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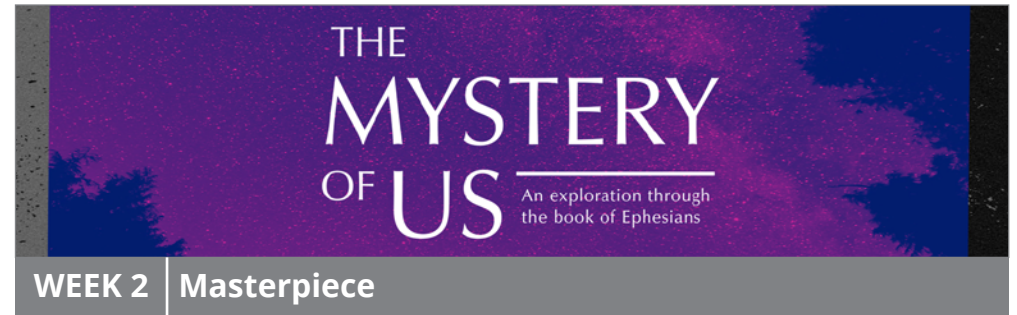
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### PRAYER

Creator God, you shaped me in your image. You created me in love. You gave me many gifts and talents. I pray that you give me guidance today in how is best to use my time, efforts, and talents. Help me walk the path you guide me on. Let my actions reflect you. Amen.

### WARM UP (OPTIONAL)

What is the greatest piece of art you've ever experienced?

### NOTES

## WORD

<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

<sup>11</sup> Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— <sup>12</sup> remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

### EPHESIANS 2:4-13

What Paul is articulating is that certain political gatherings are under the lordship of these powers that have been usurped by Jesus, or Jesus has been exalted over. So these powers that rule over the systems and institutions of the world bring death and hostility, division, all these things...What does that actually mean that you've been saved by this God in this way of being raised and seated? Well, it looks like participation in this new humanity, in which former hostilities have been abolished, and you are, together, united before God.

- The new humanity in Jesus does not erase ethnic identity because our new identities would then become whatever the majority culture of the time is, which is the Babylon design pattern all over again.
- It's the diverse, hospitable, unified body of Christ that signals to spiritual forces of darkness that they have lost their power.
- The condition from which Jesus saves both Israel and the nations is the covenant curse of mutual hostility and slavery to foreign gods.

- Tim Mackie on Ephesians 2

## GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale from 1-10 (1 being never/not at all and 10 being always/extremely) how would you rate your capacity of mercy towards others?
2. Do you believe that by Gods grace you have been saved? Why do you answer that way?
3. Knowing that you have been intricately designed by the Creator of the universe, how might this knowledge cause you live differently?
4. Do you mix and fellowship with people from other ethnicities and cultures? Why/why not?
5. If you are not yet a follower of God our Father, would you be willing to acknowledge Him as your God, and enable him to have all authority as the one who calls the shots in your life, and is your Father who loves you? Would you like to enter into a saving relationship with God through Jesus? Ask your lifegroup leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer:

*Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Saviour. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## PRAYER