

EPHESIANS

2 : 1 1 - 2 2

BEFORE AND AFTER

(Ephesians 2:11-22)

If you're in sales, or if you buy things that others sell (and we all do), then you know that one frequently used and extremely effective strategy for selling a product is called the "before and after" method. Here's how it works: A salesperson demonstrates to the potential customer how bad things are prior to their product arriving onto the scene. Then the salesperson helps the potential customer to see how good things could become if they would just make this "new and improved" product a regular part of their lives. A lot of the time, to make the point, the seller will even show dramatic "before and after" pictures, contrasting the "old that is" with the "new that could be." This is the exact communication technique that the Apostle Paul uses in **Ephesians 2:11-22** to teach us a huge Biblical lesson. Specifically, Paul is showing us what it is like before Jesus enters one's life, and what it is like after Jesus enters one's life. So, he starts by pointing out to believers the terrible shape we were in before Jesus entered onto the scene of our lives (vv.11-12). Then he focuses on three amazing changes Christ brings after He comes into our lives (vv.13-18). Finally, Paul wants us to see the Lord's ultimate purpose of bringing His people together to be the representatives of God to this needy world (vv.19-22). Is Paul trying to sell us something? Absolutely! He wants you and me to "buy into" what it means to be the Body of Christ ... what it means to be the Church of Jesus Christ!

PAUL'S REMINDER: **THEREFORE REMEMBER ...**

(v.11)

RECALL WHERE JESUS TOOK YOU FROM

(v.11-12)

RECOGNIZE WHAT JESUS HAS GIVEN YOU

(v.13-18)

1. (v.13) Closeness to ...
2. (vv.14-17) Partnership with God's ...

3. (v.18) Anytime we want it ...

REALIZE WHO JESUS HAS MADE YOU TO BE

(v.19-22)

1. (v.19) A full-fledged ...
2. (vv.19) Citizens of the ...
3. (v.19) Members of ...
4. (vv.20-21) The Holy ...
5. (v.22) The Shrine for ...

FOR THOUGHT & TALK

In your small group take 5-10 minutes to review the main points of this week's message. Discuss the following questions, taking your time as the Spirit leads, realizing you don't have to cover them all.

1. Read aloud **Ephesians 2:11-22** from two different translations, along with **Mark 10:45**, **Matthew 16:18** and **Acts 20:28**. Based on your reading of these verses, what's your impression of how important the Church is to Jesus? Does it seem to you that Christians are placing less and less emphasis on being fully engaged in a local church community? Why do you think that is? Why is it important for followers of Jesus to love the church as much as Jesus does? In practical terms, what does fully engaging in the church, and loving the church like Jesus, look like?
2. Pastor John summarized **Ephesians 2:11-12** in this manner, "**PRE-JESUS**" **WE WERE ... SPIRITUALLY DONE FOR!** How were we done for? What does that mean? Paul uses two very strong phrases to describe life "before" Christ ... *without hope* and *without God*. What do those phrases mean to you when you hear them read? How does recalling life "before" Jesus help us better appreciate life "after" Jesus?
3. What can you and I do to help us at NCFE feel more like **God's household** (v.19)? What's the benefit of doing so? What can you and I do to help NCFE be more of the **holy temple** Jesus intended us to be? What's the benefit of doing so? What can you and I do to help NCFE be more of a **sacred shrine** where the Shekinah Glory of God shines undiminished? What will the results be of doing so?
4. From a personal testimony basis, how is the "before Jesus" you different from the "after Jesus" you? If you have been a Christian for a long time, and can't remember much of your life without Jesus, then what are some of the ways that the Lord has changed you during your many years as a Christian? How has being a part of Jesus' church helped to bring about those improvements in your life?