

Sermon 10: The Positive Blessings of God's Reconciliation: Ephesians 2:19-22

Text: Ephesians 2:19-22 "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit..."

Summary: Reconciliation to God is more than a removal of animosity.

Proposition: He wants us to delight in His glorious plan for His people.

Interrogative: How can we do this?

Introduction:

- **God's plan for humanity was simple and good:**
 - Reflect His glory as one made in His image.
 - Use our strength and wisdom to care for His creation.
 - Delight in Him forever.
- **The fall brought misery to people:**
 - **Spiritual death: Romans 5:12** "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned..."
 - **A broken creation: Romans 8:20-22** "The creature was made subject to vanity...the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption...the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now..."
 - **A broken humanity: Romans 3:10-12** "There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one..."
- **The Jew/Gentile tension was a snapshot of this mess:**
 - **Viewed with disdain: 2:11** "Called uncircumcision by those who were called the circumcision..."
 - **Excluded from God's people: 2:12** "Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel..."
 - **Outside the covenants: 2:12** "Strangers from the covenants..."
- **God always planned to include all peoples: Genesis 12:2-3** "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing...in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed..."

- **Christ established reconciliation between God and man: Ephesians 2:13-15** We are "Made nigh by the blood of Christ...he is our peace...Having abolished in his flesh the enmity..."
- **This reconciliation is bigger than just removing animosity:**
 - **Human conflicts:** Peace usually means a temporary removal of hostility.
 - **The gospel:** The gospel bring everlasting peace and full restoration to God's purpose.

Truth 1: We have full right to an eternal Kingdom: 2:19 "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints..."

- **Roman Citizenship:**
 - In Roman society, being a citizen was a big deal.
 - Citizens enjoyed many benefits that were not enjoyed by non-citizens.
 - They enjoyed legal protections, were exempt from certain taxes, could vote, hold public offices, and purchase land.
 - They were granted full status to participate in Roman Society.
 - Paul was a Roman citizen and appealed to his status as a Roman citizen several times for legal protections.
- **Through the cross, we have a heavenly citizenship: Colossians 1:13** Christ has "Delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son..."
- **We are called to be faithful citizens in this realm, but our allegiance is to that realm.**
 - **1 Peter 2:11** "I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul..."
 - **Hebrews 11:13-16** "These...confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth...they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city..."
- **Our ultimate allegiance should be to Christ and His Kingdom.**

Truth 2: We are members of a family: 2:19 "And of the household of God..."

- **The Roman household:**
 - The structure and strength of a household is the building block of society.
 - In the first century, the household was more complex than our modern nuclear family.
 - Legal, religious, and education duties began at the household level, and members of households were bound together on the most personal level possible.

- In Roman society, fathers held nearly absolute legal authority over their household but also felt the weight of responsibility to care for and provide for their household.
- **Through Christ, we have been placed into His household:**
 - **Ephesians 3:14-19** "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God..."
- **Despite all the turmoil around us, we are a part of God's family, and this should give us a sense of security and stability.**

Truth 3: We have immediate and unending access to God: 2:20-22

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit..."

- **The Temple:**
 - This location represented the place where God met with His people.
 - It established a constant, visible reminder that God is holy and cannot be approached by sinful people outside of His provision: **Hebrews 10:14** "The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect...in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year...For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins..."
 - First century practices added into Temple worship further distorted the picture established in the Law pointing to Christ.
 - No Rabbinical additions more visibly distorted that picture than the barriers separating Gentiles and Jews and men and women in the Temple.
 - Paul highlighted the power of the cross which abolished these unjustifiable man-made barriers to God:
 - **Ephesians 2:13-15** "Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and

hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity..."

- **Galatians 3:26-29** "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise..."
- **Through Christ's sacrifice, those who were excluded from the Temple are now the Temple of God:**
 - **1 Peter 2:5** "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ..."
 - **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's..."
- **It is not just that we have access to God, but that He now indwells us.**

Applying this Passage:

- **Marvel at the gospel's power:**
 - **Isaiah 19:21-25** "The LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day...he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them...In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance..."
 - **Romans 11:11-32** "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles...Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness...I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery...that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved...ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all..."

- **Prioritize God's Kingdom:** Be a faithful citizen in this realm but also live with a greater passion for that realm.
- **Identify your purpose:** When everything around you may seem out of control, find your value, identity, and purpose in who you are in Christ.
- **Worship and praise God:** Live a worship-centered life: **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's..."
 - **Personal:** Live each day to the glory of God in all you do.
 - **Corporate:** Prioritize and enjoy the sacredness of the local church.