

"United in One Body"

Ephesians 2:11-22

Part 5

Introduction: In our study of Ephesians we have been looking at Paul's words to the Gentiles at the church at Ephesus. He is teaching them of how they are new creations in Christ. As we look at the teaching of Ephesians 2, **we are seeing how the church was formed.**

In Ephesians 2:1-10 Paul has taken us from our sinful past right up to the cross where we were saved by grace through faith. He then led us from the cross to our everyday lives where he explained in verse 10 that we are God's workmanship created in Christ unto good works.

Now as we have continued on starting in 2:11 Paul addresses the Gentiles in Ephesus and reminds them of how they were social outcasts and spiritual outcasts as Gentiles. Then as we come to verse 13, we see a major contrast.

I. The Gentiles Brought Near

Notice Ephesians 2:13

We were made near by the BLOOD. Not any works which we have done but by the BLOOD only. If you are not washed in the blood you can have to fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Notice Ephesians 2:14

This is the verse that we looked at last week and as we did, we were able to see several points:

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

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.

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

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

Galatians 3:28

²⁸ *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.*

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

Paul is most likely thinking about the separation at the Temple here. The Gentiles were limited to the Court of the Gentiles and could never come near the Holy Place. There was a wall around the Gentile Courtyard and there was a warning sign:

"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!**

This now brings us to where we are in our study today.

4. Jesus created a new man.

Notice Ephesians 2:15

There are several points to see here:

- a. Jesus nullified that which caused the enmity and the enmity itself.

Notice Ephesians 2:15

Jesus abolished/rendered powerless the Law which is what caused the enmity. Now I need to explain something here that will help us to better understand what Paul is saying.

The Law of Moses could be divided into three sections:

1. **The Moral Law** - This would be the Ten Commandments. This is not what Paul is speaking of here. Jesus did not abolish the Commandments. Nine of them are repeated in the New Testament for us. Only the Commandment to keep the Sabbath is not repeated.

Jesus did not come to destroy the Moral Law but instead He fulfilled it.

Matthew 5:17

¹⁷ *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: **I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.***

This is so very important because the Law called for our death.

2 Corinthians 3:6-7

⁶ Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

⁷ But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

Romans 3:19-20

¹⁹ Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The Law required perfection and we are not perfect, so we were sentenced to death by the Law. But Jesus came and He fulfilled the Law perfectly and now we are IN CHRIST and ONE WITH HIM. Therefore, in our standing we too are perfect.

Romans 8:3-4

³ For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2. **The Civil Law** - This is the Law that our government and the judicial system is built upon. Jesus did not abolish the Civil Law.

3. The Ceremonial Law

This is the part of the Law that caused the enmity, and this is the part of the Law that was abolished/nullified. Listen to the words of another teacher:

"The greatest barrier between Jew and Gentile was the ceremonial law, the Law of commandments contained in ordinances. The feasts, sacrifices, offerings, laws of cleanliness and purification, and all other such distinctive outward commandments for the unique separation of Israel from the nations were abolished. That God's moral law was not abolished is clear from the phrase contained in ceremonies. His moral law reflects His own holy nature and therefore can never change. All the ceremonial laws which distinguished and separated Jews from Gentiles were obliterated. Before Christ those groups could not eat together because of restricted foods, required washings, and ceremonial contamination. Now they could eat anything with anyone. Before Christ they could not

worship together. A Gentile could not fully worship in the Jewish Temple, and a Jew would not worship in a pagan temple. In Christ they now worshiped together and needed no temple or other sacred place to sanctify it. All ceremonial distinctions and requirements were removed."

Listen to the words of another teacher:

"What He did do was to render ineffective the ceremonial law. It says here, the **"commandments contained in ordinances"**. In other words, what He did was put religion to death. No longer could the Jew say, "Oh, I sacrifice. I go to the Temple. I worship on the Sabbath. I do this. I do that. God loves me more than He loves you." Oh, no. He took all the external stuff and threw it out. Jesus says, "Now there is only one way to God, and that's through Me. You can't work your way up the ladder."

I appreciate the words of this man. JESUS PUT RELIGION TO DEATH. This is what many churches need to understand today. They go through ceremonies, candle lightings, many rituals and so on thinking that they are pleasing God.

Listen! The ceremonial Law has been abolished. We now come to God by Jesus Christ and not ceremonies or rituals. I don't need to be in a church to worship God, I do not need to dress a certain way to worship the Lord, I do not need to be a part of any ritual to worship the Lord. I can worship God on the mountain while dressed in my hunting clothes. Religion has been abolished.

John 14:6

⁶ *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

b. Jesus created something new.

Notice Ephesians 2:15 again.

The word **"NEW"** here means new in kind or quality, unprecedented, unheard of, new in sense that it brings into the world a new quality of thing which did not exist before. Now we as INDIVIDUALS are made new in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17

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

We were made new as individuals but that is not what Paul is speaking of here in Ephesians. He is speaking of the church or the body of Jesus Christ. In the church there is neither Jew nor Gentile.

Galatians 3:28

²⁸ *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.*

Listen to the words of another teacher:

*"When Jesus speaks of ONE NEW MAN He is speaking corporately not individually. In other words, this truth in this context refers to Christ's body, the church, which is in turn composed of individual **new** creations in Christ. Note that God is not making a new world, but a new man. God makes no attempt to improve world conditions by repairing the old systems, but He replaces the old, earthly nationalisms by a new order whose citizenship is of heaven."*

Notice Ephesians 2:16

Here we see that the Jews and the Gentiles become one body in Jesus Christ.

We need to notice closely here the word "Reconcile". Listen to the meaning.

"Reconcile pictures the bringing together of friends who have been estranged. Through Christ, man's enmity toward God is changed to one of friendship, and the enmity of Jew and Gentile for each other also is changed from hostility to friendship."

Now God never needed to be reconciled to man for God has always loved man.

John 3:16

¹⁶ *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

1 John 4:19

¹⁹ *We love him, because he first loved us.*

It was man who needed to be reconciled to God because before salvation we were enemies of God.

Romans 5:8-10

⁸ *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

The word for reconciled here is only used two other places in the New Testament.

Colossians 1:18-23

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

¹⁹ For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

²⁰ And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

²¹ And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

²² In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

²³ If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister:

Notice Ephesians 2:16 again.

Jesus Christ has slain the enmity. Listen to what Johnson says concerning this statement.

"Now when he says he has **slain the enmity** he means that the Lord Jesus has taken upon Himself the judgment that the broken law required, that He has paid to the full for the people of God. And that's why the people of God go free: their penalty has been paid. Therefore, heaven can exact no further penalty, and we must remember that. Everything was procured for us by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ - forgiveness of sins, reconciliation to God, propitiation for sins - all secured by the cross."

Notice Ephesians 2:17

Here is a very interesting verse and I really want you to see what Paul is saying here. The word "AND" is a connective and it also show the order. Now when I say that the order really seems to be backward. We would think that it would say that Jesus came and

preached peace and then he slayed the enmity on the cross. How can it be that He slayed the enmity and then preached peace to these people? They never met Jesus Christ after His resurrection. So, how can this be?

The answer is what we need to absorb here.

The preaching that Paul refers to here was the preaching of the Apostles. They preached the Words of Jesus Christ, so it was the same as Christ preaching the Words.

Application:

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

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

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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.

When you share the Word of God with someone it is the same as Jesus Christ preaching the Word. We are Jesus to the lost and dying world.

Philippians 1:20-21

²⁰ According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.