



“Crossover”

— Go Deep—

Small Group Plan

Dear Small Group,

Hostility and division are not new to humanity. They are as old as the fall when we chose to separate from God. And since that time they have plagued humanity creating alienation between nations, races, family members, and even Christians. We have become strangers and aliens when we should be citizens and friends.

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- As you think about our world and especially our own country, what examples of hostility between groups of people come to mind?
- What attitudes and actions are being produced by the hostility?
- How do you respond to the quote: “History is the record of failed peace missions” ?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

SEPARATION

Ephesians 2:11-12

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (that done in the body by the hands of men) — ¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

- Think through these words and phrases — “separate” “excluded” “foreigners” “without hope” “without God.”
- What is Paul trying to communicate?
- The Jews had a tremendous hatred for the Gentiles. Some even said that the Gentiles were created by God to fuel the fires of hell (William Barclay).
- Describe what it would be like and how it would feel to be a Gentile at this time?

RECONCILIATION

Ephesians 2:13-18

¹³ *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.* ¹⁴ *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,* ¹⁵ *by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,* ¹⁶ *and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.* ¹⁷ *He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.* ¹⁸ *For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

- There was an actual dividing wall in Jerusalem. The Court of the Gentiles was separated from the Temple by a stone wall and a sign forbidding any Gentile entrance on pain of death.
- Verse 19 begins with “*But now*” — How did Jesus bring the Jews and Gentiles together?
- How does the “blood of Christ” (v. 13) overcome all that divides us?
- What does it mean to have access to the Father through one Spirit (v. 18)?

UNIFICATION

Ephesians 2:19-22

¹⁹ *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household,* ²⁰ *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.* ²¹ *In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.* ²² *And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

- Think through these words — “*citizens*” “*household*” “*temple*” “*dwelling.*”
- Now, what is Paul trying to say?
- Think about this spiritual building. How are “the apostles and prophets” the foundation (v. 20)?
- Why is Jesus “the chief cornerstone” (v. 20)?
- How are we, and Christian through the age, a part of this building?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- What is our role in breaking down barriers between people?
- The Jews erected a physical barrier in the temple. What walls have we created?
- Reflect on and respond to these statements –

“If God has torn down the greatest barrier,
why would we want to erect lesser ones?”

“Christ made peace possible,
but it’s up to us to make it personal.”

- Close by praying for the courage to join God in tearing down walls and for the strength to accept walls that have fallen.