

Ephesians 2:19–22 | “The Household of God”  
*Preached on June 1, 2025 by Pastor Matt Brown*

You can turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 2, verses 19–22 today. *[pause]*

When a young man and a young lady begin to like each other, they will sometimes seek to define the relationship.

That is, they will determine to communicate with each other what exactly the status of their relationship is. *[pause]*

Are they just friends? Are they dating? Are they serious? *[pauseeee]*

I remember when I first began talking to Kate, I really liked her, and so I was eager to find out where exactly we stood in our relationship.

And thankfully, she didn’t leave me wondering for a long time. *[pauseeee]*

Really, we seek to figure out the state of our relationships, or other people’s relationships all the time, in all sorts of connections. *[pauseeee]*

When someone brings someone new to a family gathering, we wonder who that person is, and what their connection is with the family. *[pause]*

When we find out that someone else knows someone in common with us, we begin asking them questions to find out how deeply they know that person, that we likewise know. *[pauseeeee]*

This happens in politics, too...

There’s some sort of scandal involving a person, and so we wonder how close others were to them. *[pause]*

Were they a close associate with the person that’s now disgraced?

Could that tarnish their reputation because of their association with them? *[pause]*

Reporters may even ask the politician, “What is your relationship with that person?” *[pauseeee]*

Life is filled with relationships—some are close family and others are family that’s not so close. *[pause]*

Some are best friends, and others are acquaintances.

Some are co-workers that we work with daily, and others are co-workers, who we rarely see. *[pause]*

Well in the passage that we are going to look at today, Paul will define our relationship with other believers.

And what he will show us is that our relationship with other believers is deeper and closer than we ever thought, for it's what Christ has brought us into. *[pauseeee]*

Before I read the passage for you, I want to remind you what went right before this. *[pause]*

Paul has been recounting what God has done in the Ephesians' lives through Christ...

They were once dead, but the Lord made them alive, yet that's not all, for the Gentiles before Christ were 'far off'. *[pause]*

That is, they were strangers and aliens of the people of God and the promises of God.

But through Christ's death, He broke down the barriers, so that they could be brought near—near to one another and near to God. *[pauseeee]*

So now listen to what Paul says next, starting in verse 19. *[READ 19–22]*

Paul is comparing and contrasting an old reality with a new reality. *[pause]*

The old reality was characterized by far-off-ness, separation, and alienation, but the new reality involves closeness, union, and inclusion. *[pauseeee]*

Paul says, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." *[pause]*

As Gentiles before Christ, the Ephesians didn't have the rights or blessings of being fellow citizens with Israel, and were considered 'outsiders' to the things of God. *[pause]*

They were truly 'strangers and aliens,' and therefore didn't 'belong.' *[pauseeee]*

As we learned in previous weeks, that was not a good situation to be in at all.

For it meant, as Paul said back in verse 12, "[being] strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." *[pause]*

No God. No promises. No hope—that's not a good state to be in, but that was each of our conditions before Christ saved us. *[pause]*

But now, through Christ's work, there is a wondrous new reality...

We are no longer strangers and aliens, but what? We are fellow citizens with the saints. *[pauseeee]*

Paul is sharing with us an important truth here—the church of God is not a single ethnic community, rather, the church encompasses people of every nation, ethnicity, and tongue. *[pauseeee]*

Jews and Gentiles are "fellow citizens" together in Christ, and really, they are fellow citizens *with the saints*. *[pauseeee]*

We need to remember that we are fellow citizens with all those who have believed in Christ.

No matter where we live, what language we speak, or what we look like, if someone has trusted in Christ, they are a fellow citizen with you. *[pause]*

This means that as fellow citizens, we have the same rights, responsibilities, and identity—we are the saints of God. *[pause]*

We have a common membership in the people of God.

We belong to one another, should care for one another, and should have the same purposes. *[pauseeee]*

That means that if a fellow Christian from another country visited Clearfield, you could accurately say that you two are fellow citizens. *[pause]*

Not fellow citizens of America, of course, but you are fellow citizens in Christ, so there should be a special closeness and linking with that Christian. *[pause]*

At the most important levels, you actually have a deeper fellow identity with that Christian from another country than you do your unbelieving, fellow American citizen next door. *[pauseeee]*

When you meet that Christian from another country, you can know, “We are in this together,” although you have never met them before.

Why? Because God says that you are fellow citizens together in Christ.

You are a part of the same people, you receive the same blessings, and you have the same King, Jesus Christ. *[pauseeee]*

So we are fellow citizens with the saints, but Paul adds another relational descriptor onto that one to define our relationship with one another.

