

Eph 2:11–22 (ESV) ⁽¹¹⁾ 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. ⁽¹³⁾ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ⁽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. ⁽¹⁹⁾ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ⁽²⁰⁾ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ⁽²¹⁾ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ⁽²²⁾ In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

1. We live in a world filled with tension

- A. Nation rises against nation – Russia, China, N. Korea, Iran, Syria all threaten the world’s peace
- B. But it’s not just nations – it’s the races – the religions – political mindsets
 - 1). This even breaks into our homes – husbands and wives – parents and children

Thought: Is there a solution – a way for mankind to get along – to experience peace?

- A. Fortunately that answer is “Yes” – that is what this passage is all about
 - 1). See the Gospels effect on two peoples groups that seemed irreconcilable – Jew and Gentile

2. The flow of thought in this chapter

- A. 1-2:10 – Paul has explained how man can be at peace with God
2:11-22 he tells us how man can be at peace with one another
 - 1). It is all through the work of Christ – who has reconciled sinful man and a holy God
And the result of that is that man is reconciled with man
- B. We also see a similarity in this passage and the passage before – God is exalted – His work
 - 1). Just as he showed the hopelessness of man’s condition in 2:1-3 – Dead in sin
 - a). But then we see the gracious rescue of God – alive in Christ
 - 2). Here we see the hopelessness of man in 2:11-12 – alienated from God
 - a). But once again we see the rescuing work of God – reconciling man to God
 - 3). In 2:4 we see grace in the words “But God” – you were dead in sin but God
In 2:13 we see grace in the words “But now” you were separated from God but now
- C. One last thought – here we see the design of the church
 - 1). Saved sinners reconciled to God and to one another – living in unity

3. Outline – This is speaking about the Gentiles – we will see two sections

- A. The Gentiles former state: Separated from Christ
- B. The believing Gentiles present state: United to Christ

I. THE GENTILES FORMER STATE: SEPARATED FROM CHRIST

1. Paul is writing to the Gentiles who were known as the uncircumcision

Eph 2:11 (ESV) 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—

“Therefore remember”

- A. Paul’s goal as always is to exalt God by causing them to remember their helpless state before salvation
 - 1). Remember who you were before God drew you to himself – helplessly, hopelessly lost

Transition: He reminds them of who they were – what they were called

“You Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision”

- A. Paul is referring to the Jewish rite of circumcision
 - 1). The Jew was commanded to take their baby boys at 8 days old to be circumcised
 - 2). This was more than a physical surgery – it was a powerful spiritual symbol
 - a). It was an external rite – like baptism – that spoke of an internal condition
It spoke of the sin being cut away from the heart
It was meant to be a symbol that the Jew would follow God and his ways
- B. It should have reflected humility – a willingness to submit and surrender
 - 1). But the Jew used it to produce a self-righteous pride
 - a). Because they were circumcised they were God’s people
 - 1a). It didn’t matter how they lived – the circumcision sealed the deal
 - b). Because the Gentiles weren’t circumcised – they weren’t God’s people – they were pagans
Some even believed God created the Gentile just to keep the fires of hell burning

Point: The Jews had totally messed up what circumcision was all about

- A. But it still indicated God had moved amongst them – he had blessed them
 - 1). He had given them his word and his commands - they had the prophets and the promises
- B. The Gentiles were uncircumcised because they didn’t have any of that
 - 1). God hadn’t moved amongst them – They hadn’t been instructed by his Word
They knew nothing about the promises

Transition: In this passage Paul outlines the plight of the Gentiles who had no knowledge of God’s ways

- A. The fact they were still uncircumcised proved that - He starts with the big one

The Gentile Was Separated from Christ

Eph 2:12 (ESV) remember that you were at that time *separated from Christ...*

1. This is the problem that leads to everything else in this chapter

- A. This is why the unbeliever remains dead to God – 2.1
 - 1). Why they follow the ways of Satan rather than God – 2:2
 - 2). Why they live to gratify the flesh rather than please God – 2.3
 - 3). Why they are objects of God’s wrath rather than recipients of his love and blessing – 2:3

Point: Because the Gentiles were separated from Christ they were separated from God in everything else

- A. Every one of God’s blessings flow through Christ – there is no other channel

Eph 1:3 (ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,*

- 1). Therefore if you’ve rejected Christ – you push away everything that God has to offer

Transition: So they were separated from Christ – that means all the rest of this list is true

The Gentile Were Strangers to God’s Promises

Eph 2:12 (ESV) remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and *strangers to the covenants of promise...*

1. Throughout the OT you find God making promises to the nation of Israel

- A. These covenants promised blessings to the Jews
- B. But the Gentiles were like foreigners without the rights and privileges of citizenship
 - 1). As far as all the promises of God went – the Gentiles were on the outside looking in
- C. Reformation Study Bible put it this way

The Gentiles were not citizens of the nation with whom God was in covenant relation. Though God's relationship with Israel included a promise to bless the nations ([Gen. 12:3](#)), Gentiles had no awareness of that hope.

