

Jason Huffman
Ephesians 2:11-19
Look Back, Go Forward
4/7/24

Discussion Questions:

1. What helps you remember important things? Can this help you with spiritual truth?
 2. Why do people often forget where they come from?
 3. Do you ever feel separated from God? How does Ephesians 2:13-14 apply?
 4. Do people struggle with thinking Jesus abolished the Law?
 5. How do you feel like your identity and God's desired activity match up?
-

Teaching Notes:

What are the hardest things to remember?

This morning we go deeper into our identity IN CHRIST...

We are going to look back to go forward.

Title: Look Back, Go Forward

Remember, "Identity impacts activity".

**Big Idea: Sometimes we have to remember who we were...
...to really live out who we are meant to be.**

11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh... (Let's save the circumcision part for the end.)

This was our pre-saved condition.

The flesh represents a life not submitted to God.

Our fleshly appetites and desires drove us and our decisions.

What else about that time?

12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

1. Remember, we were without God.

As Gentiles we were driven by the flesh...

- We were without Christ.
- We were aliens from God's people.
- We were strangers to the covenant promises.
- We had no hope of spiritual life.

This was not just you personally, but all of us corporately.

But what did God do?

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

2. Remember, Christ brought you near.

The sacrifice of Christ clears the way for us to be near to God.

It was not our good works that brought us near to God.

And that is true for those without Christ now too.

It isn't good works or moral decisions that brings Christ near.

It is the blood of Christ. It is His sacrifice on the cross we preach.

BUT...What else did He do to bring us near?

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

Paul is talking about Jew and Gentile.

They were separated in just about every way.

But Christ...has **"broken down the middle wall of separation."**

There was an actual middle wall in the temple.

This wall was there even in Paul's day.

But...Jesus broke down that wall of separation.

15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, **16** and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. **17** And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. **18** For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

3. Remember, Christ abolished the enmity.

Abolish: to eliminate, eradicate, to put an end to.

Enmity: hostility, friction, opposition, conflict.

The Law truly brings us all to the same place...condemned.

At this point people have a few choices...

- You can focus on what you can do. (Outward religious stuff)
- You can get rid of it. (Make up your own, or ignore it totally)
- Or you can ask for help. (Trust in the mercy and grace of God.)

Jesus didn't abolish the Law because it didn't matter.

...He fulfilled it because it did matter.

Then He helps us by paying the price for us breaking the Law

But I want to close by going back to v11.

V11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands

He describes Gentiles & Jews in terms of circumcision.

This was an **outward symbol** of the **covenant** they had w/God.

Notice Paul says, “the covenant of God made by hands”

Their covenant of circumcision was made by hands.

...**But what God does is change hearts.**

Deuteronomy 30:6 And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Romans 2:29 NLT

a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by the Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people.

NLT V11 Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called “uncircumcised heathens” by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts.

Outward symbols can assist us in our inward realities.

...But when we just focus on...

...outward symbols we miss our true identity & the correct activity.

4. Remember, our heart is what matters.