

Ephesians JH Cell Group Series-

This series emphasizes the foundational lessons in the book of Ephesians about the believer's new identity in Christ. There is one teaching per chapter, and the first three hone in on different aspects of our new identity: 1) What Is the New Self?, 2) New Self vs. Old Self, and 3) The Love of Christ for Us. The last three teachings focus in on living in line with what's true about us now: 4) Unity, 5) Being a Giver, Not a Taker, & 6) Standing Against Satan.

The teachings below are geared toward 8th graders and should be shortened and simplified for younger grades. Also, as always, these are not scripts. Each point below should be taken as a suggestion to take into account as you prayerfully consider the passage and the students you are teaching.

This series is designed for 6 weeks, although you could spend much longer in Ephesians if you want. After the 6 teachings (one for each chapter), there are more resources at the end of this document for teaching other parts of Ephesians not covered in the main teachings.

- Ephesians 1: What Is the New Self?
- Ephesians 2: New Self vs. Old Self
- Ephesians 3: The Love of Christ for Us
- Ephesians 4: Living as a New Self: Unity
- Ephesians 5: Living as a New Self: Being a Giver, Not a Taker
- Ephesians 6: Living as a New Self: Standing Against Satan

Ephesians 1: What Is the New Self?

- MAIN POINT- What it means to be *in Christ*.
- INTRO- Consider the question "Who am I?"
 - e.g. Tell weird facts/funny stories about yourself
 - But who *am I* for real? Who does God say I am?
- Eph. 1:1-2 General intro to book: non-specific, bug-picture letter to new churches
- Eph. 1:3
 - *Has* blessed us with *every* spiritual blessing? How so?
 - Various phrases in your Bible (if they have NLTs) are actually all the same: "united with Christ," "through Jesus Christ," "belonging to Christ," "united to Christ" all actually say "IN CHRIST"
 - IN CHRIST means "Joined up with Christ so things that are true about him become true about us" (write)
 - For Christians, Christ is in you AND you are in Christ (if you can, draw a picture of a big Jesus and a big student, and then draw a little Jesus inside the student when you talk about Christ in you, and draw the student inside Jesus when you talk about
 - Christ in you:
 - "Christ died for our sins" 1 Cor. 15:3
 - "If anyone opens the door and *lets me in*, I will come in..." Rev. 3:20
 - Jesus pays for your sin, and if you receive Christ, he comes to live IN YOU through the Holy Spirit
 - You in Christ
 - "Every spiritual blessing *in Christ*"- things about Jesus become true about us
 - e.g. Jesus is close with the Father; I am in Christ; therefore, I am close with the Father.

- [Do some kind of humorous/memorable demonstration that shows this principle. Examples: 1) Put a student in a bin. When you shake/spin/drop the bin, you shake/spin/drop the student because he's *in* the bin. 2) Put a \$5 bill in an envelope. When you hide/fold/rip up the envelope, you hide/fold/rip up the \$5 bill, too.]
 - **DQ- If you've grown up in the church, you've probably heard of "Christ in you" when you were kids, but you probably haven't heard of "you in Christ." When do you think is a good age for people to start learning these deeper things? Why?**
- Eph 1:4-14 [Read through the section, writing down and explaining key identity truths in brackets below, or split it up with four readers if you have time: 4-5, 6-8, 9-11, 13-14. Emphasize that *these things are true about us if we are IN CHRIST because they are true about Jesus.*]
 - 1:4- "**chose us**" [1) GOD'S CHOSEN- i.e. Jesus was the real chosen one]
 - 1:4- "**holy**" [2) DIFFERENT/SPECIAL]
 - 1:4- "**without fault in his eyes**" [3) PERFECT IN GOD'S EYES]
 - **DQ- WHY IS THIS SO HARD TO BELIEVE SOMETIMES?.**
 - 1:5- "**adopt us into his own family**" [4) GOD'S CHILD]
 - 1:7- "**freedom**" [5) FREE]
 - 1:7- "**forgave our sins**" [6) FORGIVEN]
 - 1:9- "**revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ**" [7) IN THE KNOW]
 - 1:11- "**received an inheritance from God**" [8) BOUND FOR HEAVEN]
 - 1:13- "**giving you the Holy Spirit**" [9) WITH GOD ALL THE TIME]
 - mention 1:14- God's guarantee—can't lose any of these things!
- Conclusion: So what now?
 - If you're not in, receive Christ!
 - ANTITHESIS: "In Christ" not "in a church," "in America," or "in a good Christian family"
 - You've heard it, but do you believe it?
 - Actions speak louder than words! [e.g. If you *believed* you were God's child, then praying/fellowship/Bible would be enjoyable and wouldn't feel like a chore. If you *believed* God sees you as perfect, you wouldn't worry what others think.]
 - Let it sink in! Thank God for these things when you pray.

