for the week beginning ***8th November***

Bible Study Group Notes

Ephesians 2.11-22

THE BIG PICTURE

In chapter 1, Paul describes God's plan to bring all things together under Christ. In 2.1–10, he shows how God brings people who were dead in sin to new life through grace. Now he describes what that grace has done between people. Gentiles, once far from God's promises to Israel, have been brought near through Jesus' death. Christ himself is our peace: he has broken down the hostility between Jew and Gentile and made them one new people. Together, they have access to the Father through the Spirit and are being built into God's home, with Christ as the cornerstone.

INVESTIGATE

Read Ephesians 2.11-22.

1. In verses 11–12, how does Paul describe the Gentiles' former position? What were they without?

2. Why does Paul tell them to "remember" this? What contrast does he draw in verse 13?

3. In verses 14–16, what has Christ done between Jews and Gentiles? Look for the words Paul repeats or emphasises.

4. Paul says Christ has made the two groups "one new humanity" (verse 15). What is striking about that? How does it differ from simply asking one group to join the other?

5. According to verses 16–18, how does Jesus bring both groups to God? What roles do the cross, the Spirit and the Father have?

6. What changes in the picture Paul uses in verses 19–21? What do "citizens", "household" and "building" tell us about the Gentiles' new place among God's people?

7. What does it mean for Christ to be the "cornerstone"? How does the rest of the building depend on him?

REFLECT & APPLY

Feel free to choose the questions that will be most helpful for your group, allowing time for prayer.

8. What kinds of things can make people feel like outsiders in a church or community? How does this passage challenge us?

9. Paul says Christ himself is our peace. How is that deeper than simply avoiding disagreement or getting along politely?

10. What might it look like for people with different backgrounds or histories to belong to one another in Christ?

11. Is there someone you find difficult to welcome or understand? What might it mean to remember that Christ has brought both of you near to God?

12. As we remember the divisions and losses caused by war, how does this passage help us long for peace? What is distinctive about the peace Christ makes through the cross?

13. How might knowing that we are "members of God's household" shape the way we treat one another at St Peter's?

PRAY

- Thank Jesus that through his death he has brought us near to God and made peace.
- Pray for people who feel far off, excluded or unwelcome, that they would find a place among God's people.
- Ask God to help St Peter's welcome people across differences, grow together in Christ, and become a community shaped by his peace.

NB The Church Prayer Pointers for November are available in the Hall, via the WhatsApp group, or from the Office.