

# Breaking Down the Wall

Pastor Paul Springer | Ephesians 2:11-22

January 28, 2018 | Winter Cycle: Week 3 of 10

## Personal Connection (25 minutes)

### Icebreaker

Have you ever experienced the feeling of being lost, perhaps as a child in a store or maybe traveling in a city unknown to you? How did you get out of that situation? Did someone help you? How did it feel to be found or find your way, again?

### Ups and Downs

Last week, we considered that faith and salvation are gifts from God, and, as such, our natural response should be gratitude.

Q. Did you find that you were able to draw nearer to God this week? Did you find yourself glorifying him?

### Praying for each other

Take a moment to pray for the group; specifically pray that God would remove any hint of *us vs. them* mentality in our lives. Pray that we could be a church that reaches all the people that God places in our path.

### Sharing Christ

Q. How are you doing with sharing your faith? Are you putting up any barriers between yourself and “*those kind of people*”? Remember, you also are “*those people*,” but God chose to save you. Discuss how this realization affects your ability and desire to witness.

### Review Last Sunday's *What Now?*

Last week we discussed that faith itself is a gift from God that cannot be earned. God alone supplies your faith. Continue to prayerfully ask God to increase your faith in him. “More of you — less of me.”

## Digging Deeper (30 minutes)

### **This Week's Key Concept:**

**Sin separates us from unity with each other and unity with God. It creates barriers we cannot tear down. Sin's barriers are torn down by Christ as he restores our relationship with God and each other.**

### **Read Ephesians 2:11-22**

In Ephesians 2:11-16, Paul describes the fact that Jews considered the Gentiles ceremonially unclean and themselves as pure and clean, because of the Jews' national heritage and religious ceremonies. Paul points out that despite their opinion, both Jews and Gentiles are spiritually unclean before God, separated from God. Paul emphasizes that through Christ, reconciliation between both groups and God can be accomplished through the blood of Christ.

Q. Have you ever looked at an individual or group of people and, without knowing them, decided they have little to offer?

Q. Our congregation is made up of people from a wide variety of backgrounds, with differing views, experiences, resources, and gifts. But we are united in and by Christ. Only Christ breaks down the barriers of prejudice, reconciles all believers to God, and unifies us in one body. Discuss how Christ uses our differences for health, strength, and vitality within the church and outside the walls of the church.

In Ephesians 2:17-22, Paul describes the union both Jews and Gentiles have with Christ, as a holy temple in their bodies, known as the Holy Spirit. Because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they are no longer strangers to each other or God.

***A barrier can be defined as something that prevents progress. A barrier can be both something that protects and something that divides. Sin is a barrier that prevents us from being one with Christ. But Christ himself is a barrier because he has protected us from the eternal consequences of our sins!***

Q. Do you remember the moment you accepted Christ into your life or when you were baptized? How did you feel after?

Q. What are you doing to take care of your temple? Or, what are you doing that encourages fruit of the Holy Spirit?

Galatians 5:5-6, 22-23 (NLT): <sup>5</sup> *But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us.* <sup>6</sup> *For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love.* <sup>22</sup> *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* <sup>23</sup> *gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

### Impact Questions

Q. Are there habits in your life or thought patterns that encourage quiet prejudices, that you may need to give to God and separate yourself from?

Q. How can our church better reflect Christ's unifying power and presence to each other? To our surrounding community?

### What now? (15 minutes)

This week, pray that the Lord would open our eyes to see the barriers that either keep us separate from him or separate us from each other.

### Closing Prayer (15 minutes)

Please share your prayer requests and praises, so that your LIFE Group may lift you up in prayer. Please pray that the church and surrounding communities would be revived in Christ's name. Pray that the Lord would help you to see how to put your prayers into action.