

## The Attractional Church

Ephesians 2:11-3:13

### Main Idea

The local church is a compelling community where God's power makes a church attractive.

### Overview

#### **Church Community is about Jesus**

- Ephesians 1 explains the wonders of our salvation in Christ
- Ephesians 2:1-10 explains how this salvation comes about
- Ephesians 2:11-3:13 begin to show the implications of this salvation
  - 2:11 – “*Therefore*” – one of the first implications of vertical reconciliation with God is horizontal reconciliation with others
    - Even others who are not like us, or were previously enemies (e.g. Jews and non-Jews)
    - The hostility is demolished in Christ
    - We are now a new family (2:19)
- This new community is in/because/built on/for Christ
  - Notice the repetition of “in Christ” (2:13, 22; 3:6, 11, 12)
- This new community has:
  - Breadth – it stretches to include people as divergent as Jew and Gentile
  - Depth – it doesn't merely bring people together and call them to tolerate one another but it binds them together tightly

#### **Church Community is hard**

- Previous to Jesus, Gentiles were separated, strangers and without hope – the Jews and Gentiles did not like each other (2:1-13)
- Apart from Christ there is hostility and enmity, but through the cross there is peace and reconciliation (2:14-18)
- However, our salvation does not make us all together perfect – we still struggle with sin
- In our “old man” we desire comfort, and community does not always bring us the comfort we want
- Paul himself says he suffers to bring about this glorious community (3:13)
- When the breadth and depth of the gospel community seems exhausting, we need to remember and be strengthened by the breadth and depth of Christ's love for us (3:18)

#### **Church Community is Glorious**

- The local church exists to display God's manifold wisdom (3:10)
  - We know Paul is referring to the local church in 3:10 for three reasons:
    - 1 – What is true of the heavenly assembly should also be true of the local assembly. “The term here in 3:10 should probably be taken as the heavenly gathering that is assembled around Christ and as local congregations of Christians” (Peter O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*)
    - 2 – The rest of Ephesians is dealing with relationships in the local church
    - 3 – The focus of 3:10 is the present, not an assembly someday in the heavenly future
- The church is God's calling card showing off Who he is and what he has done in Christ to reconcile all peoples to himself and each other
- The local church is one of the high points of Scripture's story line – the mystery has now been revealed (3:1-6)

- The local church is not just called to be gospel-plus community; rather, the local church is called to be a gospel-revealing community
- The breadth and depth of the gospel community in a local church confounds the world and stuns the heavens (3:10)

### Questions

**Discussion Starter:** What are ways in the world we see people longing for and enjoying community?

1. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. Use this passage to explain the gospel. What are we saved from? By? To? For? Why does Paul start with vertical reconciliation before moving on to other parts of the Christian life?
2. Read Ephesians 2:11-3:13. What's the significance of "therefore" at the beginning of 2:11? What implications does this have on your relationships at Restoration Church?
3. Summarize Paul's point in 2:11-22.
4. Notice the repetition of "in Christ". What does this tell us about gospel community?
5. How do you see Paul talking about "horizontal" reconciliation in this passage? Why is horizontal reconciliation often so hard?
6. Where does this passage speak to the breadth of our relationships inside the local church? Where does it speak to the depth of our relationships?
7. How do you see breadth of relationships at Restoration? How about depth? Where do you see these in your own relationships? Are there any areas you could pursue greater breadth or depth?
8. According to 3:10, what's the purpose of the local church? How does this purpose orient us away from a "consumer" model of church?
9. Read Ephesians 3:14-19. What's the role of community in helping us understand the love of Christ? How do those who are different from us help us understand and love God more? What does this tell us about the importance of having diversity in our relationships?

**Accountability:** *Where are you thankful for the gospel community of Restoration Church? Are there areas in which this challenged you in the breadth or depth of your relationships?*