



Life Group Study Notes

“We Are Family: World”

Ps. Carlos Antonio - August 11, 2019

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- If you could visit another country on an all expenses paid trip, where would you go?
- How many different cities or towns have you lived in?
- Who is one of your closer friends from an ethnicity or nation different from your own?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Today we focus on the second word in our name: Bethel **World** Outreach Church.

Ephesians 2:11-22 ESV Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Paul twice exhorts the Ephesian Gentile believers to “remember.” (*Gentiles* is a term that refers to all non-Jewish people.) Paul wants them to remember their prior condition and experience.

They were separated...alienated...strangers...no hope...without God.

But now in Christ Jesus...two critical changes have happened.

The first great purpose and benefit of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus is this: God has made it possible for repentant, believing people from all over the world to be reconciled to him. We are no longer separated, alienated strangers without hope and without God. We have been brought near to God. We have access to the Father in the Spirit through the Son.

But this is only half of what God has done for us through Jesus.

The second great purpose, benefit, and outcome of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus is this: God has made all of us one. All repentant believers from all the various ethnicities and nationalities are one in Christ. All are indwelt and joined together by God's Spirit. This oneness is a reality in the Spirit, but needs to be worked out in real relationships in this life.

Here are some important thoughts about this oneness that God desires for us:

1. Diversity is easier said than done.
2. Diversity is impossible apart from God.
3. The problem with diversity is me:
 - my insecurity
 - my pride
 - my preferences

The true foundation that makes genuine diversity possible in real life is knowing who we are apart from Jesus and who we are in Jesus.

Apart from him we are all sinners far from God, unworthy and guilty, deserving of eternal separation from God. Remember this. None of us is better than another when it comes to qualifying for salvation. We are all alike: we are fallen images of God.

But we are also alike in who we have become in Jesus. Because he lived sinless and died for our sins, we are the righteousness of God in Jesus. We are all appointed to everlasting life. We will all live together with God in the new heavens and new earth. We will all be conformed into the image of God.

These truths can help us grow together in unity with diversity for the glory of God.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points below, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- What is one example of insecurity, pride, or personal preferences that hinders you in growing in unity with your diverse spiritual family?
- Why do you think God wants his diverse people to become one?
- Who is someone diverse from yourself that you think God wants you to get to know better?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Thank God for his love for all people.
- Ask God to help you overcome your own insecurities, pride, and preferences.
- Ask God to give a good, close friend who is diverse from you.