# Ephesians: Christ Our Fragrant Offering

**Overview:**
The book of Ephesians addresses the mystery of God's will to bring all things together in Christ (Ephesians 1:9–10). Specifically, Jews and Gentiles had been brought together in the major city of Ephesus at this local church, so Paul addressed how Christ had torn down the "dividing wall of hostility" between the two groups (2:11–22). Ephesians is divided into two major sections. Chapters 1–3 address the doctrines of grace and salvation given by God, while chapters 4–6 consider the application of these gifts in the church. In Christ, the church has been made into a multiethnic community to proclaim His gospel.

**Introduction Starter:**
Have you ever been part of a diverse group of people? Sports teams that have larger rosters often have diversity, and groups such as a theatre troupe can be comprised of a variety of people. God has given diversity in the church since we all share salvation in Jesus. Christ desires unity in diversity because we are part of the "one body" (Ephesians 4:4–6).

**Main Idea:**
Our fellowship and love in the church must be sacrificial, just as Christ gave Himself for us.

**Expositional Outline: Ephesians 5:1–2**

1. Our position: imitators and children (v. 1)
- God's people have imitated Him since the first chapter in the Bible when they were made in His image (Genesis 1:26–27).
- In giving the law, God desired for His people to be like Him as holy (Leviticus 19:2).
- Holiness is lived out in Jesus, who never sinned.
- Children naturally imitate others, and we must imitate our heavenly Father.

2. Our description: walking in love (v. 2)
- Walking is a favorite metaphor for Paul to describe the progression of the Christian.
- The love we share is influenced by the love we have received in Christ (1 John 3:16).
- Later in the letter, husbands are called to embody this love to their wives (Ephesians 5:25).

**Christ Connection:**
Under the old covenant, the high priest would put animal organs on the altar so that the aroma would be pleasing to God (Leviticus 1:9). This fragrant offering was a regular part of Old Testament worship (Genesis 8:21; Exodus 29:18; 2 Chronicles 2:4; Psalm 66:15). Animals were regularly sacrificed to atone for sin. In Christ, we have a sacrifice offered once and for all (Hebrews 10:10–14). Christ is our Great High Priest who does not need to offer sacrifice for His own sin since He is sinless. He is our sacrificial offering. No longer do we come to God through the blood of goats and sheep but through the precious blood of His only Son.

**Concluding Idea/Application:**
Naturally, we think and act differently from those who experienced other upbringings. Such differences can often be divisive. However, in the church, unity in diversity declares the gospel because Christ prayed that we would be one so that the "world may know" (John 17:23).