# EPHESIANS 3

IMMEASURABLY MORE

## PRAY

**Read verses 20-21.**

How are you encouraged, motivated and comforted by this benediction?

Use the words of Paul's prayer in **verses 14-21** as a guide to pray for yourself and your church.



### A PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS

**14** For this reason I kneel before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. **16** I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, **18** may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, **19** and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

**20** Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

Amen.

EPHESIANS 3 : 14-21



# EPHESIANS 3

*IMMEASURABLY MORE*

**LISTEN**



**Listen to this excellent podcast by Tim Mackie  
from the Bible Project (57'51)**

<https://bibleproject.com/podcast/ephesians-part-2-new-family>



# EPHESIANS 4:1-16

BODY WORKS – THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

## BIBLE STUDY



### Introduction to the passage for leaders

*This week, we are looking at how we can bring glory to God in the church as a united body of Christ.*

*Paul is in prison and he is writing from a background of isolation - yet he calls the church to be connected, get on with each other and serve each other.*

*This chapter is all about reminding us as Christians what we are called to.*

- *Called to unity*
- *Called to service and sharing*

*The whole point of the gospel is us being reconciled to God following the separation of a broken relationship. It's not a matter of now having a cosy relationship with God on our own – instead, he calls us to be connected with others, and particularly other Christians, so that we can impact society.*

*We also don't pick and choose who else is part of God's people. We have got eternity together so we had better start getting on now!*

*Pray before you start that God will help us look past our personalities and cultural preferences to understand what a beautiful picture the church can give to our world.*

*Pray that we understand on a deeper level what being part of the body of Christ means for us personally. Ask for open and honest conversation as we investigate how best we can serve in our church.*

**Starter:** What gifts do you have that you believe God has given you to bless others in the church?

*Some questions are inspired by Ephesians: Wholeness in a broken world (Lifebuilder series)*

# EPHESIANS 4 : 1-16

BODY WORKS – THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

## BIBLE STUDY



### Read Ephesians 4 : 1-16

#### Let's unpack the passage.....

1. Look at verses 1-3. Thinking about what we have learnt in the last two weeks, what is our calling (v.1)? In what ways should our calling be seen, according to these verses?

2. Why do you think the characteristics mentioned in these verses are so important when it comes to unity?

*(Paul does not simply mention a group of characteristics; in recognising that unity is such a challenge, he says remember what you have in common as believers and what you are working towards.)*

3. According to v 4-6 what do we have in common?

4. If someone asked you why it is important for the church to be unified, what would you say?

*(Look at verse 7 - We are not trying to achieve unity on our own. God is at work, giving and showing grace, and he pulls us together despite our differences. Grace is given for a common purpose of unification, and recognising its work in our lives is a key part of being unified.)*

5. In verses 11-13, Paul describes gifts that Jesus gives as demonstrations of his grace (v.7).

*(NB: this is one of several places where gifts are mentioned in Paul's letters and is not a comprehensive list).*

What are the purposes of the gifts that are mentioned in this particular passage?

*(We are a change-enabling community. When I'm integrated in the body of Christ, growth occurs – in myself and in the church.)*

6. What does spiritual maturity look like (vv 14-16)?

*(This is so important because if we are not growing together then other things start to happen)*

# EPHESIANS 4 : 1-16

*BODY WORKS – THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST*

## BIBLE STUDY



### Let's unpack the passage.....

7. What waves do you think are tossing the church back and forth and what wind of teaching is blowing the church here and there at this time in history (v.14)?

### So what?

8. Reflect: How do you see yourself as part of the body of Christ? How do your gifts and your actions practically carry out the purpose seen in verses 12-13?
9. Read verses 15-16 again. What does Paul say we need to do to counteract the winds and waves that batter the church in verse 14-16? What do you think are the most important things to grasp here as we consider what it means to be a 21st century church?

### Ephesians 4 v 16 is Emmanuel's Verse of the Year for 2021

If you haven't already done so, why don't you commit to learning the verse?

If you are artistic, you could design a poster to reflect the imagery in the verse.

# EPHESIANS 4:1-16

*BODY WORKS – THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST*

**LISTEN**



**Listen to the first 21 minutes of this podcast  
by Tim Mackie from the Bible Project.**

<https://bibleproject.com/podcast/ephesians-part-3-new-humanity>



# EPHESIANS 4:1-16

*BODY WORKS – THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST*

## PRAY

**Pray using the words in verses 15 and 16  
to direct your prayers:**

- Ask God for help to learn how to speak the truth in love.
- Ask that we might recognise the beauty and power that come from having Christ as our Head.
- Thank him that our church is growing and building itself up in love, even through the time of Covid, and that we have experienced being joined and held together at this time.
- Ask that God shows us how ‘each part does its work’ as we discover and begin to enjoy using our gifts.

