

The Epistle to the Ephesians

“United by a Moment”

United in Christ

Eph. 2:11-22

Ephesians 2:11-22 tells us that Jesus came into world, not only to break down the barrier between man and God, but also to break down the barrier between man and man, between group and group. He came to call together for himself a people from *every* tribe and language and nation, to create a unity out of the great diversity of humanity, to make those of us called by Him into *one* people. Differences of class, gender, and ethnicity serve to divide us in the world; Jesus destroys those barriers and enables us to love each other with His love.

Sin separates people from God and people from people.

A. Brought Near by the Blood of Christ (v. 11-13)

- We need to “remember” what we were and what we would be apart from the amazing grace of God demonstrated toward us in Christ.
- Today we don’t have big fights over circumcision but back then – a mark of the OC people was circumcision. Thus, the Gentiles (nations) (uncircumcised) had no relationship with God. There is no hope without God.
- Remember when you were self-righteous, separate from the people of God – without hope and without God ...BUT ... Once again we get this great “but!”
- Notice we don’t get to God. Jesus comes near to us. He has pursued us and brought us near.
- Death is an enemy. Sin has brought death into the world. When you walk away from God you walk away from life. There is no way back, but for God! My separation has been put on Jesus and now I am brought near!

B. One New Man (v. 14-18)

- Jesus Himself is our peace! The central message of this text is that *peace* is a *person*: Jesus Christ. In Him, we have peace with God and peace with other believers; without Him, there is no peace. All roads to peace begin with Him. Since we all come to God the same way, we can approach each other in humility and love -- regardless of the external differences among us.
- The enmity of v. 15 is between people – not God and man. The Jews and Gentiles were separated by the law of God in God’s design. This was a great and deep divide. The cross ended the enmity between these two groups of people. (Abolished in the original means “abolished”!)
- Jesus died not only to make us right with God, but to create a new man in which people from diverse backgrounds would be brought into one body where there would be real peace. The church is where the world is to see true harmony and love – between all races, tongues, cultures, economic levels, education etc. in the new order established through the cross. In Jesus’ kingdom the citizens are united on a common mission and there is harmony - not people at each other’s throats, biting and devouring one another, for self gain and

advancement - not pride where one looks down on another as if he were superior and not a recipient of grace.

- A new humanity – a new creation – one new man (2 Cor. 5:17). God is community in unity, and we are to be in His image – His likeness.
- We have a responsibility – a stewardship – to reflect this new order in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Gal. 2:11-14 – Peter’s act of separating from the Gentiles is treated as a horrendous act – an evil thing – attacking the very heart of the gospel and the corporate goal of Jesus’ death.

There Are Not Two Ways of Salvation

- There was one great work of salvation on the cross when Jesus died to remove the enmity between God and Jew and between God and Gentile. And He did this reconciling work not separately but in one body, the church. Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God in Christ. That is why being reconciled to God means being reconciled to each other. That is why there cannot be two peoples and two tracks to heaven. There is one way to be reconciled to God: Christ reconciles us to God by uniting us to Himself. That means we become one body; Jew and Gentile.
- Being the body of Christ means that we have been brought into a Jewish inheritance. We have our salvation because we are fellow citizens with Israel and have become heirs of the promise of Abraham. We are not an independent body over against Israel. We have been grafted in to the true Israel – the body of Christ.

Pause and Ponder:

- What might be the danger of an emphasis on “accept Jesus as your own personal Savior”?
- Our culture exhibits a real lack of commitment, and the church is looked upon as a place you go or a meeting you attend for personal growth and encouragement. How does the teaching in this passage help correct this?

C. A New Dwelling Place of God (v. 19-22)

- We are citizens in Jesus’ kingdom. This is our priority. We are connected to and a part of God’s people (i.e. Abraham’s seed).
- Temple = access to God (OC had very limited access – it was designed to be temporary and give way to something greater). One brick does not make a temple – nor does one living stone.
- God does not dwell in a multiplicity of temples. Christ is not divided. Christ Himself is the cornerstone upon which His temple is being built of living stones (1 Peter 2:4-10). The church is the fulfillment of the promised rebuilt temple.