

**"United in One Body"**

**Ephesians 2:11-22**

**Part 4**

**Introduction:** Today as we return to our study of Ephesians, I want to give you a little more history to help your insight into what we are currently looking at. In Ephesians 2:11-22 Paul is focused upon the unity which Jesus Christ has made in the Church. In Paul's day there was a major division between the Jew and the Gentile.

In the Old Testament the Jews were God's ELECT. This meant that the Nation of Israel had been chosen by God to be His representatives to the world.

**Romans 9:4-5**

<sup>4</sup> *Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;*

<sup>5</sup> *Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

This is what we have been looking at on Wednesday evenings in our study of Romans. In these two verses there are 8 privileges that were entrusted to Israel to make them unique as God's representatives. But instead of being a channel they became a bucket. Israel became very prideful of these privileges and began to look down upon the Gentiles. The Gentiles were social and spiritual outcasts in the eyes of the Jews. Because the Gentiles were beyond the borders of Israel the Jews saw them as people that were "AFAR OFF".

But God intended for salvation to reach the people who were AFAR OFF.

**Isaiah 57:19**

<sup>19</sup> *I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.*

Let me show you what Peter preached in Acts 2.

**Acts 2:38-39**

<sup>38</sup> *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

<sup>39</sup> *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.*

Peter preached that the promise of salvation was for them who were afar off but did not really grasp this Truth until Cornelius came to faith in Acts 10.

**Acts 10:34-35**

<sup>34</sup> Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:*

<sup>35</sup> But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Because of the contention and the division in Paul's day between the Jews and the Gentiles many had a difficult time overcoming this. That is exactly why we have the verses that are before us. Paul is writing this to show his readers that IN CHRIST there is to be unity.

In verses 11 and 12 Paul reminded his readers of how they were social and spiritual outcasts.

**Notice Ephesians 2:11-12**

In verse 12 we see some frightening points about those who are unsaved. **They are without Christ, without hope and without God in the world.** But there is good news.

**I. The Believer Brought Near**

**Notice Ephesians 2:13**

This is the verse which we looked at last week. We who were AFAR OFF were made nigh by the BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST. We were not made near by our works, or by our position, or church membership, or church attendance. It is only the blood of Jesus Christ that can wash away our sins and bring us into the presence of our Lord.

Last week in our study we looked at how there is a crimson thread that flows the entire way through the Old Testament right up to the cross. In the Old Testament there were millions of animals that were slain for sin, but the blood of those sacrifices could not remove the sins from anyone's account.

**Hebrews 10:1-4**

*For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.*

<sup>2</sup> *For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*

<sup>3</sup> *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.*

<sup>4</sup> **For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.**

But when Jesus died His blood washed away our sin and the sin of the Old Testament saints.

### Revelation 1:5

<sup>5</sup> *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins in his own blood.***

### Notice Ephesians 2:14

There are several points to see within this verse:

1. **Jesus Christ is our peace.** This means more than the fact that He is our peace Maker. He is literally our peace.

Let me give you an illustration to help you with this. There can be two people who have built up walls and fences because of their differences and if both of these people come to know Jesus Christ, they now have a middle ground/common ground for they are both IN CHRIST and He has now become the peace between the two.

*"During World War II a group of American soldiers was exchanging fire with some Germans who occupied a farmhouse. The family who lived in the house had run to the barn for protection. Suddenly their little three-year-old daughter became frightened and ran out into the field between the two groups of soldiers. When they saw the little girl, both sides immediately ceased firing until she was safe. A little child brought peace, brief as it was, as almost nothing else could have done. Jesus Christ came as a babe to earth, and in His sacrifice on the cross He Himself became peace for those who trust in Him. His peace is not temporary but permanent."*

2. **Jesus Christ has made both one in Him.**

Notice Ephesians 2:14 again.

The context here is that the Jew and the Gentile have become one in Christ.

### Galatians 3:28

<sup>28</sup> *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

We have talked about this before, but it needs to be said again. When a Jew comes to Jesus Christ for salvation, they lose their Jewish identity in Christ. There is no such thing as a Jewish Christian or a Gentile Christian. We are all one IN CHRIST. He then is our PEACE.

