

But Now In Christ Jesus

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Ephesians 2: 11-22

Last week

-We were dead in sin, BUT GOD made us ALIVE WITH CHRIST

-We were dead in sin and captive of Satan, BUT GOD raised us UP WITH HIM and seated us with HIM

-We were doomed to be children of wrath, BUT GOD allowed His Son to take our wrath on HIS shoulder so that we can experience the immeasurable riches of His GRACE in kindness towards us in CHRIST Jesus.

In, by, and with His GRACE

Grace means unmerited favor.

Eugene Peterson, explains **what the Grace of Jesus** does to us: **grace gives** us a “reorientation from living anxiously by my wits and muscle to living effortlessly in the world of God’s active presence.”¹

-Paul is on fire. He explains how once we were dead, and how the Grace of God redeemed us from enternal death. (this is big)

-Paul also wants to draw to us how God can build a **new family**, a new chosen family, that includes Jews and Gentiles. They both are equal recipients of God’s salvation through Jesus Christ.

This week, let me start with this story:

Illustration: I arrived Salina, Kansas on December 27, 1980. It was very cold, gloomy, the sky was full of clouds. I had a strange feeling to be in a new land at a new place which would be my new home. I knew one professor who helped me to come to Kansas Wesleyan University. Am I accepted in this society? I am a foreigner, *odar*... It was a very strange feeling to be at a place where no one knows you, you don’t belong, you don’t know their culture, you don’t know if they will accept you...

Strange feeling to be an **alien**...!

Paul is writing to the people of Ephesus, where there were Gentiles and Jews.

They did not get along. Here we see him addressing the Gentiles who were feeling left out...

-Once upon a time We Were “Odar” 2:12

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (Eph 2:11,12 ESV)

Therefore? That means you need to remember our condition as Paul mentioned in Chapter 2, dead, in sin, walking with Satan the prince of the air... and so on, and by the grace of Jesus we have life, a new life, a resurrected life.

Therefore:

Five statements used by the apostle describe the spiritual condition of the **Gentiles before they came to Christ:**

-First, they were **“separated from Christ,”**

-Second, they had **no citizenship**: they were **excluded from the citizenship of Israel**

-Third, **no covenant** with God: **foreigners to the covenants of the promise...**

-Fourth, they had **no hope**: **they were without hope**

-And fifth, **they did know God**: they were **“without God in the world.”**

-Called uncircumcised 2:11

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision”

Calling names is bad. I hated it in my school days...

-Do you see the tension between the “clean” and the “unclean”, those are circumcised and uncircumcised. (if circumcision is too strange for you to understand what is going on, I gave this example before of whoever is carrying on their chest the Armenian cross are saved and have the sign of the covenant. Whoever does not have the sign is not saved).

Whoever does not have the sign is not saved).

The circumcision was sign of a covenant with God; it was not given to the Israelites to boast over others as privileged people. Well, they did boast.

Two weeks ago I said, to be chosen, elected is not a privilege; it is a responsibility.

They are called to be a light to the nations. We at PACC too...

Thus, the division between Jews and Gentiles was extremely bad. **It reminds me with some of the divisions in our society.**

-But NOW in Christ Jesus 13

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Eph 2:13 ESV)

But now in Christ Jesus... I love that **Conjunction** BUT God...But Christ Jesus. It There is a turning point...you were like this and like that But, But, But God, and here... But Christ...

Illustration: -Think about these signs: **Do Not Enter, No Trespassing, Stay Out, Keep Out, Only Authorized people.**

How about: No Blacks, No Jews, No Armenians. Sad part of our history...
How about Azerbaijan says: "this is no more your land..."

What did Christ do?

-Once far away, now near

How beautiful it is to see God's plan for the Gentiles to **be brought nearby.**

The image of Jesus destroying the walls, the barriers, and bringing peace within the divided society.

Illustration: **New signs:**

Welcome, You belong here, WE care for you, You are my brother, my sister, We are adopted by same Father...

Please notice this is not an artificial connection.

Paul built the foundation in Chapter 1 and chapter 2:1-10

To BE IN CHRIST. That foundation is essential to build new home, new church, new family. We are NEAR to GOD.

How the Kansas church accepted me, adopted me... made my part of the family

Then what...we are connected...this connection has horizontal dimension.

-One Body for reconciliation 14-18

¹⁴ For he himself is our **peace**, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making **peace**, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached **peace** to you who were far off and

peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ **For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.** (Eph 2:14-18 ESV)

We are connected.

Did you see the words that Paul uses for this connection: both, one, reconciled, together, peace

Question: **What divides us?**

Ask?

Politics, religion, race, geographic location, sports, language, education...

Those are **distinctions between us**. Those are **not** major issues that divide us.

