

Ephesians 2:11-22 ALL AGE

Part 1: God's building

INTRO Next part of Ephesians – just how amazing Jesus is, and what he offers to those who follow him.

Learned that:

- We've got every spiritual blessing
- God offers us hope, riches and power – not necessarily in the way the world offers them, but riches of his blessing for all eternity
- Last week – how in Jesus God saves us from everything that separates us from him – GRACE – getting what we don't deserve – God's Riches At Christ's Expense

Another question – Jews were God's chosen people – **how can we all become part of God's family? (SLIDE)**

Answers that question in these verses:

Pauls says it was part of the plan – READ v14

How? READ v16 – cross deals with everything. Not just our wrongdoing, but barriers we create between ourselves. When Jesus was put to death, he also 'put to death' our hostility towards each other

So basically we can all be part of God's family – whole world, from every nation – all part of God's one people. Isn't that great! Paul summarises in v19 – READ...

...and it kind of reminds him of an idea, which he decides to develop. **God's people like a building – lots of different parts, but all one building (SLIDE)**.

- READ v20 – Jesus at centre – cornerstone – all old buildings like this have one. (Anyone know where cornerstone is here?) - **SLIDE**
- Apostles and prophets are foundation. Who are apostles? And prophets? Bedrock of truth and pattern of church life (Acts 2 – model for us) - **SLIDE**

And result is: READ v21 – why important that described as a temple?
(Where God lives)

And that's for all of us: READ v22. (SLIDE) Not just then – for us now – for every church – we 'are being built' (present tense) – **us at St Mary's now.**

VIDEO – ARK HOTEL

All have a **brick**: find a few people of same colour (**SLIDE**)

- List all jobs/parts of building (FLIPCHART)
- What might that look like in church? Who or what are the beams, the screws, the panels etc?
- What do you think you are?

SONG – Big Family of God

Talk part 2 – Making the building stronger

Lovely idea but challenging. All know how hard it is to be part of a real community. Unity isn't easy – natural for human beings to divide. School – all my classmates were Spurs or Arsenal fans – fun, but can be nasty. Just a football team! We should never assume that it's easy being church. How can we make our building stronger (not talking about roof – but our community)?

Couple of simple illustrations:

1. GAME – building with bricks v duplo. Why is it easier to build with bricks? (They connect together.) In a building, that's things like screws and cement. What connects us together? (SLIDE)

- Shared purpose
- Shared activities
- Time together
- Worship and prayer
- Spirit – Jesus is cement – when he dwells here by his Spirit, then we connect deeply – think of those nobbles as Holy Spirit. Every Christian has it, that's what connects you. Without it, can build, but not as secure. We all need to know Jesus and experience his Spirit

2. ILLUSTRATION – strong wall

Show interconnected vs lines of bricks – what's make strongest wall?

Church can be like this – lots of cliques, not really together. Natural that some people won't get on with others – but let's not become like this – or what happens? (EXAMPLE)

3. GAPS IN WALL – not everyone involved.

Shared end of last year how we need to get everyone involved. All participants not passengers. Otherwise like this wall – gaps in it. If that's you, your brick is missing. Not in wall – what happens to wall?

Word for today: 'Work together' (SLIDE)

Both words important – need people to put a shift in. Lots of priorities: family life, work – all important, all of your life matters to God and God's in

every part of it. Not the kind of vicar who only looks at what you do in church – spent 12 years in regular work, I know pressures.

But church is also your family: look around – these are your brothers and sisters too. Jesus says this family is every bit as much your family as your biological one. Your family needs you. Is there a gap in the wall where your brick needs to be? And if not sure, then come and talk to me, let's begin that conversation. Everyone matters. Little tiny screws – what happens to that beam if not screwed in? What happens to the ones next to it? Then the whole floor? The building? Every bit matters.

Together – teamwork. Bricks rely on others around it. Priority for Alise and I to create connection points: why we started home group, opened our home when church heating bust, insisted on regular stewards meetings.

Same with growing ministries of church: some of our ministries rely heavily on one or two people flogging themselves, and eventually people get tired of carrying the burden. We need help!

Great that so many of you are involved on Sunday mornings – but that's a given. Churches grow or die based on what happens during week. My goal is that every member of this church is involved in some way on Sunday (contributing to our worship), and also in at least one thing during the week (contributing to our ministry) – health permitting.

That's how we become a building in which God dwells by his Spirit.