

ONE BLOOD, ONE BODY, ONE BUILDING

SESSION #4

Review: Before Christ, we were all buried in sin and spiritual debt and incapable of choosing life apart from the enabling intervention of the grace of Christ. We were dead, enslaved and condemned. We followed a different Master, and that Master was the self-destructive cravings of the lusts of the flesh. These lusts were encouraged and fueled by the Father of Lies, Satan and his demons. We deserve what is coming to us! We made our own bed and now we must lie in it! BUT GOD! God, who is rich in mercy and abounding in love paid the ultimate price win us back into fellowship with Him. The grace of God is the enabling supernatural and superhuman power to do the impossible. God's grace is a FREE gift. We were not saved BY our own good works but we were saved For our own good works in Christ.

Ephesians 2:11-22 *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—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. 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 both one, and has broken down the middle 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. ¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

I. REMEMBERING THE WALL OF DIVISION

- A. **Ephesians 2:11-12** *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—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.*
- B. When our children were younger, we found it helpful to teach them the value of sharing with each other. When they were given a dessert to share, we would have one of them cut it in two pieces and the other would get to pick whichever of the two pieces. Most of the time this worked.
- C. God's heart has always been to have a global church and family, not in place of His Israel but with them. In essence, God gave all His covenant promises and gifts to Israel with the intention that they would share them and the message of the good news of His Kingdom with all nations.
- D. *"God, in His mercy, wanted a family. So in His wisdom He said to the Jews: I give you a Messiah. I give you the promises. I give you the scriptures. I give you the covenant. I give you the commonwealth. I give it all to you, now it has got to be shared. One of the tragedies of their history is that they did not learn to share it as God intended them to do, but when Christ came that was put right."* (David Pawson)
- E. Before Christ came, we as Gentiles were on the wrong side of history, the wrong side of the contract, the wrong side of the street, and the wrong side of dividing wall. The wall between Israel and the rest of the

unbelieving world was meant for their preservation and protection and separation for God's holy purposes. The wall kept Israel in and the world out. Thus, Christ came to remove the wall so that everyone could have access to the mercy, love, and eternal family adoption through the same salvation by a blood sacrifice.

- F. The Bible lists over 5,000 promises which are directed to Israel before Christ. Here is some interesting research from another:
- *"How many promises are found in God's word? There are 7,487 of them made from God to humans, two made by the God the Father to Jesus Christ and 991 between humans. There are also 290 promises made by humans to God, 21 given by angels and one (1) by a man to an angel. Amazingly, there are also in the Bible two (2) promises made by demonic spirits to God and nine (9) given by Satan himself (such as when he promised Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if He bowed down and worshipped him - see Matthew 4:9)! All together, Scripture contains at least 8,803 promises!" (Willie T.-Christianityboard.com)*
- G. **Verse #11-** Paul defines the people of salvation as those who were circumcised of the flesh as an outward expression of the covenant commitment to God. Paul is making the point that the Gentile people are outside of this covenant and all the received promises from God.
- H. **Verse #12-** Those outside of the covenant and the people of God were also outside of Christ and without the Christ, until now.
- a. **Without Christ-** (Gr. *Christos*)- *the anointed King; the expected coming King to rule all Israel; Messiah.*
 - b. Paul is now saying that the Gentiles were not looking nor expecting this King so they could not receive Him based on the old system of covenant. Gentiles were locked out and separated. Apart from the Christ, we look for other human leaders and deliverers, only to be disappointed every time. (Ex. Inaugurations, Coronations, etc. in modern time)
 - c. *"There is only one citizenship that is permanent in this world, and that is the citizenship of Israel." (David Pawson)*
 - d. **Aliens-** (Gr. *Apallotrioō*) (a verb) *alienated; estranged; to be shut out from one's fellowship and intimacy; separated; excluded; having no hope*
 - e. Paul is revealing how those outside of God's covenant with the Jewish people and outside of Christ, they are "aliens" outside of the eternal Christ, outside of the eternal commonwealth of Israel, and outside of the eternal covenant of God's blessing. Paul gives the picture of someone standing outside a building looking through the window and wanting to gain the comfort on the inside.
 - f. **Strangers-** (Gr. *Xenos*)- (a noun) *a foreigner, a stranger;*
 - g. **Without God-** (Gr. *Atheos*)- *without God, knowing and worshipping no God; atheists; godless*
 - h. *"According to the Bible, every Gentile is an atheist. The only time that the word "atheists" is used in the Bible is in this passage...(Eph. 2:12). This is where we get the word "atheist" from...The word "theos" means God. The prefix "a" means without...According to Paul, even in spite of all the religion in the world, Gentiles are "atheos", without God, because God is the God of the Jew." (David Pawson)*
- I. Paul is demonstrating the canyon of separation between the godless Gentile and the covenanted people of God. The Gentile is hopeless, helpless, without a future, and nothing to truly look forward to beyond that which is right before them. Oh, the beautiful promise of the hope offered in Christ. He has made a way for all now.

