

Let's Show America Great Again
OUTSIDERS NO MORE
Ephesians 2:11-22

At some time or other, each and every one of us has been on the outside of someone else's 'fishbowl' looking in, feeling like outsiders. We've all wondered how we can get into their reality and be part of the action, whatever that meant.



As our world becomes more and more hostile toward Christianity, the Bible and the Gospel of Christ, anyone who takes their faith in Jesus seriously is going to feel more and more like an outsider. It's not a matter of if, but of when, we start losing some of our cherished freedoms and privileges as Christians in this country.

The people who received Paul's letter to the Ephesians certainly felt like outsiders in their world. To declare Jesus as Lord in the Roman Empire was to align oneself with Jesus of Nazareth against the Caesar of Rome (see 1 Cor. 12:3). It meant excluding oneself from Roman society, its culture, its politics and its religion. It often meant persecution.

Even though they were outsiders, however, and were often tempted to get back into their old world, the early Christians hung on and had a bigger impact on the Roman Empire than the Empire had on them. That brings us back to the question: What made those believers embrace their place as outsiders? What enabled them to overturn one of the most powerful Empires of history?

The apostle Paul wrote Ephesians 2:11-22 to remind his readers, which includes us, that we are not the outsiders at all. No! We are the insiders of an infinitely bigger reality that holds eternal

potential. That reality is God's kingdom, which is already bursting into history and will someday come in its fullness.

Once we make that realization, we will stop staring into the fishbowls of the world, wanting what they offer; and we're going to start exploring the potential of the kingdom of God. We're going to start living in a way that opens us up to his power and will eventually transform the world around us.

To bring his readers to that realization, the apostle reminded them of three important truths.

- **Remember that you USED TO BE the outsiders – 2:11-12**
- **Through his death, Jesus Christ destroyed the barriers that kept you on the outside – 2:13-18**
- **Now YOU are the insiders! – 2:19-22**

When we truly believe these things, we will spend less time staring into other people's fishbowls, wanting what they have, and more time exploring what we have in Christ. We will become less reliant on the world and its structures for solutions to our problems, and more reliant on the Spirit that lives inside us. We will become less obsessed with gaining power in this world, and more in touch with the power that resides in us. We will become less focussed on making this world a better place, and more focussed on living under the liberating and transforming rule of God.