- 1). They didn't know the promises of salvation in Christ – therefore they were separated

Transition: That leads us to our next point

They Were Without Hope

Eph 2:12 (ESV) 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...*

1. Not having less hope – without Christ there is NO HOPE

- A. There was no future beyond the grave – only the expectation of a horrifying eternity
- B. How much different for the believer – we look ahead with excited anticipation – hope

1 Th 5:8 (ESV) But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

- 1). That confident expectation that the grave only leads to something incredible

Transition: Now Paul just bottom lines it

They Were Without God in The World

Eph 2:12 (ESV) 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.*

1. Because they were separated from Christ they were without God

- A. They lived without his touch on their lives – they lived without the comfort of his promises
They lived without the stabilizing of his truth

Summing Up the Horrifying State of These Gentiles

1. This is who every lost person still is

- A. They were strangers to the promises that told them about Christ and promised salvation
 - 1). Therefore they were separated from Christ
 - 2). Which meant they were without God and had no hope of heaven in the future

2. This is why missions are so important – see it there

- A. There are still people like this – who have never heard the good news of Jesus Christ
- B. But there is an anti-mission movement you need to know about

Teaches there are others ways to heaven besides faith in Christ - sincerity

- 1). Famous illustration by Annie Dillard

Eskimo: 'If I did not know about God and sin, would I go to hell?' Priest: 'No, not if you did not know.' Eskimo: 'Then why did you tell me?'

- a). It would be better not to tell them so they remain ignorant

Then they will be allowed into heaven on another basis

- 2). But Scripture is clear – there is only one way

Jn 14:6 (ESV) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

- a). To be separated from Christ is to be separated from God and hope
- b). Therefore missions are vital AND URGENT

Carl F.H. Henry: "The gospel is only good news if it gets there in time."

- C. Interestingly enough – God is bringing the mission field to us

- 1). Spoken to those here who have never heard of what Christ did to save them

- a). Who have never heard the real promises of salvation in Christ

Transition: This is a terrible state to exist in – but Paul isn't done - God to the rescue again

II. THE PRESENT STATE: IN CHRIST

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

1. But now those who were far off “In Christ” have been brought near

- A. Do you see who gets the credit here? Same as the passage before

- 1). You who were dead have been given life in Christ - 2:4

Now you who were far off have been brought near through Christ - 2:13

Jn 6:44 (ESV) No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

- B. Here we have the hopelessness of alienation from God ended through his gracious work

Transition: Paul begins to outline the reconciling work of Christ

Brought Near by The Blood of Christ

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

1. Before anybody can enjoy nearness to God they have to be cleansed of sin

- A. The law of God allows no loopholes – God is holy and just - therefore sin must and will be judged

- B. That is what happened on the cross – something legal happened in the courtroom of God

- 1). On that cross 2000 years ago a trial took place – Jesus was judged to be guilty for my sin

- a). Then God's wrath was poured out upon him until His justice was satisfied

- C. God can now pour his love out on me Only because my record has been cleansed by Christ's blood

- 1). If that didn't happen – all I could expect is wrath – because I had sinned

- 2). I would have no hope of heaven – and my sin would still send me into the fires of hell

Transition: He shed his blood to wipe my record clean so I am no longer an object of wrath

- A. Therefore Paul tells us what the result is – look at the first part of v. 14

He Himself Is Our Peace

Eph 2:14 (ESV) For he himself is our peace...

1. Peace with God – Why? My record is clean – his wrath exhausted on Christ

- A. Therefore the enmity between God and me has ended – he has nothing against me

Ro 8:1 (ESV) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Transition: Up to this point in Ephesians Paul has been talking about man's relationship with God

- A. Now he shows us how the work of God effects our relationships with one another

2. But also peace with one another

Eph 2:14 (ESV) ... who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

- A. He has made Jew and Gentile one – Miraculously - loathing has been turned into love

Thought: Again to have this happen something had to be removed

- A. Just as the record of sin had to be removed for us to be one with God

A dividing wall of hostility had to be removed for Jew and Gentile to become one

3. What is the dividing wall of hostility that was broken down?

He tells us: Eph 2:13–15 (ESV) ⁽¹³⁾ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ⁽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,

- A. If unity was going to happen there had to be a different approach to God than the law
 - 1). The law based on man's performance – couldn't make ANYBODY right with God
 - 2). And it couldn't make man right with each other
- B. The Jews proved the law could never produce a unity between mankind
 - 1). Any system based on man's performance will fuel pride and self-righteousness – not love
 - 2). This is what happened with the law
 - a). The Jews considered themselves to be superior to the Gentiles because they had the law
And were somewhat keeping it – not very well – but an external observance
 - b). They looked down on the Gentiles because they didn't have the law
And were not keeping it at all
 - c). That faulty observance of the law just made the Jew proud and exclusive

Point: For this unity to occur God had to abolish the law as a way to be accepted by him

