

Ephesians Study 4

Prayer: Be in our reading, turn our eyes to seeing and our ears to a posture of listening

In the previous passages, Paul has focused of grace, expressed in the kindness of Jesus, as a gift. Nothing we do can bring it about, make it come to us—its free.. And its free for a reason, so we know its not us that makes it come about.

Then its like Paul zoomed out for a broader view of the grace at work, not just in our hearts but in whole groups of people.

Reading and Reflection

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

As you read, what images stick out to you? What verses challenge you? What passages do you gloss over? Why?

“His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God.”

How does this passage relate to chapter 1:10.

Because of what God has done, (grace expressed in kindness through Christ, bringing us back to each other in unity) none of us are strangers to each other.

Paul gives us three active images of what God does—fellow citizens (think refugees becoming citizens), members of one family (think of how families love and forgive, welcome and take care of each other), the building blocks of the new temple, (think solid construction done in all its stages) all vital parts of God’s presence on earth.

Chapter 2:11-16

What words stick out the most to you? How have you envisioned a new humanity? How does God?

Imagine someone coming into a room, with you and 8 other people in it and telling you that you were a new humanity, that in you God was bringing about peace? How would you really respond?

What would our Jew/gentile divide be now? Cultural or racial divides? Rich/poor divides? Male/female?

NT. Wright suggests that the importance of this passage is not to be misunderstood or passed off. If we do not take peace between different groups seriously, then we miss the meaning of Jesus’ death. How do you respond to that?

What challenges come up when 2 different groups come together? How have you dealt with differences in the past?

Chapter2: 17-22

Jesus preached peace. When read with the first part of Chapter 2, its clear that Paul outlines 2 ways of knowing peace. Think about what would be the response to knowing both of these ways of peace:

--Personal peace between us and God (having to let go and trust in that grace? What would you add)

--Corporate peace between ourselves and others (having to let go of certainty, being right, identity importance that is apart from God? What would you add?)

What do the images of “fellow citizens”, “one family,” and “whole building/holy temple” say about your new identity? Our identity as a church? Again, read this in the light of Chapter 1:4-10. What has God always intended? What is his “always” purpose?

Responding to the Text

Brainstorm all the ways these three images can be played out. Ask yourself: What does fellow citizens/one family/whole building bring up for me? What does it imply? How can I understand it in my daily life?

How is this text embodied in your life?