

## Who Are You?

Scripture Text: Ephesians 2:19-22

### Introduction

Who are you? For many people, that answer may be simple. They may say, “I am a father, a mother, a student, a teacher, a lawyer, or a Christian.” One of the most important questions Jesus asked was, “Who am I?” Of course, He knew exactly who He was, but He asked others to tell Him who they thought He was. That is one of the most important statements one can make — Who is Jesus Christ. The song, “Who are you?” by (believe it or not) The Who was a theme song for the TV series CSI. In that show, detectives would use all sorts of tools and techniques to investigate evidence of a crime to determine the identity of a victim. If you were to do a forensic analysis of yourself, looking at all the evidence, what would you find? Who would you be?

### Before and After Christ

For the Christian, there is a before Christ and an after Christ. There was a time when you were the walking dead, then you knew Christ, and were reborn. At the beginning of chapter two of Ephesians, Paul mentioned several things about who the people of the church in Ephesus were. Paul does this several times throughout Scripture to describe who people were in the past and who they were in Christ. Just look at some of the descriptions Paul mentioned about the believers in the church at Ephesus:

- Dead in sin
- Followed Satan and the world
- Lived in the passions of the flesh
- Children of wrath separated from God
- No hope

That does not make for a good description. If someone were to describe themselves to you like that, would you be impressed? Would you describe yourself that way? I am certain many folks would not and probably many of the members of the church in Ephesus probably did not. One of the most helpful things we can do for ourselves is to recognize who we are and to acknowledge our condition — to be honest with ourselves. Dr. Phil often says, “You cannot change what you do not acknowledge.” If you have a problem, you cannot fix it until you acknowledge it. Fortunately, for the members of the church in Ephesus, God had mercy on them. God had great love for them. God did not leave them in that terrible predicament Paul described. By the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ the members of the church were now the following:

- Saved from destruction
- Alive in Jesus Christ
- In fellowship with God
- God’s new creation
- Re-created to do good works

Does that not sound much better than the first description? We see in this passage that who the Ephesians were before and after they received God’s grace was very different. Their identity changed. The evidence that revealed who they were changed. The same

is true for us and for anyone who has received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We are all different once we encounter the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. As such, if we have received grace and have faith in Christ, evidence of a changed life ought to be present. This changed life should certainly be evident in our individual lives, but it should also be evident within the whole church. The world ought to see the church of Jesus Christ as a people different from the rest of the world. They ought to see us and say, “There is something different there and I want to know more about it.”

## Two Groups United in Christ

In this passage, Paul described two groups who God brought together — Jews and Gentiles. In some translations of this passage, the section is labeled as “One in Christ” or “Unity in Christ”. Look at the number of times Paul mentioned about being “one”:

- [He] has made us both *one* and has broken down...the dividing wall of hostility. (v. 14)
- He might create in himself *one new man* in place of the two, so making peace. (v. 15)
- [He] might reconcile us both to God in *one body* through the cross. (v. 16)
- Through him we both have access in *one Spirit* to the Father. (v. 18)

Now, Paul was certainly writing about the nature of the church in Ephesus that had both Jewish and Gentile Christians. He was addressing the issue of a divided church at that time and how they ought to be *one church*. If God has brought different people together to be His people — His Church — then He desires for them to be united. God has not called us together with all the differences we have in order for us to remain different groups of people. We are *one church* united in *one* Lord and Savior for *one* mission. There is no “us” and “them,” there is only God’s family that meets here at Good Hope.

## What is the Church and Church Membership?

Last year, after talking to several pastors, I started working on material for a church members class. Unfortunately, many months went by until I finally got it done. We had a church members class back in February and met for several weeks to discuss things such as what the Church is and what it means to be a member of God’s church. One of the things the class agreed was what the Church is not. It is not...

- a *Building*
- a *Club*
- a *Business*

Many people say they go to church, but in reality, a church is not a *building* or place. A church is the people of God who meet somewhere for a particular purpose. A church is also not a *club*. A club is a group of people who meet at certain times, in a certain place, and pay certain dues to be a member in good standing. While this may describe some aspects of a church, a church is far more than a club. It is something God created for His glory and for His purposes. A church is also not a *business*. We do not go to church like we go to Wal-Mart or to the Mall. Many people treat a church as a place for them to

be served — they want something out of it. A church, however, is the people of God who meet to worship God, to serve one other, and to reach the world for Jesus Christ. In contrast, Paul described in verse nineteen of this passage that members of the Church are the following:

- Citizens of God's kingdom
- Members of God's household

Notice these two descriptions. The first is that believers are *citizens* of God's kingdom. Jonathan Leeman, an author who wrote a book titled *Church Membership*, described a church as an embassy where one's citizenship in God's kingdom is affirmed. A church does not grant citizenship into God's kingdom — that is done when an individual responds to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and trusts Him as Lord and Savior. A church does not grant citizenship in God's kingdom but affirms that status. The second description is that believers are *members* of God's household. This means that we are related to each other by the blood of Jesus Christ and form a closely knit group. The work of the Gospel not only breaks down barriers but unites us in profound ways. One of the most intimate descriptions of our relationship with Jesus Christ is that we are *adopted* into God's family. If you have trusted in Jesus Christ, you are a member of God's family. Paul then made the following statements about the Church in verses twenty through twenty-two:

- Built upon Jesus Christ (the cornerstone)
- Joined together and built together
- Growing into God's holy temple
- A place for God to dwell

This is who the Church is and this is who Good Hope Baptist should be. We are God's holy people called together into fellowship with Jesus Christ and each other for the glory of Jesus Christ. It is that togetherness, that unity, that oneness, that I desire to see for us to be. It is for that reason that I offered to the Church a Church Covenant — a promise for the members of Good Hope Baptist to make with each another. This covenant will not mean anything unless you commit to it, but if you do commit to it, it can represent a stronger, more healthy church family. Will you commit to that?

## Conclusion

God's Church is the family of God on this world. God created the Church to be His representatives who will reach the world for Jesus Christ. We are built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, being built together as a people, growing into the people where God dwells. Let us honor Jesus Christ by uniting together — not as a place, or a club, or a business — but as God's family. That is who we are. Is that who you want to be? Let us join together for this purpose and watch God do wonderful things through us. Watch God grow His Church here. Will you be a part of that? May it be so! Amen!