And it’s this relationship that he will expand on for the rest of the passage. *[pause]*

Paul says that we are “members of the household of God,” and he will describe this household, sharing with us its members, its structure, and its significance. *[pauseeee]*

*So let’s first consider...*

## **I. The members of the household of God.**

When you answer the questions for the census, often they will ask you about your household. *[pause]*

They will ask how many people live in your household, their names, what their relationships are to you, etc. *[pause]*

They want to know all about your household—well Paul is here describing *God's* household. [pauseeee]

It is *His* household, we must always remember that.

The church is God's, it's the great household *of God*.

As 1 Timothy tells us, “the household of God...is the church of the living God.”<sup>1</sup> [pauseeee]

We do not own the church, nor are we ultimately over it, but it's God's. [pause]

May we never act higher than we are when it comes to the church, for we would be trying to raise ourselves up to the place of God. [pauseeee]

We are not over the house, no, we are a *part* of the house of God. [pauseeee]

So God is the owner and head of it, but who are its members? Us! Christians! [pause]

Paul just said to the Ephesian Christians that they are members of God's household, and this teaches us that every true Christian is a member of the household of God. [pause]

Jew and Gentile, male and female, Americans and Africans, rich and poor—all who trust in Christ are members of God's household. [pauseeee]

Remember what we learned?...

Those barriers that once separated us have been torn down by Christ, and now we are one, together in God's house. [pause]

It used to be that Gentiles were only allowed in the outer court of the Temple, which was the house of God, but now in Jesus, they are full members of the household of God, the church. [pauseeee]

What an astonishing statement this would have been to those steeped in Judaism! [pause]

To say that Gentiles could be called members of the household of God, along with Jews, would be radical!

Yet that's what Christ has opened up and created in Himself. [pauseeee]

For those of us who trust in Christ, we are all members of the household of God.

We belong to God, but more than that, we belong to God *together*. [pauseeee]

A household is usually one's immediate family, living together with them—it signifies close family.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Timothy 3:15.

So what is Paul showing us, then?...

We are a part of the family of God together, and so we should be close. [pauseeee]

When a family is functioning the way that it should, the family is close and loving, so also, as the household of God, we should be close and loving with one another.

We are a part of the great “household of faith.”<sup>2</sup> [pauseeee]

How would you define or describe your relationship with others in this church? [pause]

Do you see them as family members, a part of the family of God in His household? [pauseeee]

So often we see others in the church as distant from us, kind of like co-workers, or even acquaintances, but our relationships here shouldn’t be shallow. [pause]

They shouldn’t be distant, as if we were just participating in some club or something.

Our relationships should reflect our identity as the household of God, and so that means we should pursue close and loving relationships with each other. [pauseeee]

What needs to change, so that how we *live* reflects what we truly *are* in Christ? [pauseeee]

We are members of the household of God, so let’s mirror that in how we interact and relate to one another. [pauseeee]

Do you intentionally open up to others here, or have you put up barriers? [pause]

Do you show love in practical ways throughout the week?

Do you check in on others, and pray fervently for them? [pauseeee]

Let’s *be* the household of God that we *are*! [pauseeee]

*So those who trust in Christ are the members of the household, but Paul goes on to describe...*

## **II. The structure of the household of God.**

A home always has a structure. [pause]

The structure is what holds the house together, and what forms it. [pause]

No house is a mere blob, but it must have a structure, design, form, or arrangement of what the parts are, how the parts connect, and what goes where. [pauseeee]

A house usually has a foundation, walls, joists, and a roof.

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<sup>2</sup> A phrase used in Galatians 6:10.

Those are the parts that form the structure of the house, so that it remains standing and functions as a building. *[pauseeee]*

We see the need for a structure on display during the fun, yet sometimes stressful moments of gingerbread house-making with children. *[pause]*

You hand out the materials to your kids to make a gingerbread house, and they have to learn to use a good structure.

Because if they don't, the gingerbread house's walls will keep falling in, or the roof will not stay on. *[pause]*

Every house needs a structure, whether it be a gingerbread one, a residential one, or the household of God.

And thankfully, the Lord is the master builder, who has set up a structure for His house. *[pauseeee]*

After Paul talked about how we are members of the household of God, this led him to expand further on this household's *structure*. *[pause]*

He says that this household of God is...

"Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord." *[pauseeee]*

Let's start with foundation, as one does when you begin a building...

The foundation is the apostles, prophets, and then Christ is the cornerstone, so let's take the apostles and prophets first. *[pause]*

The apostles and prophets spoken of here were the authoritatively sent ones of the early church, who God used to speak through. *[pause]*

As Peter mentioned, "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit,"<sup>3</sup> so think of people like John, Peter, Paul, and others like that. *[pause]*

Through their God-inspired writings and godly examples, they were setting the foundation for the church. *[pause]*

It's really through them that we have the New Testament writings, but these writings ultimately come from God and are God's Word.

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<sup>3</sup> 2 Peter 1:21.

Therefore, it's not that these apostles and prophets are just amazing in themselves, and that's why they are the foundation of the church.