II. REJOICING IN THE NEARNESS WITH CHRIST

- A. **Ephesians 2:13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
- B. **But now-** Here Paul goes flipping the script, turning the corner, slamming on the breaks to shout, “*But wait, this is not the final chapter.*” Paul gives us the bad news first only to save the best news for last. This news was too good to be true for many Jews of his day and it is what brought his own persecution from his own people.
- C. Paul’s listeners were very aware of the Jewish temple system and the limitations of who could go before God to offer a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Only the assigned Priests could offer sacrifices for themselves and for others, while only the assigned High Priest could go once annually into the most holy place where God would meet with that High Priest on behalf of all the nation.
- D. But now, all people have access to God’s presence, including the most holy place because of the eternal sacrifice of the eternal Lamb and the eternal High Priest who stand perpetually before God on behalf of all people.
- E. Two powerful messages come to us from the Good News of Christ’s sacrifice. When Christ died, the curtain that separated God’s most holy place from the people was ripped from top to bottom (**Mt. 27:51**). Also, the wall of separation, along with all of Herod’s temple would be torn down about 8 years after Paul declares that the spiritual wall has been torn down (**Mt. 24:1-2**). This happened in 70 A.D.

III. UNIFIED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD

- A. **Ephesians 2:14-22** *For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle 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.¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*
- B. Paul now begins to invite the Gentiles into the family of Messiah. Paul begins to shift his addressing from “you” to “we” and “our”. He begins to cast vision for God’s desire and heart for a multi-cultural global family, united in His Son Jesus Christ.
- C. **One Blood-** Christ offers forgive of the sins that separate us from God through His ‘One Blood’ sacrifice.
- For the Jew, the blood was central to their identity and their forgiveness of sins. There was the blood within that set them apart from every other race of people as belonging to God. The blood without was what God used to cover and cleanse the Jewish people to maintain their right standing before their God.
 - Paul is now saying that the blood of Christ is now the standard for identity and for removal of sins. Now, all nations, tribes, and backgrounds of people can receive the gift of an eternal King, and eternal citizenship, an eternal friendship with God, an eternal hope, and an eternal family in Christ. The Jew didn’t stop being Jewish nor were the Gentile nations required to become Jewish to receive these covenant promises. Christ united all into One New Man and Family in Himself. This is the greatest cultural miracle of human history.

- c. Every time we take the bread and cup of communion (common union) we are remembering the once sacrifice of the love of Christ to pay for our forgiveness through repentance. God doesn't need to prove His love to us again. We just must remember again and again what Christ did for us.
- D. **One Body**- Christ has brought together 'One Body' and one family, both Jews and Gentiles. We are all one in Christ Jesus.
- a. We are One Body in Christ. We are not separate bodies following Christ. This is the beauty of the picture of the marriage covenant. Two completely different and separate people, husband and wife, give their individual lives in contractual covenant and sexual union to become one union. This is also why God defines the holiness of marriage. It's a reflection of His covenant to humanity who gives themselves to Him in covenant love and receives His love forever.
- b. **Ephesians 5:30-32** *For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*
- E. **One Building**- Christ is constructing 'One Building' that we can all approach His Heavenly throne and enter His holy of holy presence.
- a. Jesus actually prophesied of the reconstruction project that now Paul speaks of when He prophesied of the destruction of Herod's Temple of His generation. Jesus told the religious leaders that if they tore down 'this temple' that He would rebuild it in three days. He then said to the Disciples that the temple would be demolished in their generation (**Jn. 2:19; Mt. 24:1-2**)
- b. In Jesus's day, Gentiles (non-Jews) could approach the outside of the Temple into the designated area called "The Court of the Gentiles which was located inside the outer courts' walls but outside of the Temple inner courts and courtyard. Only Jewish men and women could enter the inner walls and courtyards and rooms. There was a 2-to-4-foot wall surrounding the inner Temple structure as a blockade of sorts to keep Gentiles outside of that wall. There were also multiple inscriptions on this wall that warns Gentiles with the penalty of death for crossing this short wall.
- c. *Herod's temple had several courts allowing different levels of access. Only the high priest could enter the innermost Holy of Holies, and this could only happen on the Day of Atonement. Outside that most holy place, the Levites on duty for daily worship operated in "the Holy Place" within the temple. Just outside the temple building, surrounding it, was the Court of Priests, where the altar of burnt offerings stood. Male Jews had access to the adjacent Court of Israel, but Jewish women were limited to the Court of Women. Finally, the Court of the Gentiles was farthest away from the temple, preventing non-Jews from coming close to the temple structure itself. The Gentiles could look up at the temple, but that was as close as they could get. A thick stone barrier called "the wall of separation" represented the great divide between Jews and Gentiles. (Chuck Swindoll)*
- d. Now Gentiles who had accepted the sacrifice of Jesus' blood for their sins, they now had closer access to God than the Jews who rejected Messiah. The blood of Christ' sacrifice was now more powerful than the blood of 10 thousand goats and lambs. Christ broke down the 'middle wall of separation' so that all could enter His presence by His once sacrifice of the Cross. Amen!
- F. **Ephesians 2:19-22** *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*