



LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD, THE BIBLE

In this week's passage, the author, Paul, is continuing to reveal the amazing change in our lives due to God's grace and Jesus' work. Here, he is addressing the Ephesians who were primarily gentiles, non-Jewish people. This is most of us. The blessings and amazing work of God keeps pouring out. Let's dig in and learn about what God has done for those who are "in Christ."

Look back at 2:1-3 and notice the words that the author focuses on their (our) previous status: "You were" (v. 1), you "once walked" (v. 2), you "once lived" (v.3), and you "were" (v.3). What does Paul ask us the "Gentiles" to "remember" in verses 11-12?

- You were Uncircumcised = people who are not living in obedience to God (11)
- You were separated from Christ (12)
- You were Alienated from the Jewish people and the promises from God (12)
- You had No hope
- You were Without God in the world (12)

Look back again at 2:4. The author wrote, "But God. . ." In the previous section These two words began the focus on what God did to change their status. In this week's passage (11-22), Paul begins the added blessings with the words "But now" (v. 13). Through a series of contrasts, we see how God completely changes our status when we are "in Christ." It is life-changing truth to see the kindness of what God has done. Below, complete the chart of contrasts of status "At one time" and then God's the blessings "But now" that Christ is in our lives.

"At one time"

Were far off
Divided and hostile
[Distanced] by Jewish ordinances
Hostile toward God and others
Without the Spirit
No access to the Father
Strangers and aliens
Separated from each other
Disconnected

"But now"

Brought near by the blood of Christ
United with believers and God
One new man (15) in peace
Reconciled with God, united with those in Christ
Having the Spirit
Full access to the Father
No longer strangers and aliens
Fellow citizens with the saints / household of God
Being built into the dwelling place for God (temple)

In our passage, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are referenced 18 times. How did God bring about these amazing changes in our lives?

- 1) By being included "In Christ"
- 2) Through the blood of Christ
- 3) God made us one
- 4) Through Jesus death in our place on the cross we can be reconciled to God
- 5) Through the teaching of Jesus
- 6) Through Jesus, we have access in one Spirit to the Father
- 7) By what Jesus accomplished, God dwells in us in the Spirit

What was God's purpose for achieving these changes? What does this say about God?

Through God's work, He was creating a unified family at peace to dwell with Him and He in us. This reveals God's character. God, who needed nothing, shares His love, mercy, goodness, and kindness and will continue to show the "immeasurable riches of His grace" in the coming ages.

What do you think and feel when you meditate on these truths?

When I (Steve) think on these, I am full of worship – praise, thankfulness, joy in Jesus, and wanting to share this with everyone. This passage reveals the goodness and gifts of God toward all people, the plan of God to bring us near to Himself and one another and gives us assurance and hope in this life. Surely, God is good to us with kindness we could not and did not earn.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

When the author (Paul) tells us to "remember" (vs. 11, 12), he then lists things that have happened in the past. Why?

What stands out to you from this passage? What do you think or feel as you consider these truths?

One of the repeated truths is that through God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), God has joined people together (oneness) in Christ (occurring 15 times here). What did this mean to the original audience? What should this mean to us today?

Who, in your world, needs this message? How can we team up to share this message?

APPLYING THE MESSAGE

Read through Ephesians chapter two slowly. Allow time to give thanks for each blessing. Carry this thanksgiving through your week and let the joy of the Lord fill your heart.

PLEASE PRAY

- Please pray for us to be intentional to pray and watch as we walk through our days and as opportunities arise for us to influence people with this good news
- Please pray for your global partners to know the joy of the Lord this week
- Please pray for Pastor Doug and Lisa as they make a quick trip to visit family in Montana