

Week 11

“You Belong”

Ephesians 2:11-13

Nakiah Reiter

I love to sing; anytime, anywhere. There’s a meme that states, “If you can’t handle me bursting into song about whatever you just said, then we can’t be friends.” That’s me.

As a high school freshman, I didn’t belong. I didn’t belong to any clubs or teams; that was for coordinated, confident people. I didn’t belong in Biology; that was for mature, dark-haired males (said my teacher). I didn’t belong in Select Choir. That was for people who successfully auditioned. In my freshman disorientation, I missed the group’s existence until mid-year. Still, I inquired.

“How do you get into Select Choir?”

“You have to audition first semester and get picked.”

“Can you try out for second semester?”

“No. They’re full.”

It was clear—I didn’t belong. The apostle Paul speaks to this condition in his letter to the Ephesians. He reminds them, “Therefore, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, who are called ‘Uncircumcision’ by those who called themselves ‘Circumcision,’ which is made in the flesh by human hands—remember that at that time you were separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and in the world without God. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

Paul well understood separation from God. As a leading teacher of Jewish law and a circumcised Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, he had the credentials to understand the commands and regulations under the Old Testament covenants that would disqualify Gentiles from proper worship. As a new creation in Christ, Paul was granted an intimate awareness of being dead in his sins, until the blood of Jesus washed over him in Damascus, setting him free from physical and spiritual blindness.

Conversely, Paul also understood belonging. In His mercy and grace, God grabbed Paul’s attention and captured his heart, making him a spiritual founding father for whole nations of Gentiles. Paul then encouraged his many churches with the good news that Jesus doesn’t have any auditions to try outs. Jesus doesn’t give preference to certain hair colors or gender. No coordination or confidence required. Jesus doesn’t fill up, leaving no more open slots for you. Nothing can disqualify you from joining. He is always ready for you to come and belong. And once you say “Yes,” to Him, you are His—forever.

QUESTION: How do you live in the truth that once you belong to Christ, you are always His?

WALK IT OUT: Write out a scripture to remind you to Whom you belong. Share a copy with a friend. If you’re feeling ambitious, commit to memorize it together.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank You that I can come boldly into Your open arms, anytime, anywhere. Thank You that I belong to You. Help me live like I believe it; help me share this good news with those who need it.