



NO SERMON NOTES THIS WEEK

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE ON THE NEXT PAGE

ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *June 10-15, 2024*

INTRODUCTION

The early churches of Jesus followers weren't without their differences. Coming from different backgrounds, the places they came from were part of what defined who they were – and, consequently, what others weren't. This week we're diving into Ephesians 2 – part of a letter written to the church founded in the city of Ephesus – and seeing how Jesus didn't just act on the behalf of one group... he acted for everyone. Even those we may see as "the other."

Monday: Ephesians 2:14

We like to be the rulers of our own kingdoms. We control who comes, we control who leaves; and by doing so, we control our (perceived) level of happiness. We control our level of peace by keeping ourselves separate from those we don't want to be connected to. But this verse from Ephesians tells us that peace doesn't come from our own actions, keeping our kingdom tidy, or keeping distance between ourselves and "the other." Peace comes from Jesus. When is the last time you intentionally went out of your way to seek a healthy interaction with someone who you wouldn't usually let into your "kingdom"... someone you thought would disrupt your peace? *(Please note that "peace" is not meant to serve as the equivalent of mental health. It's important to draw appropriate boundaries and not allow those are hurtful or abusive to cause harm.)*

Tuesday: Ephesians 2:11-13

This passage from Ephesians notes a law that had driven a wedge between believers in Jesus who were of a Jewish background and believers in Jesus who were of a Gentile background. The Gentiles were considered "separate" until Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection connected everyone to him. What does it mean to you that Jesus' death connected you to both Jesus and a wider community? What does it mean to you that it took an act as extreme as death for that connection to be made?

Wednesday: Romans 8:14-17

Paul writes to the people of the church in Rome that the Spirit of God sets us free of the need to live in fear. When has the fear of "the other" – someone different from you - kept you from accepting someone? What have you learned from that experience?

Thursday: Ephesians 2:15b, 19

The author of Ephesians tells us that Jesus set out to create "one new humanity" – connecting the divided groups of the Jews and the Gentiles. And that in doing so, the people of the church in Ephesus were now "no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household." When were you accepted into a group to which you, yourself, were an outsider? What did that acceptance mean to you?

Friday: Ephesians 2:20

This verse speaks of the foundation of the household that Jesus created: Jesus "as the chief cornerstone," but with the wider base relying on "the apostles and prophets." Our own acceptance into this household means we're part of something that was built by others – a group that continued well beyond the point that this letter to the Ephesians was written. How do we continue to build this "household" of Jesus to accept others in the future?

MOVING FORWARD

As we look to continue Jesus' "household" – the church – we must seek out ways to make others welcome... even "the other" that doesn't look, act, or think the way that we do. Jesus' act of reconciliation on the cross wasn't just to connect us to God after the Fall. It was to connect those who believe in him. How can you help to make Asbury a place that is welcoming to those who may be different from you?