When **sin** enters in our lives, **distinctions become barriers**.

Pride has a major role. I am better than you. I know better than you do. My way or the highway. You are wrong, I am right.

-The Israelites were called to be separated from the others. The law which was given to help them come closer to God. Their separation became a privilege, and they were boasting instead of being a light to the nations.

Sin comes and destroys everything.

BUT NOW in CHRIST JESUS

-On the cross Jesus put to death our hostility...

-Jesus took upon himself our hatred and enmity.

-Destroying barriers, breaking down the wall. Destroying sin.

-Where did Jesus die? On Calvary not in the Temple which had many walls that separated us.

HE put to death our enmity, hostility.

Listen now: At the cross we are the same.

-What was the result of this reconciliation?

PEACE *eirene*

In this short passage four times the word peace comes, four times.

The word for peace (*eirene*) occurs **forty-three times** in Paul's letters, eight of which are in Ephesians. (1:2; 2:14-17; 4:3; 6:15, 23)

"Peace is a central and fundamental component of Paul's theology. Virtually every topic of doctrinal significance is brought into relation to peace."²

-For he himself is our peace

Peace is not a thing, or idea, it is person of Jesus Christ. **He himself is our peace.**

We see a similar image about peace in the story of **the two prodigal sons**. The younger son left (far away); the older son remained (near). One was far away, and one remained close by.

And he came and preached **peace to you who were far off and **peace** to those who were near (17)**

Both needed to repent, both needed the peace of Jesus.

- Jesus creates a NEW Community. (19-22)

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ **In him** the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple **in the Lord**. ²² And **in him** you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (Eph 2:19-22 ESV)**

Please notice, before the verbs were past tense, now in this section Paul uses present tense. **There is a construction going on... it is ongoing...**

Illustration: Lebanon unfished construction... we are constantly under construction....

-Same status, position.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household.

I know exactly what it means not to be full citizens of a country.

My family and I did not have full citizenship of the US when we arrived. We were allowed to do some things and not allowed other things. Until one day we became fellow citizens... I have same status with all of you.

-We are not foreigners and strangers, we are fellow citizens, members of a household. I love this community. There are no second-class citizens. There is no caste system as some cultures have.

-Same Foundation

²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. (20)

The apostles are the ones who are sent with a message, the message of Jesus Christ. The prophets are the ones who are the voice of the Lord. They told the

people about God's judgement, or a warning from God, or guidance from God. On the other hand, they were messengers and the voice of the people to God. This is our foundation and Christ is the cornerstone.

-The same holy temple in the LORD (His Spirit dwell in us)

²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit (21-22)

This is not any temple; it is a living temple.

This is the new community; it is the church.

Don't think church as a building but living organization. A living temple where God is. And it is under construction... God is shaping us...

-Jesus used many living images for the church: vineyard. living temple, living stone, the bride... all are living images, there is life in it.

Sometimes church organization dominates over the life of the church, watch out. God used organic images.

WE just we finished a series on Acts. Pentecost, the Holy Spirit brought life to the apostles.

Application:

1. We are the building and God is the Builder

Remember this, God is building us. Later 4-6 we will see our responsibilities in this construction, in the new family, in this new community.

Now, allow to be IN Jesus. In Him. In His Grace

2. It is OK to be different from each other.

In him the whole building is joined together.

Once I saw an illustration from pastor in Palo Alto how woods are joined together. Let me show you a slide about that. There are different types of woods which are joined together. Eventually they will beautiful pieces of art.

If continue to be IN JESUS, even though we are different, a beautiful thing can come out of it

I asked this question in the beginning.

Question: **What divides us?** Politics, religion, race, geographic location, sport, language, education...

Sin can sperate, but **In Jesus** we can unite despite our differences.

**May the peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be in you and
And May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your
hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:7 NIV)**

1. Eugene Peterson, *Practice Resurrection* P 96.
2. Klyne Snodgrass, NIV Study Bible Commentary Ephesians, P 130

In addition to occurrences in greetings and blessings, note the following:

- God is a God of peace (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; 1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:23).
- Christ is the Lord of peace who gives peace (2 Thess. 3:16).
- The gospel is a gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15).
- The mindset of the Spirit is life and peace (Rom. 8:6),
- Peace is an eschatological reward (Rom. 2:10),
- Peace is equivalent to salvation and describes relation to God (Rom. 5:1),
- The kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17),
- Peace is the goal for human relations (Rom. 14:19; Eph. 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:22).
- Peace is the foundation for problem solving (1 Cor. 7:15; 14:33).
- The fruit of the Spirit is peace (Gal. 5:17).
- Peace guards our hearts (Phil. 4:7) and rules in them (Col. 3:15). Klyne Snodgrass, NIV Study Bible Commentary Ephesians, P 130