Ephesians 2- New Self vs. Old Self

- MAIN POINT- You were lost without Christ, but rescued with him
- Intro- Some illustration where you need to understand bad news to appreciate good news (e.g. you are sitting down to dinner and Arnold Schwarzenegger kicks down the door to rescue you—only a good thing if there's something to rescue you from)
- Last week, talked about *who we are* in Christ- these new things he makes us. But how do we get there, and where are we coming from? Who am I without Christ?
- Bad news: Eph. 2:1-3 Your old self was—
 - "dead"- separated from God
 - "live in sin"- experiencing the terrible effects of our own selfishness (hurting others, being hurt)
 - **DQ- What are some examples of bad effects that sin can have in our lives?**

- “obeying the devil”- being tricked and manipulated, stuck in ways of thinking
- “inclinations of our sinful nature”- getting trapped in sin, addicting. The same amount of drugs/sexual experience/putting people down/lying/etc. does not satisfy any more so you need more.
 - Trying not to sin just makes it worse, because you are trapped!
- Worst of all: “subject to God’s anger”-
 - God is perfect and made us to follow him. He gave us a conscience so we would do what’s right. But ALL of us go against our conscience, doing wrong things, and even more-so, NOT doing right things.
 - We stand under his judgment, and that means paying the penalty for our sin, which includes being separated from all goodness forever.
 - **DQ- What would you say to a friend who says, “I could never believe in a God that would send people to hell”?**
- The human solution: RELIGION! Do the right good deeds, go to the right holy places at the right times, and do the right rituals.
 - Problem- We can’t clean ourselves up enough! (like trying to scrub a turd)
 - Problem- God’s standard for his perfect presence is perfection
 - Problem- The best religion could do is fix us up on the outside, but our trouble is on the inside, our selfish hearts.
- God’s solution: The GOOD NEWS (finally!) Eph 2:4-5
 - He felt *compassion* for us, even though we caused our own problems!
 - He *loved* us, even though we turned against him!
 - He *died & raised again* for us! This is how we are saved from our sin. God became one of us, and when he willingly went to his death, he suffered through all of the evil that has ever been done by any of us. So, our sin was paid for. And then he defeated sin and death by coming back to life!
- What that means now:
 - Eph 2:7 Proves forever that God is good!
 - Eph 2:8-9 Saves us as a FREE GIFT
 - OPPOSITE of religion! Religion says “do X, Y, & Z to get to God.” The Bible says, “Jesus did X, Y, & Z to get to you! And he did H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P!” He went the distance for you to make salvation free.
 - **DQ- This passage is so clear a little child could understand it. But why do people have such a hard time with this idea? Why is it so hard to believe that knowing God and getting to heaven is a free gift?**
 - Eph. 2:10 Sets us up to do good works for God!
 - People argue about what “good works” has to do with “being saved.” This passage tells us: you aren’t saved because you do good works, you do good works because you are saved!
 - Fully rescued—not just from paying for our sin when we die, but rescued from a life controlled by sin in this life, too.
- Conclusion- This is a free gift—just say yes! Already believed this for a while? Spend some time thinking about this and thanking God. You would have been *so screwed* if Jesus hadn’t come for you, but now you are *so blessed* if you’ve received Christ. It was free for you and it’s free for others, so tell your friends!

