



May 20, 2018 | PASTOR CRAIG SWEENEY

Chosen to be His **Church**.

A Question: What is the Church?

What we learn: His Church is...*"faithful followers of Christ Jesus."*

The BIG Question: What happens to God's church when we see it *differently* than God?

We are chosen to be **His Church**!

Once dead...now **alive**!

*"Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. <sup>2</sup>You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. <sup>3</sup>All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature."*  
Ephesians 2:1–3

**United with Him!**

*"But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, <sup>5</sup>that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead...we are united with Christ Jesus...God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. <sup>9</sup>Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. <sup>10</sup>For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."* Ephesians 2:4–10

A living **invitation** to all people!

*"For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us."*  
Ephesians 2:14

**Eternal**

*"This was his eternal plan..."* Ephesians 3:11

Challenge:

1. **Change our thinking** - Am I His Church?
2. **Change the way I experience His Church** - Am I a consumer or an owner?
3. **Change my DOING** - Am I part of the net?
  - Said of Dallas Willard - "When I'm around him, I see God clearer..."

Paul's prayer for the church (Ephesians 3:14–21).

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS

## Life Group Homework

For the week of May 20, 2018

### MY STORY

1. What was your takeaway from last week's study?
2. In what ways did you find greater dependence on Christ this week?

### QUICK REVIEW

3. Upon reviewing your notes from Sunday's teaching, what caught your attention?

### DIGGING DEEPER

*Ephesians 2:1-10 (NLT)*

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. <sup>2</sup>You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. <sup>3</sup>All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

<sup>4</sup>But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, <sup>5</sup>that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) <sup>6</sup>For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup>So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup>God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. <sup>9</sup>Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. <sup>10</sup>For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

4. What were we once and who did we obey?
5. What did Christ do for us according to the passage?
6. One of the misconceptions many people have about Jesus is that they believe Jesus came to make bad people good, but this is not what this passage is teaching. What did Jesus come to do for us and how does that make you feel?
7. In the passage, after verse 4, the pronoun "he and his" are used referring to Christ. What are the "he and his" phrases and how do they impact you personally? Example— he gave us life.

## TAKING IT HOME

*Ephesians 2:11-18 (NLT)*

<sup>11</sup> Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. <sup>12</sup> In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.

<sup>13</sup> But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us.

<sup>15</sup> He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. <sup>16</sup> Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

<sup>17</sup> He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. <sup>18</sup> Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

One of the hot topics of culture today is racial reconciliation. People can get very emotional about this issue. This passage in Ephesians addresses the racial reconciliation that was taking place in the first century. Let's take a moment and unpack some of the biblical principles regarding this issue.

8. What was the attitude of the Jews toward Gentiles?

While circumcision was a physical symbol given along with the law in the Old Testament it was also symbolic of the heart attitude. (See Romans 2:25–29; also see Galatians 5:6). In first century it was the separator between Jew and everyone else or Gentiles.

9. What did being united with Christ do for Gentiles?
10. What brings about true unity among different people groups?
11. How can we live this out in our lives?

*Ephesians 3:16-19 (NLT)*

<sup>16</sup> I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. <sup>17</sup> Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. <sup>18</sup> And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. <sup>19</sup> May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

<sup>20</sup> Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

12. What is Paul's prayer for the church?
13. What would your life be like if you lived daily with the knowledge Paul prays for?
14. How could that kind of love impact racial reconciliation in the world?

## CHAIR TIME TOOL

Read Ephesians chapters 2 and 3 and answer the following questions?

15. What is the main theme of each chapter?
16. In chapter 2 is there something in my heart that is separating me from others around me?
17. In Chapter 3 pray verses 17-19 for yourself and others in your life.

## FAMILY RESOURCES

Read Ephesians 3: 16-19 with your kids and then answer the following questions together:

18. What does it mean to trust Christ?
19. How do you experience God's love?
20. What would your life look like if you were rooted in God's love? How would those roots strengthen you?

End your time by praying Ephesians 3:17-19 over your children, yourselves and those who are on your "My Five List."