

Message Series: Belonging

Message Title: Outsiders

**Key Scripture:
Ephesians 2:11-18**

Message Summary

Paul reminds the Christians in Ephesus, that they were once outsiders. The Jewish people considered the Gentiles to be far from God and not part of his plan. Yet in his death on the cross, Jesus has brought peace to those who were close to God, and to those who were far away.

Through Jesus, we all have access to the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit, that is given to all of us. In Acts 10, Peter has a vision, and then is sent to the gentiles, and the Holy Spirit falls on them. This causes the church an initial problem, as they thought the gentiles were outsiders, but in Acts 11 they realise that if the Holy Spirit is moving, then there are no outsiders!

The challenge to us, is to remember that we were once outsiders, and yet God brought us in, and so there is no one that his Holy Spirit cannot reach, and we are not to make anyone feel as though they are outsiders when it comes to God's grace.

How does applying this message affect our:

Fellowship – experiencing healthy relationships with other people

When have you felt like you were on the outside? Did anyone do anything that helped you feel like you belonged? Is there anyone in our network who might be feeling like an outsider? How can we be sensitive to those who don't feel like they belong?

Discipleship – growing in Christ both thought and deed

What attitudes or previous experiences are making it harder for us to welcome those who might be different from us? Is there anything we are intentionally, or unintentionally doing to make others feel like they are outsiders?

Ministry – Discovering and using our God-given gifts and abilities

How are we with people? How are we growing in developing our skills to connect with people who are different to us?

Evangelism – Reaching out and sharing the love of Christ with unbelievers

Jesus constantly spent time with those who others viewed as outsiders. Who are we spending time with who others might view as being on the outside?

Worship – Surrendering our heart and life to Christ on an ongoing basis

In some cultures the thought exists that 'Guests are God' how are we using opportunities for hospitality as worship? Are we growing in our generosity and hospitality as part of our worship life?