Ephesians 3- The Love of Christ for Us

- Main Point- Wrap your mind around how much Christ loves you

- Intro: What would happen if Bill Gates adopted an orphan who was your age who had lived on the streets his whole life? The kid has stolen, lied, cheated, and snuck around his whole life just to survive. He would stop doing those things because now he's rich, right? (Ask the students what he would really do.) It would be hard for him to *really believe* how rich he is now. How it is with us in Christ.
- Review- Paul recaps earlier point in 3:12
 - **DQ- How can we be confident before God when we he is perfect and we are sinners?**
 - Not sinners in God's eyes if we received Christ- we are forgiven because Jesus paid for it
 - Get this when we put our *faith* (just means "trust") in him
 - Once you do, you have CRAZY blessings! Review from chapter 1:
 - forgiveness
 - eternal life
 - child of God
 - Holy Spirit in you
 - etc.
 - Now, one of the most important and difficult things we can do is *just believe how awesome we have it and how much Jesus loves us!*
- Eph. 3:14-16 Thinking about the Good News of Jesus makes Paul pray for the Ephesians that they would have inner strength.
 - **DQ- What type of things require inner strength?**
 - Is Paul going to pray for them to have inner strength to obey God? Lay down their lives? Forgive their enemies? What it is might surprise you...
- Eph. 3:17-19 Praying for the *power to understand Jesus' love for you*
 - Hard to understand because nothing is like it!
 - How wide, long, high, and deep? Consider the cross- suffering to the extreme physically (the torture of the whips & nails), emotionally (mocked, hanging naked in front of a crowd, betrayed by best friends), and spiritually (punished for all human sin). He could have stopped it at any time, but his love for you kept him going!
 - "Then you will experience the fullness of life and power of God."
 - When? When we *understand* Christ's love and *experience* it (v. 18-19)
 - Remember the orphan adopted by Bill Gates? He will get to live like an ultra-rich kid when he understands and experiences the fact that he is now Bill Gates's son.
 - It's the same with us—we can experience fullness of life or live like an orphan, *even if we are truly God's child because we've received Christ.*

Knowing the love of Christ

1. Fullness
2. Loving as he has loved us
3. I am fully accepted by God because of Christ
4. God has good, important, doable plans for my life
5. Spend time with my Father
6. Other believers are my brothers and sisters

Living as an orphan

1. Feel empty- need satisfied
2. Get from others/worry what they think
3. Need to earn my way to God
4. I have to plan my own life
5. See prayer/Bible as a chore
6. Neglecting God's family

- Conclusions:
 - Good News, Christ died and raised again to **rescue** you
 - If you receive Christ, you **have** the love of Christ, which is the greatest thing ever

- If you **believe** and **think about** Christ's love, and spend time **building your relationship** with God, you will experience fullness
- Otherwise you will live like an orphan and miss out!