Rather, God used them and spoke through them, in order to lay a foundation. *[pauseeee]*

When you read the epistles, you can see this foundation being laid, as they wrote God's words, and pointed to how Christians and the church ought to live and function. *[pause]*

They were a special, unique, one-time, early-on group of men, who God used to be the foundation for what was to come.

And that means that there are no new apostles today, for the foundation has already been laid. *[pauseeee]*

It's the apostles who were first-hand witnesses of Christ and His resurrection, and you find the early church devoting themselves to what? The apostles' teaching.<sup>4</sup> *[pauseeee]*

Aren't you thankful that God laid a good foundation for the church? *[pause]*

He didn't leave the church to flounder and fall, but provided His Word through holy men, who helped to stabilize the church to come. *[pauseee]*

So it's the apostles and prophets who are the foundation, but it's Christ, who is the cornerstone of the foundation. *[pause]*

So yes—the apostle and prophets were important, but Christ is the most important, key foundation stone of the church. *[pauseeee]*

Especially in ancient building projects, the cornerstone was the most important stone in the whole building...

It was the stone laid at the corner of the foundation, and was laid first. *[pause]*

The cornerstone was critical because it provided stability and strength to the building, but also, it became the standard by which other stones were laid. *[pauseeee]*

Therefore, Christ our cornerstone means that everything ought to be in line with Him.

So practically, this means that whatever we do as a church, we always remember who our cornerstone is. *[pause]*

We don't function as a church apart from Christ, but we function with Christ as our cornerstone. *[pauseeee]*

Think of a bunch of stones in a building saying, "We don't need that cornerstone, we can go and do our own thing."

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<sup>4</sup> References to Acts 4:33 and then Acts 2:42.

That would not go over well, as whatever they tried to produce would fail. *[pause]*

So also, as a church, we rely upon Christ, our cornerstone—He is our leader, He is our guide, He is our foundation, our stability and strength. *[pause]*

We proclaim the marvelous person and work of our Savior, we live like Him, we extol His glory. *[pauseeee]*

A Christless church is not a church because their cornerstone isn't Christ.

So whatever we do as a church, Christ had better be our cornerstone, and this is made clear as Paul moves on. *[pause]*

In verse 21, Paul is talking about Christ as cornerstone and he says, “*in whom* the whole structure being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.” *[pauseeee]*

To understand this image, we must remember that we are the stones of the building—each Christian is a stone that's a part of the building.

And this is shown in our text, and it's also very clear in Peter's writing, when he says that we are “living stones...being built up as a spiritual house.”<sup>5</sup> *[pauseeee]*

So in Christ as the cornerstone, the whole structure is joined together and grows. *[pause]*

As one commentator put it: “Each stone is fitted into him, and finds its true place and usefulness only in relation to him.”<sup>6</sup> *[pause]*

Christ is our foundation and focus, and also, it's in Him that we find unity, strength, and growth. *[pauseeeee]*

You take Christ out, and the whole church disintegrates.

But with Christ as our cornerstone, we are fit together and joined neatly together with one another, so that we grow and are built up. *[pauseeee]*

He's the one that joins us together, so how could we get rid of what joins us together? *[pause]*

He's the one who grows and builds the church, so how could we disregard the one who grows and builds the church?

No, we cling to Him, we look to Him, feed on Him, abide in Him, love Him, and long for more of Him. *[pauseeee]*

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<sup>5</sup> 1 Peter 2:5.

<sup>6</sup> Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 10, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 94.



So if someone were to ask us, “What keeps you guys together?” our only answer has to be, “Christ, our cornerstone.” [pauseeee]

Since Jesus joins us *together*, then that means we need each other. [pause]

Oh, that each Christian would remember this!

We are not to be lone-wolf Christians, trying to live our faith by ourselves without the church, but you were made into a stone that’s made to be a part of something bigger. [pauseeee]

Like stones in a building, we need each other or the building isn’t what it’s supposed to be.

We are intricately linked so that it becomes a building. [pause]

Therefore, one stone can’t say, “I’m out of here!” or “I don’t need you guys!” but each stone must understand that it is and should be a part of the church.

And that means that we are to be unified, working together, encouraging one another, loving one another, and realizing that we are all in this together.

In fact, we were *made* to be together, like stones in a house. [pauseeee]

There are countless people out there, who look at the church as a voluntary, not-so-needed thing for their Christian walk.

But that is foreign to the Bible! [pause]

No, Christ has made us one, joined us together to be a part of the church, the household of God.

We were made to be together, and we need each other! [pauseeeee]

The amazing thing is that God is not done building His church.

As more and more people believe in Christ, more stones are added to the building, so that it’s growing into this amazing spiritual house of God. [pause]

That means that the church is still in process—it is “under construction,” for more and more stones are being added every time a sinner turns to Christ. [pause]

The house of God *grows* into a holy temple, and is *being built* into a dwelling place for God.

