

He Is Our Peace

Ephesians 2:11-22

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 hostility¹⁵ 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) **Our culture is marked by division. What are some of the things we divide over and breed animosity between people or groups? How is this similar or different within the church?**

Paul begins with where the Gentiles stood before receiving the gospel, particularly relative to their Jewish brothers and sisters. He says that their differences ultimately led to hostility between the two groups.

- 2) **What did the Jews have that the Gentiles didn't? In what ways were they different from each other?**
- 3) **We need righteousness before God, but we can't produce it because of sin. How do those things play out in how we relate to other people? (think about Cain and Abel)**

Starting in v13, we see how Jesus changes the equation. His work changed the way that we relate to God, and in turn, changed our relationships with each other.

- 4) **How does the work of Jesus change our relationship to God?**
- 5) **How does the work of Jesus make all who are in him one? How did his death kill the hostility between Jew and Gentile?**
- 6) **What does it look like to relate to each other considering this work of Christ? Is there anything that would change with how you engage others that would better reflect what Christ has accomplished?**

Our salvation is personal, but it is not individualistic. We have a new corporate identity as that Paul describes here as the household and temple of God.

- 7) **The American church is prone to very individualistic views of the Christian life. What are some ways you see this in the church? What about in yourself?**
- 8) **What are some implications of our corporate identity? What does it mean for how we relate to other Christians, our priorities, etc.?**

Some things you can be praying about:

- What can we praise God for?
- What sin do you need to confess?
- What cares or burdens we can help carry?