**Application:**

This is exactly what our world needs today. Jesus can do what no President or any world leader could ever do. He can bring people together who were separated by walls and fences. In our society there are racial divisions, political divisions, ethnic divisions, family divisions, and the list goes on. Jesus is the answer to the divisions. He is our PEACE. He has made those who come to Him ONE.

*"Consider this analogy: Suppose two people have a difference and go to law about it; and the experts in the law draw up a document, which states the rights of the case, and ask the two conflicting parties to come together on the basis of that document. All the chances are that the breach will remain unhealed, for peace is seldom made on the basis of a legal document. But suppose that someone whom both of these conflicting parties love comes and talks to them, there is every chance that peace will be made. When two parties are at variance, the surest way to bring them together is through someone whom they both love. That is what Christ does. He is our peace. It is in a common love of him that people come to love each other. That peace is won at the price of his blood, for the great awakener of love is the Cross. The sight of that Cross awakens in the hearts of men of all nations love for Christ, and only when they all love Christ will they love each other. It is not in treaties and leagues to produce peace. There can be peace only in Jesus Christ."*

**3. Jesus has broken down the middle wall of partition between us.**

**Notice Ephesians 2:14 again.**

Here Paul is most likely thinking about the temple of his day. At the temple there was on the outside a section known as the court of the Gentiles. No Gentile was permitted to come beyond the dividing wall and approach the Holy Place.

*Josephus records that "When you went through these first cloisters unto the second court of the Temple, there was a partition made of stone all round, whose height was three cubits. Its construction was very elegant; upon it stood pillars at equal distances from one another, declaring the law of purity, some in Greek and some in Roman letters that no foreigner should go within the sanctuary."*

*Along the top of the barrier of the dividing wall at regular intervals, were stone pillars bearing an inscription engraved in both Latin and Greek...*

***"Let no one of any other nation come within the fence and barrier around the Holy Place. Whoever is caught doing so will himself be responsible for the fact that his death will ensue."***

The Roman government gave the Jews permission to execute any Gentile, even those who were Roman citizens, if they proceeded beyond this **barrier!**

Let me show you how serious this was in Paul's day.

**Acts 21:27-31**

*<sup>27</sup> And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,*

*<sup>28</sup> Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.*

*<sup>29</sup> (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)*

*<sup>30</sup> And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.*

*<sup>31</sup> And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.*

Getting back to our text then: The idea here is that the Gentile is no longer afar off. All who come to Jesus Christ now have access into the presence of God. Let me show you what the writer of Hebrews recorded:

**Hebrews 7:19**

*<sup>19</sup> For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.*

**Application:**

Now I need to pause here and pull some of these thoughts together. Jesus Christ gave His life blood to destroy the barriers and the fences. He gave His blood to break down the middle wall of partition and to make us all one IN HIM. He did this so that there would be unity in the church. He even prayed for the unity of the church.

**John 17:20-23**

<sup>20</sup> Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

<sup>21</sup> That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

<sup>22</sup> And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

<sup>23</sup> I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

These verses not only show us our Lord's desire for unity within the body of Christ, but we also see that our unity is a major part of our testimony. We are living a divided nation and when there are people who are living and functioning in unity the world notices. Let us remember that Israel was the ELECT in the Old Testament meaning they were God's representatives to the world around them.

We as the church are the elect today meaning that we are God representatives to the world around us.

### **2 Corinthians 5:17-20**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

<sup>18</sup> And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

<sup>19</sup> To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

<sup>20</sup> Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

But the sad thing is that many in the church are constantly building walls and building fences. There are those in the body of Christ that will criticize other believers because of differences within their lives which result in fences and walls. Let me show you something we will look at down the road a way.

### **Ephesians 4:1-3**

*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

<sup>2</sup> *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

<sup>3</sup> **Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

The word "endeavor" means 'To exert oneself'.

**Conclusion:**

Jesus Christ died to build His church in unity. Let us exercise lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and forbear one another in order to keep the unity.

One side not to keep in mind:

**We never compromise the Truth in order to attain unity. That is treason to Jesus Christ.**