Ephesians 4- Living as a New Self: Unity

- Main Point- living out the unity we already have.
- Introduction- Who remembers what the big commands were from the first 3 chapters? Trick question, there were none! It was all about what God has done, is doing, and will do for us. That's the most important thing for us to understand, and if we get that, we'll be able to live out what we are told to do.
- Shifts to what we should do, *based on who we are in Christ*.
- Eph. 4:1-6
 - Life worthy of your calling, not worthy of your salvation (GOSPEL- ref. Eph. 2:8-9)
 - Calling:
 - Individual- missionary, leader, giver, evangelist, etc.
 - The church- Showing others the goodness of God
 - Some do and some don't!
 - **DQ- What type of things would you see at a cell group that is living up to its calling?**
- Eph. 4:2-3
 - Is this what people see when they come to our group?
 - [Go through and explain each concept: humble, gentle, patient, etc.]
 - A dynamic community of people who love each other and work together in unity?
 - Or do they see cliques, fighting, ugly competition, and favoritism?
 - **DQ- How do these type of things show themselves in junior high nowadays?**
 - "Keep yourselves united"- not "make yourselves" because God has united all who have received Christ:
- Eph. 4:4-6
 - **DQ- What type of things do people outside of Christianity tend to unite over?**
 - Notice, most of these things are temporary, changing, and often superficial
 - Unity in Christ:
 - One Body- The Church: we are truly connected soul to soul
 - One Spirit- Mutual leading- We can work together, as opposed to everyone going a different direction (wouldn't work in a physical body! Happened to me when I was learning to ski—each leg went its own direction)
 - One Hope- Eternity together
 - One Lord- Jesus
 - One Faith- Share the Bible- We know where each other is coming from
 - One Baptism- Transformed- experience our new identity together (baptized=put into. It can be water, but this is about being put into Christ)
 - One God- Same Father = same family
 - NOTICE, these things are eternal, unchanging, and meaningful!
- Conclusion-
 - Get involved!
 - **DQ- Aside from "show up more," what are some things you could do to get more involved with the guys/gals here?**

- Challenge them- will you actually try these things or are you just trying to give a right answer?
- Be patient with each other
 - They WILL annoy you—will you try God’s way and be patient with them?
- Keep the unity- this is who God made us, so let’s see how awesome it can be!

Ephesians 5- Living as New Selves: Being a Giver, Not a Taker

- Main Point- Being a giver because God made us his children
- Introduction [In this passage, we are told to imitate God. Give some sort of funny introduction about imitations, like celebrity imitations, imitations of each other, someone who does a great imitation of yourself, etc.]
- Eph 5:1-2
 - Because you are his children- ref. John 1:12- become his child by believing Jesus’ died and rose for you and receiving that gift
 - Follow example of Christ
 - **DQ- Being inspired by Jesus’ awesome example is one good reason to follow God. What are some other reasons to follow God?**
 - About to get into commands about sex and drugs—good to remember what this is really about: “Imitate God... live a life of love... follow the example of Christ” = *Being a giver, not a taker.*
 - “Imitate God” means give as he gave, not just “follow the rules”!
- Eph. 5:3-4
 - Sexuality- Bible teaches that sex unites us on a deep level, that’s why it’s reserved for marriage only (this is for ANY and ALL sexual contact)
 - Taker-
 - Get pleasure for myself
 - Don’t care if it harms myself or my boyfriend/girlfriend
 - Use sex to be liked
 - Giver-
 - Waits for full commitment for sexual exploration so I can give myself fully to my spouse
 - Bottom line: the Taker asks “How far can I go?” but the Giver asks, “What’s most serving?”
 - Money/career (based on “greed” in verse 3)
 - Taker-
 - Use my gifts/opportunities to get stuff for me
 - Slack off and waste opportunities to give
 - Giver-
 - Use my gifts/opportunities to give generously
 - See my abilities as ways to serve God better
 - Did God give you a gifted mind? Is that because he wants you to get rich and drive a Maserati? Or is it because he wants you to use it in serving people?
 - This is SO different than how our culture thinks! If you work hard at serving God and not at getting ahead in life, people will call you stupid.