And so we should greet every new Christian with open arms, saying, “Welcome to the household of God!” [pauseeee]

*God is building something amazing, and that’s what I want to show you next from this text...*

### III. The significance of the household of God.

We all want to know what the significance of something is. [pause]

We wonder, “What is the significance of this moment?” Or, “What is the significance of this event or institution?” [pause]

If something is *insignificant*, we usually take it lightly, or treat it as trivial, but when it comes to significant things, we take them more seriously. [pause]

Well when we think of the household of God, we need to consider: is it significant or insignificant?

And the answer to that question makes all of the difference, and we certainly know the answer—it’s supremely, eternally significant. [pauseeee]

So where do I find the significance of the household of God in this passage?

Well first, it is the household *of God*, so it’s significant, for it’s God’s household! [pause]

Anytime that God is connected to something, it makes it significant.

But there’s more—Paul says that this household “grows into a holy temple in the Lord,” and it’s “being built together into a dwelling place for God.” [pauseeee]

Think back with me to the Old Testament time period. [pause]

In the Old Testament, the Temple of God, also called the house of God, was important. [pause]

It was the special place where God’s glory, holiness, and presence were displayed on earth.

And the Temple was where the people met God and worshipped Him together. [pause]

Well now Paul is saying that the church of God is that temple and dwelling place of God, and it’s only possible “by the Spirit.” [pauseeee]

So where does God dwell? In and through the church! [pause]

We don’t travel to Jerusalem or some other far-off land to find the presence of God, but His presence is in and among His church. [pause]

The church is the place of God’s presence on earth, and so we represent Him.

In and through the church, God has determined to show His presence, power, glory, and holiness. [pause]

Therefore, the church, which is made up of Christians, is actually a spiritual temple of God, and that means that we don’t come *to* God’s house, we *are* God’s house! [pauseeee]

This gives the church utmost significance! [pauseee]

Americans have such a low view of church, and it shows...

Many people think they don't need the church, but believe they can do the Christian life alone, or they think that they don't need to be connected or involved in a church. *[pause]*

Often you will find people who look down on the church, see it as unimportant, and neglect it.

But let me tell you this: to look down on or neglect the church is to show disdain *for God*, for it's God's Temple, it's where God dwells. *[pause]*

It would be *unthinkable* for an Israelite during the Old Testament time period to say that they loved God, but hated His Temple.

So also, it's unthinkable for a person to say that they love God, but hate the church. *[pause]*

God and the church are so vitally connected that to look down on one is to look down on the other. *[pause]*

The church is what He has chosen to be His Temple and where He chose to be His dwelling place, and yet people see the church as unimportant? *[pause]*

The church is the household of God! So don't you think He cares about and loves His own household?! *[pause]*

Let's remember that we are the household of God—what a privilege, what an honor! *[pause]*

We are not a part of something lowly or small, but something high, big, glorious, and *significant*. *[pause]*

Too often we get downcast because we don't feel like we belong to something, or the things that we belong to feel small and trivial.

But just think of how big, important, and remarkable it is to belong to the household of God. *[pause]*

We belong to God's household—the God of the Universe, the Creator of the World, the All-Powerful Lord, and Sovereign One.

And we belong to Him, together. *[pause]*

**In Christ, we are members of God's glorious household together.**

Jews and Gentiles, who believe in Jesus, are no longer distant from each other, but are fellow citizens and members of the household of God. *[pause]*

God has brought together so many different types of people to be a part of His great house.

And what separated us before Christ, no longer separates, but we belong to something amazing...

We are the Temple of God, the dwelling place of Him by the Spirit. *[pause]*

What a privilege, what an honor! *[pauseeee]*

The church is God's house, not a man-made institution. *[pause]*

Man-made institutions flop and fail, but the church of God will not fizzle away.

Man-made institutions can die off, but the church of God will never die off! *[pauseeeee]*

The Lord has not only designed His house in wisdom, but built it through His mighty power and through a matchless act of grace in Christ Jesus, and we get to be a part of it! *[pause]*

We are each a part of God's great building program!

We are constantly growing and becoming something precious to God—we are a part of something bigger than ourselves! *[pause]*

We are a part of His great building project, and when God is done adding stones to His house...

The construction will be complete, the tools removed, and the whole world will get to see the finished building in all of its splendor, and all glory will go to God alone! *[pauseeeee]*

Christian, you are a part of something bigger than just yourself. *[pause]*

You are a part of God's grand plan, that is amazing.

And it's because of being brought together as God's house that we can have relationships with one another in the church that truly have deep significance. *[pauseeee]*

When we gather together, there is something amazing going on because the presence of God Almighty is here.

And in all of this, we stand upon and proclaim our cornerstone, Christ Jesus our Lord.