



theme: Identity #2 – A Dwelling Place for God
materials: Sandwich ingredients, bibles

welcome

Make some creative sandwiches. Bring out bread and a variety of possible ingredients (ketchup, marshmallows, peanut butter, bananas, pickles, etc...) The object is for each person to use 2 ingredients in their sandwich in an attempt to make the most "creative" tasting combination they can. The more unusual the ingredients the better.

Share your creations with each other, and see whose sandwich tastes the most interesting.

interact

Pray Ephesians 3:14-21 over each other in pairs or threes (substitute the person's name for the word "you" in the passage, and add in some of your own prayer, if you like.)
Do you understand the unsurpassed love of Christ for you? What does it mean to be filled with the fullness of God?

read

Read out Ephesians 2:1-22. It is a complex passage, so read it slowly, and stop if there are any questions or if people are confused by anything in it.

What does this passage say our identity is without Christ? (v.1-3; 5; 12).

Do you agree with this? Do you think you were "dead" in your sin before Christ? What does that mean?

What is our new identity now?

What does it mean to be made alive in Christ? How does that happen?

What is grace? How are we "saved by grace through faith"?

Why does Paul (the author) stress so much that our salvation is not our own doing?

What have we been "created in Christ" for? (v. 10) In verses 11-21 it talks about Christ being "our peace", "killing hostility", "making one man out of two", and people being made into "members of the household of God."

Which are the two groups Paul is talking about here? Who is Christ joining together to form one body?

How are we all being built together as a dwelling place for God?

What is the main thing that unites (or should unite) followers of Christ?

Do you see yourself primarily as an individual, or as a member of a larger group? Are you worried about losing your individuality if you are identified not just as yourself, but as part of the Body of Christ?

think

You have been created in Christ for good works (v. 10). Organize with your cell this week to engage in even one small good work as a witness to Christ's workmanship in us.



live & pray

Visit a church this week that you would not normally go to, preferably one in which you are a visible minority. Do you recognize your spiritual relationship with these folk as easily as you would other Christians who seem to have more in common with you? Christ is joining all Christians together to build a dwelling place for God by His Spirit.

useful resources

- Website: <http://www.christnotes.org/commentary.php?b=49&c=2&com=mhc> - Matthew Henry's Commentary on Ephesians 2
- Movie: *Punch Drunk Love* – A powerful movie about a man who discovers his identity with the help of Grace. (Some sexual Dialogue).
- Movie: *The End Of The Spear*

leader's guide

Our identity without Christ is that we are dead in our trespasses, followers of the prince of the air (Satan), children of wrath, living in the passion of our flesh, separated from Christ, alienated from Israel, strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God. Phew. To be dead in our sin is for our spirit's to be dead, not having any ability to communicate with God and not having received his new life.

Our identity in Christ is to be alive, raised up with Him and seated in heavenly places, recipients of immeasurable riches, kindness and grace, created for good works in Christ, and joined together with all other believers as a dwelling place for God. Phew.

Grace is receiving a positive benefit that one has not earned or deserved. Divine grace is favour bestowed upon us by God completely irrespective of our having deserved it. We are saved by grace through faith, having believed and accepted God's work of salvation for us.

Paul wanted to be clear here that we could never attain salvation through our own efforts. It is only by Christ's sacrifice that we could receive salvation. So we do good works because that is what we have been created for in Christ, not because good works can save us.

Paul is referring specifically to Gentiles and Jews here, and the fact that Jesus is bringing them together to form His new "body", when before they were separated by the Law. So Christ has restored the relationship between God and humanity, and He is restoring the relationships of different human groups to one another. He is joining us all together by giving us all the same Spirit, so that our main identity will be found in that Spirit, and not in the human things that keep us apart.