- **DQ- How could someone decide how much they should give away and how much they should keep for themselves?**
 - Words (v. 4)
 - “Alright, get your pens ready to write, because I’m going to tell you the 10 words that you should never, ever say. Just kidding!” Use joke to make the point that what we’re talking about is much deeper than just a list of words you shouldn’t say.
 - Taker-
 - Use words to hurt others
 - Use words to draw people’s attention... to ME!
 - Giver-
 - Use words to build others up (not fussing about how others talk, either)
 - Use my words to draw attention to... Jesus!
- Eph 5:5
 - What? Doesn’t this contradict everything we’ve studied so far?
 - Answer question with a question: Does God consider us to be immoral, impure, or greedy? No, he sees us as pure in Christ.
- Eph 5:6-8
 - v. 6 actually says “the children of disobedience” in Greek, not “ALL who are disobedient,” because we all sin sometimes.
 - Why bring up the fact that people who are guilty before God will not go to heaven? Reminding us of the *why to follow God*: “Imitate God... He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us... (and if he didn’t we’d be toast!)”
- Eph. 5:15-18
 - Making Decisions (“be careful how you live... make the most of every opportunity... don’t act thoughtlessly”)
 - Taker-
 - Says/does hurtful things without realizing it
 - Doesn’t notice opportunities to help
 - *Acts like a child*
 - Giver-
 - Thinks before speaking or acting
 - *Looks* for chances to share God’s love
 - *Acts maturely*
 - You are just barely to the age where you could do this! It’s okay when a child acts like a child, but not when an adult does (tantrums, doing nothing to help when it’s time to clean up, etc.). That shift should happen sometime around your age, but for some it never comes!
 - Drunkenness/Drug Use
 - Taker-
 - Gets drunk or high
 - Cares about getting a good feeling, but not about hurting self or others in the process
 - Giver-
 - Doesn’t let a substance control him/her so that God’s Spirit can be in control
 - Watches out for friends

- Conclusions- some yes/no questions to answer in your own mind.
 - Does the Bible have commandments?
 - Is its message mainly about the rules?
 - Do you appreciate how much God has given you if you have received Christ?
 - Does it make you want to be a giver?
 - Did you realize that God's commands about sex and drugs have to do with being a giver and not a taker?

Ephesians 6- Living as a New Self: Standing Against Satan

- Main Point- Knowing who we are in Christ helps us resist Satan
- Introduction- Talking about the devil tonight. Some think this is stupid (discuss portrayals in cartoons/pop culture) and others obsess over it. Let's do neither and learn what God says.
- Eph. 6:10-12
 - Be strong... but do it in his strength
 - Fighting the devil, not people
 - **DQ- What would happen if a church thought its mission was to fight against bad people, rather than fighting Satan?**
 - The devil!
 - Real
 - Created by God (not equal/opposite to God) as an angel
 - Rebelled against God- thought God was no good, convinced other angels to rebel, convinced people to rebel
 - Proved wrong at the cross- God didn't just say he was good and Satan was wrong, he proved it by being willing to suffer for us
 - Fighting the devil is a battle of the mind.
 - **DQ- How does Satan try to affect our thinking?**
- Eph. 6:13-17 Armor- Paul referring to Roman armor
 - Belt of Truth-
 - Belt holds everything together
 - Best way to fight lies is with the truth!
 - Body armor of righteousness-
 - Breastplate- protects the heart
 - Our righteousness- *believing* that God has truly made us righteous (not just our doing righteous deeds)
 - Remembering that God has forgiven you protects your heart.
 - **DQ- How does remembering God's forgiveness protect us from Satan's influence?**
 - Hard question- might need to lead them to thoughtful answers (knowing that God is that good makes sin less tempting, knowing God has made me new gets rid of the thought from Satan that I'm worthless)
 - Shoes-

