

Ephesians Study 4/24/24

Opening: The wall of separation has been forever destroyed in Christ! It's time to grow into the new things Christ blood has paid for you. The division of the past is breaking way to a strong unity that will not end. Jesus is the healer of every wound that divides humanity from each other. May His church be united under the banner of Christ.

Text: Ephesians 2:8-17

8For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9not by works, so that no one can boast. 10For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance as our way of life. 11Therefore remember that formerly you who are Gentiles in the flesh and called uncircumcised by the so-called circumcision (that done in the body by human hands)— 12remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. 14For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has torn down the dividing wall of hostility 15by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and decrees. He did this to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace 16and reconciling both of them to God in one body through the cross, by which He extinguished their hostility. 17He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. 19Therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, 20built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone.

- 1. Ephesians 1:8-10 8For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9not by works, so that**

no one can boast. **10**For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance as our way of life.

a. Grace received by promises believed.

b. "and this not from yourselves" the awakening to our need for grace is God's work in the heart of every believer. God has awakened us to His salvation offered in Jesus.

c. Does God work to awaken every man? Yes! Unfortunately, not all men will awaken to God's call of salvation and receive His grace.

d. "So that no one can boast" God's plan removes our pride which is the root of all our sins. Because it is clear we didn't earn what He has given us. His grace has stripped us of our arrogance.

e. For we are God's "workmanship", it is His hands that have and are working in each of us. We must allow Him.

1. We are Gentiles: Ephesians 1:11 Therefore remember that formerly you who are Gentiles in the flesh and called uncircumcised by the so-called circumcision (that done in the body by human hands)—

a. Uncircumcised gentiles were not able to participate in the Abrahamic Covenant that was considered exclusive to Jews alone.

b. God never intended that only Jews should receive the blessing of Abraham.

c. **Genesis 22:17-18** **17** I will surely bless you, and I will multiply your descendants like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will possess the gates of their enemies. **18** **And through your offspring all nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.**"

d. Paul reveals his disdain for the (jews) who cling to circumcision as evidence of a righteous life before God without any fruit to prove a changed life exists. This statement is Paul showing the hypocrisy

of the Jews who are clinging to dead religion over truth. Jesus also rebuked the religious Jews of His day for their hypocrisy.

2. We were outside looking in: Ephesians 1:12 **12remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.**

a. At that time: Before Christ the gentiles had no root in the covenant of redemption. God's plan was always to provide an open door for all people of the earth.

b. Commonwealth meaning: Citizens of the covenant. Christ was promised to the Jews. Since they nationally rejected Jesus God opened the door for all nations to enter the covenant. What does this covenant produce?

i. **Salvation:** A person passes from spiritual death to life.

ii. **Immortality:** We will live forever throughout Eternity.

iii. **Provision:** All blessings promised through Noah, Abraham and Moses are transferred to gentiles through Christ.

iv. **Purpose:** As partakers of the covenant, we now are called to carry the mission of evangelizing the rest of the world. Remember that Israel failed in this mission to be a "light to the gentiles"

c. Without hope: Outside of Christ we have no hope of salvation from our sins. Gentiles cannot enter eternity without Jesus Christ. Why? It is His substitutionary work at the cross of death, pain and shame that removed the paid the punishment that was due to each of us for our willful rebellion against God. Thank you, Jesus.

3. We are now Brought Near: Ephesians 1:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

a. Are you living in the nearness to God that Jesus blood has opened for you? The door to God is wide open for those who desire God.

4. Not by the Law but by Love Ephesians 2:14-15 14For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has torn down the dividing wall of hostility 15by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and decrees. He did this to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace.

a. The law of God created hostility between Himself and Mankind due to the constant breaking of God's commandments by humanity. The law of God is good and the Law was given to reveal to humanity the results of living in contrast to a Holy God.

b. The Law was not the end of the work of God but only the teacher pointing us to a better way of living.

c. God has brought unity between God and Man and Jew and Gentile.

d. Abolished defined: Formerly put to an end a system, a practice, an institution. For those in Christ the law has been satisfied, fulfilled, and completed. The law had a requirement of blood for sin, it spoke of sin and death but it pointed to the coming of "a lamb" a final atonement. Jesus is that completion and therefore He has brought peace with God and peace for mankind.

e. The mission of the law was to create hostility, to reveal failure, to expose wickedness, and to set up judgement for evil. The law revealed the holiness of God and the depravity of mankind. Jesus

law was love, which is greater than the law of commandments for love fulfills the requirements of righteousness.

- f. Matthew 22:36-38 “Teacher, which commandment is the greatest in the Law?” 37 Jesus declared, ““Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38This is the first and greatest commandment. 39And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’...”**
- g. “Created in Himself”** Jesus is the word of God (Law) and the (Love) of God united in perfect harmony to reconcile those who are under the laws condemnation back to God.

5. His body became the Door Ephesians 2:16-17 16and reconciling both of them to God in one body through the cross, by which He extinguished their hostility.17He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

- a.** When Jesus drank the cup of the sins of humanity, He became Sin. His body became the object of all of the Law’s scorn for all of the evil done on earth. When His body of sin was destroyed the power of sin was destroyed for the believer. Our sins cannot keep us away from God.
- b.** Paul is not giving us a license to sin but is showing us God’s bountiful grace which calls us out of
- c.** God sees Jesus’ work covering your life. God himself has set up this great exchange to draw us near to Him.
- d.** God’s declaration to humanity is Peace, to the Jew and to the gentile. To the “chosen” and to the “unchosen”
- e.** Jews and Gentiles are to be one body of believers in Christ. We are not to be Jews and Christians; we are to be one family of believers together under Jesus Christ.

f. The Apostle Paul is encouraging the Church at Ephesus not to be hostile towards the Jews present among them but to walk in Peace with them.

6. Conclusion: Salvation is the product of God's work completed at calvary and our acceptance of this free gift. Our confidence is in Christ every day of our Christian lives whether they be good or bad. No matter the day we can say with Christ, that we belong to God and His will is our greatest desire.