

His Blood Makes the Difference

A Study through the book of Ephesians

Ephesians 2:11-13

Sometimes we followers of Jesus can feel like a second-class citizen of God's Kingdom. Perhaps you kind of feel this way now, if so, I have good news, you don't have to belabor under that false notion any longer. The blood of Jesus makes all the difference, let's talk about how.

Every believer in Ephesus understood that His New Life in Christ came with a backdrop of God's precursory relationship with the Jewish race. This fact, however, caused some Gentile believers to mistakenly feel they were a bit lesser and had missed out in one way or another.

You see, the churches in Ephesus had a blend of both Jewish and Gentile converts. As they grew in love and fellowship with each other it became very apparent that the Jewish believer began their New Life in Christ with what seemed to be an advantage.

This is because the Jewish believer came into Christianity out of a culture that already worshipped the One True God, had the ten commandments as a moral base to live by and had learned the Old Testament Scriptures from their childhood.

While on the other hand, the Gentile believer came into Christianity with some real hurdles to overcome. They came out of a culture that worshipped many idols, a culture that was super immoral and they grew up with absolutely no knowledge of the Bible whatsoever.

With such a difference between what the Jewish believer and what the Gentile believer brought into their salvation, it would be easy for the Gentile Christian to feel like he is a second-class citizen in God's Kingdom.

So, the Holy Spirit moves Paul to address this issue to show that by the blood of Jesus there are no second-class citizens in God's Kingdom. And the following truth applies to us as well.

Ephesians 2:11, "Therefore, remember that formally you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)"

As you know, since the time of Abraham, God required that all Jewish males get circumcised as a sign that their race had entered into a covenant relationship with God, so that through them God may reveal Himself personally, declare His laws and bring a Savior for all mankind.

It is interesting in this verse that the word "formally" was used. In other words, before Jesus and their wonderful salvation that is described in the first 10 verses of this chapter, there was in the fallenness in both cultures and a dividing wall of prejudice between the two of them (see v.14).

But why "formally" and not "presently"? It is because upon their salvation they all became one with Jesus where we are told in Galatians 3:27-28, "for all of you who were baptized into Christ

have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Ephesians 2:12, “remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world.”

Note the phrase, “That at that time,” This was the condition of all lost unbelieving people, that includes both the unsaved Jew and the unsaved Gentile. And so spiritually speaking, in this respect, no one really had an advantage.

But you may be thinking that a Jewish person is naturally born a citizen in Israel. Not in God’s eyes. We are told in Romans 9:6, “For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.” And in Galatians 3:7, Understand, then, that those who believe [in Jesus] are Abraham’s children.”

Ephesians 2:13, “But now in Christ Jesus you who were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.”

Here again we see the phrase “in Christ Jesus”. Paul focuses on how the power of the blood of Christ shed for us, is ours in the realm of our faith-based relationship with Jesus.

The “far away” position that our lost condition put us in before we were saved, that is described in verse 12 as being “separated”, “excluded”, “foreigners” and “without”. Now because of our salvation in Jesus, His blood shed for us has brought us near to those things mentioned in v. 12.

Though once we were separate from Christ, now because of the blood Jesus shed for us we are told in 1 Cor. 3:23, “And you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.” No disadvantage!

Though once we were excluded from citizenship from Israel, now because of the blood of Jesus we are told in Eph. 2:19, “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people, members of God’s household.” No disadvantage in this regard!

Though once we were foreigners to the covenants of promise, now because of the shed blood of Jesus we are told in Gal. 3:29, “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” No disadvantage in this area either!

Though once we were without hope, now because of the shed blood of Jesus we are told in 1 Pet. 1:3, He caused us to be born again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Again, there is absolutely no disadvantage for us!

Though once we were without God in the world, now because of the shed blood of Jesus we are told in Gal. 3:26, “For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.” No disadvantage!

What’s making you feel like a second-class citizen of the Kingdom of God? Consider the power of the blood of Jesus shed for you, and let it settle the issue and correct that wrong notion today!