

PRACTICING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

A Study in Ephesians

Centering the Vision of Peace - Breaking Down the Dividing Wall of Hostility

Ephesians 2:14-17 ¹⁴ For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us, ¹⁵ abolishing the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile both to God in one body^[d] through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷ So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near...

Outline: Our study will begin this fall (August 27) and will correspond with the sermon series. Aware of the divisiveness of our culture, the message of Ephesians offers a timely word and challenge to the church. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the catalyst of the reconciling power of God embodied and practiced by the new humanity, the body of Christ. Paul calls the gospel of Jesus Christ the “gospel of peace” (Eph 6:15). It is only through Christ that ruptures of our humanity can be healed and made whole. The church is called to be the place where this peacemaking comes alive in our midst.

- **August 27 - Lesson 1 Shalom, Unity To All** - Ephesians 1:1-10
- **September 3 - Lesson 2 Christ, Our Peace** - Ephesians 2:11-22
- **September 10 - Lesson 3 Peace, Love, and Prayer** - Ephesians 3:14-21
- **September 17 - Lesson 4 One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism** - Ephesians 4:1-16
- **September 24 - Lesson 5 Peace and the Power of Words** - Ephesians 4:17-32
- **October 1 - Lesson 6 Peace within Marriages** - Ephesians 5:21-32
- **October 8 - Lesson 7 Peace within Families** - Ephesians 6:1-4
- **October 15 - Lesson 8 Peace as Our New Status of Being** - Ephesians 6:5-12

Each week we will explore how we are to share in Christ’s vision of peace and unity for humanity by the power of the cross. Weeks 1-4 focus on our new identity in Christ, who is “our peace” (2:14). Weeks 5-8 seek to guide us in the ways that we are to embody the gospel of peace in our relationships with one another. Our prayer is that this study would encourage our church family in taking up the ministry of peace and reconciliation that Jesus has called us to. It requires that we confess the sins of strife and war that are common in our society that daily tears one another down. We must reject divisiveness and partisanship and actively seek the unity of Christ. We must learn the language and life of peace, prayerfully seeking to build others up in the grace and mercy of Jesus.

Please be in prayer for your class, praying for the peace of Christ to be awakened in the relationships of each member. Let the prayer of Ephesians 3:14-21 be the prayer to guide our Hillcrest family towards Christ’s vision of peace.