

# **Unsolved Mysteries Past Demolished, Bridge Built- Session #3 Small Group Notes**

## **Introduction:**

**What is something in your past that seems hard to let go of?**

**What is something in your past that you feel trips you up still today?**

**What does it mean to “let go” of our past?**

In today’s discussion, we are going to see how Paul spoke to the church in Ephesus, in particular what seems to be the Gentile part of the church to help them to learn how to let go of their past. The Gentiles were separated from being able to have complete access to the Temple during the time the Bible was written. Oftentimes we can often put restrictions on ourselves or believe lies that we are not able to have complete access to Christ due to our past. Paul wants to show us how salvation brings about true freedom and reconciliation.

## **Discuss:**

1. Ephesians 2:11-13

- Past torn down, grace extended.

Explain: God’s work of reconciliation is not only between God and the individual, though it must begin there. It is also between groups of people that are at odds, such as Jews and Gentiles were in the days of Paul. Then he shows their condition further as being “without Christ” (verse 12). These are words that he uses to describe the sum of the woeful condition of the lost man or woman. Paul uses the contraction of “But” as way to show a new way of living through the work of Jesus on the cross by being brought near.

Ask:

**What are some ways that we can knowingly create division in the church? What does this look like?**

**What does it look like for me to extend grace to someone that I may have odds within my work? Neighborhood? Or even in the church?**

2. Ephesians 2:14-17

- Past torn down, peace built.
- Past torn down, reconciliation built.
- Read Revelation 7:9-10

Explain: Paul was, at the time of this writing, under house arrest in Rome, awaiting trial because he was falsely accused by the Jews of taking a Gentile into the temple past the literal **wall of separation** dividing Jew and Gentile. Paul made it clear that in Jesus, the wall is gone. What did this communicate? They enjoy the same **access** to God, access that comes **by one Spirit to the Father**. Not only are Jews and Gentiles saved by the same gospel, but they also have the same essential walk with God and **access** to Him. One group does not have a greater **access** than the other does.

Ask:

**What did your life look like when you were at odds/war with God?  
How is your life different today?**

**Are there people that you are in odds with today? What are ways that we seek to justify being at odds with one another? What impact does it make to know that there is equal access to God through Christ?**

3. Ephesians 2:18-20

- Past torn down, empathy built.

Explain: Because we are one body and have the same access to God, it also follows that we are all built upon a common **foundation**. That foundation is the original **apostles and prophets**, and their enduring revelation, recorded in the New Testament. May no one ever lay any other foundation. Therefore, I can see others in my life as needing to experience that same foundation, even in the struggles they face.

Ask:

**When and how was the last time that someone showed empathy to you that you remember? What impact did it make in what you were going through?**

**Why do we struggle with showing empathy to others? How do you see showing empathy to others helps to build more bridges than tear them down?**

4. Ephesians 2:21-22

- Past torn down, a holy people built.
- Read Galatians 3:26-29

Explain: Paul uses architectural terms to describe the church as something designed by God the Great Architect, as His dwelling place where He resides in our hearts, and then as the holy temple that is set apart for His glory!

Ask:

**How does understanding who we are in Christ, impact the way that we live? How did Paul want it to change the people in Ephesus?**

**What impact does it make to know that you are built by the Great Architect? A person that the Lord wants to dwell inside? A holy temple to be set apart?**

**From today's discussion, is there something that you are recognizing that you need to "let go of" in order to grow closer to Christ or to others?**