

The Outcast

In My Heart

*“He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves”
(Ephesians 1:5–6, NIV).*

WORD!

Ephesians 1:3–14, NIV—Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. **4** For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love **5** he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— **6** to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. **7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace **8** that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, **9** he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, **10** to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. **11** In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, **12** in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. **13** And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

Crystal was often teased by the other children in her neighborhood because she was skinny and wore glasses. She had few friends and often played alone. She would sing to herself as she rode her bicycle around the neighborhood. One day, some of the neighborhood bullies snuck up on her and pushed her off her bike. They began laughing at her and calling her names. She ran home crying to her mother. She simply wanted to be liked and accepted by the other kids in her neighborhood. Her mother consoled her and told her everything would be okay.

As her mother went to bed that night, she wept as she thought about what her daughter had experienced. She thought about the upcoming talent show and how it could benefit Crystal. She entered her daughter into the show and told her about it the next day. Crystal became extremely excited and began practicing. The day of the talent show came. Crystal performed and won! Everyone congratulated her, and the bullies even approached her and told her how well she did. Now they play together often, and Crystal has even forgiven them. She loves the sense she gets of feeling like she belongs to a group. She continues to express joy to her mother for entering her into the competition, which she said allowed her to feel validated.

Crystal continues to perform around her town and has won several competitions.

SIDEBAR

Spiritual Blessings in Jesus Christ

Paul urged the believers to give thanks to God for divine blessings. Before creation, God had developed a plan to renew human fellowship with Him that would result in human blamelessness before God. God decided to make human beings God's children through Jesus Christ. God should be praised for the gift of Jesus Christ. Jesus' death justifies us before God and provides the foundation for human forgiveness from sin. In the fullness of time, God will complete His plan and restore the unity of heaven and earth through Jesus Christ.

How to Affirm Your Worthiness!

1. Stay humble!
2. Be helpful!
3. Live honestly!

GOT IT!

A. Divine Blessings

Use Word! to help you determine whether each statement below is TRUE or FALSE.

1. Paul urged the believers to give thanks to God for divine blessings.
TRUE FALSE
2. God decided to make human beings God's children through Jesus Christ.
TRUE FALSE
3. God should be praised for the gift of love.
TRUE FALSE
4. Jesus' birth justifies us before God and provides the foundation for human forgiveness from sin.
TRUE FALSE
5. In the fullness of time, God will complete His plan and restore the unity of heaven and earth through all people.
TRUE FALSE

B. Action!

1. Write the terms *grace*, *sin*, *redemption*, *inheritance*, *predestined*, *adoption*, and *forgiveness* on the board or a piece of paper.
2. Divide into three groups.

3. Each group will discuss the meaning of each word and its significance to today's Scripture.

JAM SESSION

Chosen and Claimed

All people want to feel valued and worthy. The writer of Ephesians declares that through Jesus Christ, we gain an inheritance as God's own people to become recipients of forgiveness and salvation's redemptive power. In the story, Crystal simply wanted to feel accepted, valued, and worthy of inclusion. The talent show allowed her to experience those emotions. She was even able to forgive the other children, despite their hurtful treatment. Being able to forgive them was an action that demonstrated Crystal's humility and kindheartedness. It is important to treat others as you want to be treated. It is hurtful to feel like an outcast and not a part of a group. Do not leave others out of an activity or make fun of them because they are unlike you. Also, learn to forgive others for their mistreatment and wrongdoing.

JAM ON IT!

Do I Fit In?

Talk to a family member or some friends and ask them if they have ever experienced exclusion. Discuss ways to deal with exclusion and fitting in.

LAST JAM

Different does not mean deficient. Learn to accept others despite their differences!

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS

Use this space to write down questions you have about this lesson.

Mascot Mania



The principal at Joseph Philippe Middle School noticed division among his students. The students who came from wealthy backgrounds did not get along with the students who came from not-so-wealthy backgrounds. There were a lot of fights, name-calling, and overall division among the students, and the principal made up his mind to tear down those walls. He created a school-wide project among the grade levels that would require the students to design and create an accessory for their school mascot—a bulldog—but the materials had to come from whatever items they could collect from home. The goal of the project was to see which homeroom class could be the most creative. The winners would not only get to create the new mascot accessory but also receive a pizza party and season passes to the city's popular amusement park.

The homeroom teachers almost immediately began to hear the students discuss what supplies each could bring from home as they excitedly chattered about winning the grand prize. Over the next few weeks, the teachers noticed minimal complaining and fighting, and the children realized they were able to come together despite their differences. As the contest drew to a close, the winning homeroom was selected, and the bulldog was provided an accessory: a skateboard made of cardboard. It was decorated in the school colors with spray paint, sidewalk chalk, and markers, colorful magazine pages and other creative regalia, and aluminum soda cans that served as wheels.

In My Heart

"In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:21, NIV).

WORD!

Ephesians 2:11–22 NIV—

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—**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. **13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **14** For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, **15** by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, **16** and in 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. **19** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of His household, **20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief corner-stone. **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.

SIDEBAR

One in Jesus Christ

Paul reminded the believers that at one time, they were apart from Christ. Through the blood of Christ, we are brought near to God and near to one another. Through Christ, hostility has been replaced by peace for all who have turned to God. Humanity was once estranged from God, but through Christ, believers are now citizens and members of the family of God. The apostles and the prophets are the foundation of the family of faith, with Jesus as the cornerstone. The family of faith is joined and held together by Jesus Christ.

How to Grow in Christ!

U—Understand people are different and have unique abilities.

N—Never exclude others because they are different.

I—Invite others to play who are different than you.

T—Treat others the way you want to be treated.

Y—Yield not to the temptation of staying apart from people because they are different.

GOT IT!

A. Together Not Apart!

Use Word! to help you determine whether each statement below is TRUE or FALSE.

1. Jesus Christ is our peace.

TRUE FALSE

2. Jesus' purpose was to create in Himself one new humanity, bringing everybody to God through the Cross.

TRUE FALSE

3. We have access to the Father by three spirits.

TRUE FALSE

B. Acceptance!

1. Think about what information people need to know if they want to be citizens of America.

2. What, if any, are the differences in the rights for people who are citizens of America and those who are not?

3. Discuss the requirements and privileges or rights of citizens of the kingdom of God.

JAM SESSION

Harmony Not Disharmony!

Adversaries sometimes search and long for ways to come together. The writer of Ephesians proclaims that it is in Christ that we, who are dead through our trespasses, are brought alive in Christ and that Jesus Christ is the One who breaks down all dividing walls and brings us together as one. In the story, the children were able to come together despite their differences. The principal was able to break down the walls that kept the two groups of children apart for so long. They were able to combine their thoughts, ideas, and materials to develop a creative mascot accessory. After the competition was over, the students still found themselves behaving friendly toward one another and did not fight and demonstrate hate, as previously witnessed. *Are there any walls of division at your school?* Try and think of ways you can bring peace to the situation and tear those walls down.

JAM ON IT!

Let's Unite!

This week, take a few moments to talk to an adult family member and ask them to discuss issues that may divide your church. Pray about these issues and pray for strategies you may be able to implement to bring about unity.

LAST JAM

"If we focus on differences, our focus is on each other.

If we focus on unity, our focus is on God!"

~Author Unknown

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS

Use this space to write down questions you have about this lesson.
