



Joy: A Study of Ephesians Chapters 2 & 3

JOY of Life with Christ (Joy in the Family)

Ephesians 2:11-22

Summary: When God made clear his desire that none should perish (1 Timothy 2:3-4; John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9), He included Ephesians, Americans, Mississippians and every race of every nation. Paul writes to remind the new believers in Ephesus that they should never forget they were once excluded from God but now they are included in His family tree because they are united with Jesus! This truth holds today! Every person alive can come to Jesus for salvation. The blood of Jesus paved the way for the salvation of all who believe. Foreigners of the faith now are citizens of God's Kingdom! This is truly good news!

Revelation 7:9-10 NLT

A great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Scripture Overview: Gentiles included everyone who was not a Jew. When God chose Abraham, He chose the lineage that would produce the savior of the world. God told Abraham in Genesis 12:2, "I will bless you and make you famous and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you." God's promised blessing to "all families" is rooted in His promise to Abraham in Genesis. In Jesus we find the fulfillment of the promise and in Ephesians chapter 2, the implications of its application in Paul's clear pronouncement to the Ephesians as former "outsiders" and now members of God's family. There is hope for everyone's salvation and the joy that it brings.

I. Many in America are living apart from Christ and without hope. They are Outsiders!

Ephesians 2:11-12 NLT

11 Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. 12 In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.

II. Others in America are united with Christ and all believers. They are Family!

Ephesians 2:13-14, 19 NLT

13 But now you have been **united with Christ Jesus**. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. 14 For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. 19 So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's **family**.

III. Jesus created one new people! One body!

Jesus Ended the System of the Law by means of His death on the Cross and reconciled man to God and united Jews with Gentiles.

Ephesians 2:15-16 NLT

15 He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself **one new people** from the two groups. 16 Together as **one body**, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

IV. We have Peace and Joy (Good News) through life with Jesus.

V. We have Peace and Joy (Good News) as members of God's family.

Ephesians 2:17-22 NLT

17 He brought this **Good News of peace** to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. 18 Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us. 19 So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. 20 Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. 21 We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. 22 Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

Questions from the Scripture

1. Trace the spiritual biography of the Gentiles in this passage.
2. What did Jesus do for the Gentiles?
3. As you think about individual Christians or groups of Christians that you feel separated from (because of theological, cultural, denominational, racial, or economic differences), what positive steps might you begin to take to heal these divisions?
4. How did Jesus bring the Jews and Gentiles together?
5. What is the significance of the fact that Jesus "preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near" (v. 17)?
6. What does it mean to have access to the Father through one Spirit (v. 18)?
7. The status of the Gentile's dramatically changed. Instead of being refugees they now have a home. What is the final outcome of Christ destroying the wall of hostility (vv. 19-22)?
8. Think about this spiritual building that is being constructed. How are the apostles and prophets the foundation?
9. Why is Jesus considered the chief cornerstone of this building?
10. How do you respond to being a part of God's new society, built together into a holy temple in which God lives?

Life Application Sermon Guide

1. Does this passage encourage you about your relationship with God and with other believers? In what ways?
2. Do you take for granted being near to God? How? What steps can you take to live closer to God and more thankful?
3. What role do you think you might have in breaking down barriers between yourself and others and between them and God?
4. Praise God and thank Him for bringing you close to Himself and to other believers when you were once so far away. Ask Him to work His grace in you so that you live out the truth of your spiritual family relationships. How might you contribute to the removal of any dividing wall of hostility between believers?