- Essential for standing your ground in a fight
 - Readiness to share Christ- why we're in this fight! Need to keep focused on this, or what's the point? We're already going to heaven, but other people aren't!
- Shield of faith
 - Our personal trust in God
 - Thought from Satan comes in like an arrow ("God is so sick of your crap!"), and we block it with the shield of faith ("No way, God loves me! He's always been there for me and I know he always will!"). Boom! Blocked Satan!
- Salvation as your helmet
 - Protects your head
 - The fact that we're saved—really believing and thinking about this
 - Same as the breastplate! This must be SO important! That's why Ephesians 1-3 were all about this—God really has rescued you because he loves you, so DON'T BELIEVE those thoughts that God is fed up with you!
- Sword- the Word
 - Only weapon- the rest are all defensive
 - Can ATTACK lies with the truth
 - Lie- "Maybe I should just stay home. No one wants me at cell group anyway."
 - Attack the lie with the sword! "False! 'God has put all the parts of the Body where he wants them.' Die you falsehood, hiyaah!"
- Prayer- our other weapon. We can keep Satan away for the time being by prayer.
- Conclusion- When is the best time to put on armor? Before the battle begins! Get focused on how much God loves you, on how awesome your salvation is NOW, before you are scrambling for it because you are tempted or facing thoughts of worthlessness.
 - Satan is no match for us if we have God's power with us by getting our mind right
 - We are no match for him without our armor. Some of us here will lose our walks with God and pursue worldly things instead of spiritual things... and it will be because we weren't ready for the battle. Don't let it be you!

Additional Resources:

Ephesians 1 pt 2: Opening of the Eyes to Who I Am in Christ ppt:

Ephesians 1

Who Am I?

Who Am I?

- I am *Brad*.
- I am *Amy's husband*.
- I am *Lizzie and Teddy's dad*.
- I am *a junior high worker*.
- I am *a part of a college home church*.
- I am *the guy who chugged a bunch of butterscotch syrup to win a contest*.
- I am *the guy with the weird pinkies*.
- I am *the guy who can flip his eyelids inside out without touching them*.
- I am *the one who always falls asleep in class*.
- But *who AM I?* Who does God say I am?

Who Am I?

Ephesians 1:1-3 This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus. 2 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Who Am I?

Ephesians 1:3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.

"United with Christ"
"Through Jesus Christ"
"Belonging to Christ"
"United to Christ"

"In Christ"

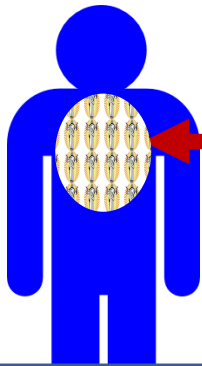
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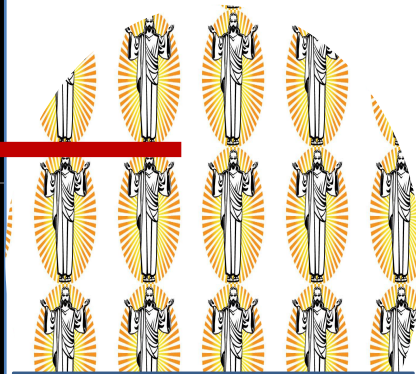
Joined up with Christ so things that are true about him become true about us.

← **“In Christ”**

Who Am I in Christ?

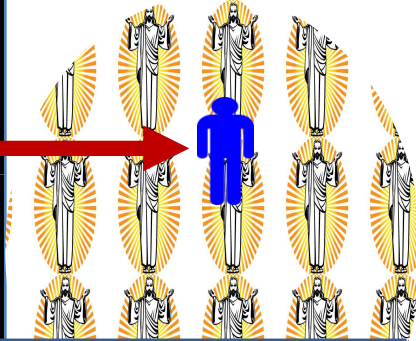
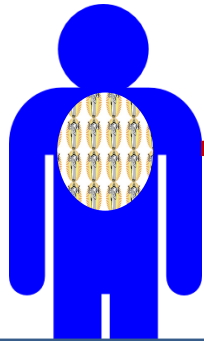


Christ died for our sins. 1 Cor. 15:3



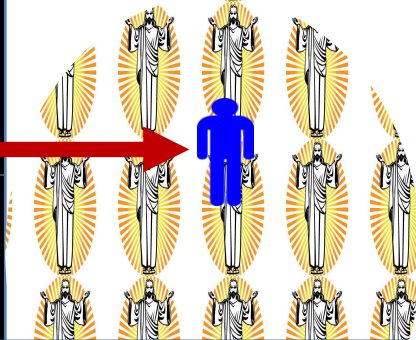
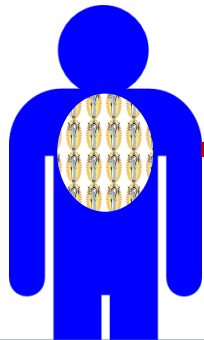
If anyone opens the door and *lets me in*, I will come in.... Rev. 3:20

Who Am I in Christ?