- A. This doesn't mean he threw the law out - "Well that's not working is it?"
 - 1). The law is what righteousness looks like – it is still the standard to get into heaven
- B. What the Gospel did was change the way man related to the law
 - 1). God would accept his Son's keeping of the law in man's place
 - a). God would apply Jesus obedience to all who placed their faith in them
- C. So man is still accepted by God through a perfect obedience to the law
 - 1). But it is based on Christ's obedience rather than their own – they meet that standard in Him
 - 2). This is the doctrine of substitution
 - a). Our sin is placed into his account – he is judged in our place
His perfect obedience is placed into our account – we are blessed because of it
- D. So the law was not thrown out because we are saved by faith – faith upholds the law

Ro 3:31 (ESV) Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, *we uphold the law.*

- 1). Faith upholds the law because it understands that you must be righteous – 100% compliant
And trusts that Christ met that standard of the law for us
- 2). So faith is not saying the law is not necessary – it is agreeing that the law was kept
Just not by us – but by our substitute

3. What did this work of Christ do?

- A. It made us right with God AND created a new humanity – a new people group – the Christian

See it there: Eph 2:14–16 (ESV) 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.
- B. In Christ Jew and Gentile who were separate and alienated became one

Ga 3:27–28 (ESV) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ⁽²⁸⁾ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

 - 1). No black nor white – Hispanic or Asian – we are new people in Christ
 - a). While we may still retain the beautiful parts of our culture
That doesn't supersede our oneness in him and the unity that creates
 - 2). I am a white American – but I am one with all the other races who are in Christ
 - a). One with all the other nationalities who are in Christ
 - b). THAT supersedes my being an American – WE are all citizens of heaven
- B. As this new people group – There is so much to be united over

- 1). We have a common salvation – a common savior
and a common goal to promote a common kingdom – God’s kingdom

Thought 1: This is all because of God’s grace – which empowers unity

- A. While the law produced pride that divided – because it was based on man’s performance

The Gospel produces a humility – because we know it is based on Christ’s performance alone

- 1). It tells us that none of us could do it – none of us was good enough
- 2). It removes my looking down upon you – you’re looking down upon me
- 3). It causes us both to look up to Christ – we are saved because of what he did alone
 - a). I’m no better than you nor you better than me – we’re both sinners who needed grace

- B. Because I have this wonderful commonness with others who are in Christ

Because I’ve been shown such grace I have a powerful motivator to treat others graciously

Col 3:13 (ESV) bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, *forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

- 1). Forgiveness becomes reasonable and logical
 - a). How can I – a recipient of such incredible grace – not show you the same thing?
How can I celebrate my forgiveness while holding a grudge against you?
 - b). This allows love to flow rather than bitterness and grudges that divide

Thought 2: This unity – loving acceptance is a powerful witness to the reality of God

- A. When the Jew and Gentile came together the world noticed

When people who would naturally have no interest in each other do – world notices

- B. When two people who have legitimate beefs with each other

Choose to let those go for the cause of the Kingdom – the world notices

Transition: Paul strengthens this thought by adding that was the message Jesus preached

Jesus Came and Preached Peace

Eph 2:17 (ESV) And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

1. Christ preached peace

- A. Peace between sinner and the Father – through his work on the cross
- B. Peace between those who would follow him – to give evidence of his work in the heart

Jn 13:35 (ESV) By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Thought: He preached peace to those who were near – the Jews who knew about God and heard him speak
He preached peace to those who were far off – the Gentiles who had no knowledge of God

- A. How did he preach peace to the Gentiles – he never went into Asia himself

- 1). He sent his church with his message – he sent those who had been saved
He is still doing that today – he is sending us

Mt 28:18–20 (ESV) And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ⁽²⁰⁾ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- 2). Paul picks up this thought – telling us the responsibility of the believer

Ro 10:13–14 (ESV) For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ⁽¹⁴⁾ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

Point: So the Gospel is a message of peace

- A. Peace between the sinner and God – and between those who are saved

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- B. It removes the pride that causes division and humbles us - reducing us all down to a level playing field
 - 1). We have all fallen short – none of us deserved anything from God but judgment
 - a). All that we have has come to us by grace
 - 2). This takes the power of bitterness away – treat others as God has treated you
 - a). If you've been forgiven for what you did against him
 - How can you not forgive one who has not done anything close to that to you

Transition: Paul closes by showing how unified we are

Eph 2:18 (ESV) For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

1. For through him = the same savior

- A. We have access to the same Father by the same Spirit through the work of the same Savior
- B. Paul is going to bring this up again in Ephesians 4 – speaking of why there must be unity

Eph 4:3-6 (NIV) Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (**Why? Because...**) (4) There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- (5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism; (6) one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- 1). We couldn't have more in common
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CONCLUSION

1. So the application is very practical isn't it?

- A. How you doing with getting along with other believers?
 - 1). The good news of Christ reconciles us to God
 - And is meant to reconcile us with one another – it makes the two one
- B. Let me close this with the prayer of Thomas Watts at the end of his sermon on this text

"Let there be *one Fold and one Shepherd*; and let thy Blood and thy Spirit, by which we have Access to one God, even the Father, cement all our Hearts to each other in such an Union as shall never be dissolved. Then shall we join with all the Creation in one eternal Song, even the Song which thy Word has taught us: *Blessing, and Honour, and glory, and Power, to him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.*"