



Growth Group Questions
October 4, 2026
“A New Humanity”

CONTEXT

Ephesians 2:11–22 builds on what Paul has previously said about grace. In the first half of the chapter Paul talked about how people who were dead in their sins and transgressions had been made alive in Christ. In verses 11-22 Paul shows what God’s grace does to the divisions between people. Gentiles who once had been outside Israel’s covenant story and were “without hope and without God in the world” have been brought near through Christ.

In verse 14 Paul says that Christ is our peace. Peace is more than people learning how to get along. The peace Paul is talking about is God doing something new through Jesus. Jews and Gentiles who had been separated by religious and cultural and even physical boundaries for centuries are being shaped into a new humanity.

This happens because of the cross. Christ does not reconcile one group to God and then ask them to figure out how to live with the other group. At the cross Jesus reconciles all who are estranged and have enmity towards each other and puts that hostility to death. Reconciliation with God and one another happens because of the work of Jesus.

Paul then turns to the imagery of the temple. People who were once strangers and foreigners are now fellow citizens and members of God’s household and are becoming God’s temple. Throughout Scripture the temple or tabernacle was the place where God’s presence dwelled. Paul says that with Christ as the cornerstone, God is now building people together into a place where God lives by his Spirit.

The temple image connects to the larger story of Scripture. From the beginning God has desired to dwell with his people and through them bring blessing to the world. Paul reminds the Ephesians that through Jesus God is now forming a new people who are to become the dwelling place of God’s presence in the world.

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:11-22

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—

¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Acts 21:27-29

²⁷ When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, ²⁸ shouting, “Fellow Israelites, help us! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place.” ²⁹ (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple.)

Isaiah 56:4-8

⁴ For this is what the Lord says:

“To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,
who choose what pleases me
and hold fast to my covenant—

⁵ to them I will give within my temple and its walls
a memorial and a name
better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
that will endure forever.

⁶ And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord
to minister to him,
to love the name of the Lord,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it

and who hold fast to my covenant—
⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain
and give them joy in my house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house will be called
a house of prayer for all nations.”
⁸ The Sovereign Lord declares—
he who gathers the exiles of Israel:
“I will gather still others to them
besides those already gathered.”

Mark 11:15-17

¹⁵ On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶ and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷ And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’^[a]? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

QUESTIONS

1. In Ephesians 2:14, the Apostle Paul says that Jesus is “our peace.” What does that mean to you?
2. What does it mean that as followers of Christ, our identity is in Him? How does having our identity in Christ change the way we should live our lives and relate with others?
3. What is reconciliation?
4. What does it mean that Jesus’ purpose was to reconcile us to God through the cross? (Ephesians 2:15-16)
5. Pastor Paul asked us to consider what walls we may build up to separate ourselves from others. What are some of the walls you identified?
6. Pastor Paul said that creating walls that separate us from others goes against everything Jesus did for us. What does that mean to you?
7. How does our reconciliation with God enable us to be reconciled with others?
8. In Ephesians 2:19-21, the Apostle Paul likens the church to a holy temple of the Lord with Christ as the cornerstone. What thoughts come to your mind as you consider this metaphor?

PASTOR PAUL'S SERMON QUESTIONS

1. Where am I holding onto resentment and how can I give that over to Jesus?
2. Prayer Practice – Reconciliation. Reflect on how God's reconciling work on your behalf should shape your relationship with others.