"Every spiritual blessing *in Christ*"

Who Am I in Christ?

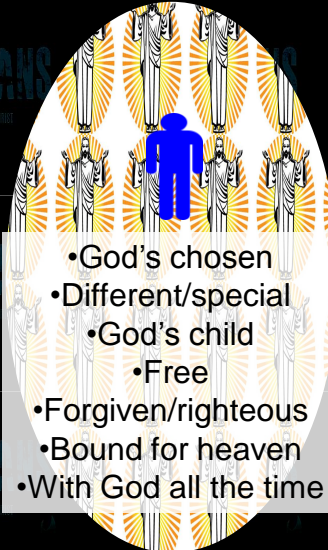


"Every spiritual blessing *in Christ*"

**Example: Jesus is close with God the Father.
In Christ, we are close with the Father.**

Who Am I in Christ?

Ephesians 1:4-14 God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy... to adopt us into his own family... he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins... when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit... The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised...



Who Am I in Christ?

Ephesians 1:4-14 God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy... to adopt us into his own family... he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins... when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit... The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised...

On our own, before we receive Christ...



Opening of the Eyes...

Ephesians 1:15-17 Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, 16 I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, 17 asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.

Opening of the Eyes...

Ephesians 1:18-19 I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. 19 I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead...

Opening of the Eyes

Realizing how good we have it!

- How it works

- Must have received Christ!
 - All those things are true about you whether or not you think about it.
 - When we *focus* on the blessings we have in Christ, we believe it more deeply

- What we need to “see”

- I’m forgiven
- I’m safe
- I’m close with God

- How to get it?

- Pray for it and trust God will bring it!



- God’s chosen
- Different/special
- God’s child
- Free
- Forgiven/righteous
- Bound for heaven
- With God all the time

Ephesians 2 pt 2- Jews and Gentiles: God’s Strategy

Ephesians 2

Jews and Gentiles: God’s Strategy

Jews and Gentiles

Ephesians 2:8-10 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Jews and Gentiles

Ephesians 2:11-12 Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders.... 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.

Jews and Gentiles

What does it mean to be a Jew today?

- 1. A follower of the Judaism (Jewish by religion)**
- 2. A follower of Jewish customs (Jewish by culture)**
- 3. A descendant of Ancient Israel (Jewish by blood)**

Back then- The Jews were one big, extended family with the same religion and culture, who all came from the same country.

Who are Gentiles? Everyone else!

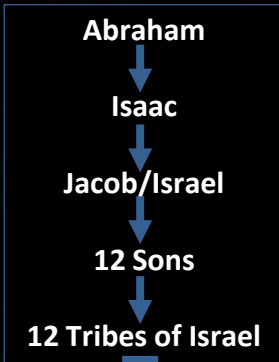
Jews and Gentiles

Why do they matter?

- God's *chosen* people...**
 - Not just chosen to be blessed**
 - Chosen to bring a blessing to the world**

Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord had said to Abra(ha)m, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. 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."



Jesus

through you.”

Jews and Gentiles

matter?

people...

chosen to be blessed

bring a blessing to the world

The Lord said to Abra(ha)m, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you

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who bless you and curse those who treat you

All the families on earth will be blessed

Jews and Gentiles

Why do they matter?

- God’s *chosen* people...
 - Not just chosen to be blessed
 - Chosen to bring a blessing to the world -Jesus
 - ***In Jesus’ day, Israel had forgotten this!***
- Key part of God’s Strategy
 - The Jewish *LAND*- Israel

- God wants a relationship with you
- He is so holy, you can't come near him!
- Need a sacrifice for your sins



- Key part of God's Strategy
 - The Jewish *LAND*- Israel
 - The Jewish religion-
 - Taught that God is far AND near
 - Jewish politics- the Kingdom
 - Need God as their king



**Setup
for
Jesus!**

Jews and Gentiles

Review so far...

- **MOST IMPORTANTLY:**
 - Q- What people did God choose to bless by sending Jesus for them?
 - A- EVERYONE!
 - Q- Then how are the Jews the "chosen people"?
 - A- They were the ones *chosen* to bring Jesus to the rest of the world.

Jews and Gentiles

Ephesians 2:12-13 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. 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.

Jews and Gentiles

Ephesians 2:14-16 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.... 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.

Jews and Gentiles

Ephesians 2:20-22 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.

Jews and Gentiles

Conclusions...

- God worked through thousands of years of history: Abraham to Israel to Jesus... *to you!*
- This was all so you can know God.
- When God *chooses* people, he blesses them by using them to bless others.
- If the *REAL* and *IMPORTANT* division between the Jews and Gentiles is gone in Christ...
the *MADE-UP* and *STUPID* divisions we have should go away too! (cool/uncool, jock/gamer...)

Ephesians 4:11-16 The New Self Pt. 1: When Each Part Does Its Work

- Intro: Something related to a NEW SELF that will grab their attention
- Key verses: Eph. 4:22-24 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

- Part of your new identity in Christ is your connection with other believers (see Brian's PPT from last week)
- Gospel- can't become a Christian just by acting like one—must be born again
- Eph. 4:11-12 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
 - Antithesis: Serving is the leader's job.
- Eph. 4:14-15 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.
 - Unity will protect us from walking away from God
 - How do we get it? How do I play my role? SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE
 - Truth without love...
 - Love without truth...
- Eph. 4:16 From him [Christ] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
 - The result: an awesome church!
 - People are coming to Christ
 - Old and new members learning new things
 - Old and new members finding joy in serving (e.g. mission trip)
 - Old and new members finding freedom from destructive habits

Ephesians 4:17-32 The New Self Pt. 2: Daily Life as a New Creation

- Intro: Something related to a NEW SELF that will grab their attention
- Key verses: Eph. 4:22-24 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
 - Gospel- can't become a Christian just by acting like one—must be born again
- Eph. 4:17-19 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.
 - Gentiles: the nations/nonbelievers. Hardly any Christians yet, so the outside world was considered non-believing.
 - Contrast old vs. new self
 - Old: darkened= make up my beliefs, making excuses for how I already live

- New: enlightened= taught by God, not just how to live... how much he loves us in making us new = why sin loses its appeal (examples?)
 - Old: goal of life is to feel good
 - New: goal of life is to show how awesome God is, grow, serve others
- Eph. 4:20-25 That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.
 - Contrast old vs. new self
 - Old: saying whatever will get me what I want (lying, telling the truth, or deceiving someone when not *technically* lying, etc.)
 - New: telling the truth
- Eph. 4:26-27 “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.
 - Contrast old vs. new self
 - Old: bad anger: blow up or bottle up (examples?)
 - New: good anger: decide how to address the situation in love and do it that day
- Eph. 4:28-29 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.
 - Contrast old vs. new self
 - Old: theft OR lazy
 - Prov. 18:9 A lazy person is as bad as someone who destroys things.
 - New: diligent, generous
 - Old: words to boost up self (put others down, gross them out, exclude others... much deeper than a list of no-no words)
 - New: words to build up others (speaking the truth in love from last week)
- Conclusion: Eph. 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
 - Sealed, can't lose the Holy Spirit, love of God, or your new identity in Christ
 - But you can waste your life and grieve the HS, living like people who don't even KNOW God.