

A Dwelling Place for God

I. Announce:

A. Welcome those watching online.

B. Slide1-6 Announcements:

C. Slide7 Prayer:

II. Slide8 Intro: A Dwelling Place for God

A. Parable of *The Land of LEGO's*.

B. Once in the land of **Lego's** a builder decided to construct a house to dwell in, using only **blue blocks**. It wasn't that he didn't like the **other colors**, matter of fact he longed for **each & every color to desire** to be a part of his home. When the **blue** building was complete **the builder** moved in.

But quickly some of the **blue blocks** decided they enjoyed their former freedom and decided to not be a part of the **blue house** any longer. **Others** complained of it being **too bright** once **HE** moved in. **Others** left as they wanted to *form their own little house ... a little less warm*, and a little more *religious*. The house became a house full of **holes**, rather than a **holy house**. This eventually caused it to *topple*.

C. The builder came up with a new design. He used **blue blocks** that wanted to be a part, **but** he also chose from *every color of block*. There was one difference this time, he took block by block and **painted them** a beautiful **deep red**. That was the one requirement to be a part of **His new home**.

Grace was the nozzle which sprayed **each block red**. **Faith** was used as the mortar to put each in its perfect place. The **1st block** placed was called *Stone/Block of the Corner*, which **lined up** the rest of the entire house. The builder then **moved into** his new house, **as** that's what houses are for. And this time it became not only a **house**, **but** a **home**; **and** not only a **home**, **but** a very **Holy and Homey Home**.

1. **Israel** was the **blue** bricks, **gentiles** are the **multi colored** bricks.

D. **Last week** (2:1-10) AL shared on God's gracious search for man, in reconciling him to **Himself**. **Now**, the *broader scope* of God's reconciliation.

1. 1st what God has done for sinners in general; Now Jews/Gentiles in particular.

III. Slide9 1 REMEMBER WHERE YOU CAME FROM (11-12) far off Read

A. In the ancient world, if you asked ... Where does God live?

1. A Greek would respond, Which God? We have 100's.
2. The Ephesians would respond, have you not seen standing right over there, 1 of the 7 wonders of the ancient world, sitting on 70,000 acres of land, that's where God lives, She lives right there. And great is Artemis of the Ephesians (aka Diana).
3. The Jews would respond, God is everywhere, but He makes His Holy residence w/us.
 - a) So the Gentiles would say, God lives with us. The Jews would say, God lives w/us.

B. What a desperate situation for us gentiles:

1. The 1st century was a century of suicide in the Roman Empire. Not only Suicide, but infanticide, and abortion. The population in Rome was actually on a decline. A nihilistic hopelessness. Ken Keathley¹
2. We were **without God** in the world. (even though they had many gods). We were with no Christ, no citizenship, no covenants, no promises, no hope, no Messiah, nor God. Thus, no purpose and nor direction in life.
3. Because this is such a desperate situation It takes 2 ch's in Acts, 10,11, before it's settled that the HS was pleased to dwell in them/those guys/ gentiles. Can't God heal our divides today? If the HS is pleased to dwell in our christian enemies, are we holier than the HS, when we are not pleased to dwell w/them?

C. Illustration: Before Christ, we were like travelers stranded in a storm, lost and exposed. We were far off (13), excluded from God's promises, and blind to the life God intended. It wasn't a minor separation, it was a deep, life-shaping alienation.

¹ Ken Keathley, Director of the L. Russ Bush Center for Faith and Culture.

D. Transition: After *remembering our distance from God*; know this, *our story doesn't end there ...*

IV. Slide10 **2 MADE ALIVE BY GOD'S MERCY (13-15)** *brought us near* Read

A. *But now* - parallels *But God* in v.4.

B. The problem of **sinners in general** was *spiritual death* (1-10). The problem of the **Gentiles in particular** was *spiritual distance from God and His blessings*.

C. *Once were far off* – these are the kind of people God receives and shows mercy to:
Those who are Helpless He will help. Those who are Homeless He will house.
Those who are Hopeless He is the Hope of those who have no other confidence.

D. *Been brought near* – once excluded, now included.

1. God not only **reconciles** us to **Himself**, but to **each other**.

a) *Reconciliation is not a process, but an act by which we are delivered from estrangement to fellowship w/God.*

2. Slide11 **Jesus**, **shed blood** that sees *no color ... but red* itself!

3. Only in Christianity ... **A Just Ruler** dying for *unjust rebels*!

E. (14) **He Himself is our Peace** - He didn't only *make peace*, but **He Himself** is our *Peace*

F. **Christ** is that *bridge* of Peace, and we were *His Peace Mission*.

1. He brings **harmony** and **wholeness** to people's relationship with **God and one another**. Paul's theme/purpose, **unifying** Jews & Gentiles.

G. Slide12a Show *the dividing wall of separation* at Temple sight. *Low wall 4 1/2' tall. 13 openings. Block found in 1871 that read: Slide12b No stranger is to enter w/in the partition wall and enclosure around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will be responsible to himself for his death, which will ensue.*

1. **Jesus tore down the wall: The physical wall**, for in Christ all are made 1. *The spiritual wall* and brought the far off Gentiles near.
The legal wall, for He fulfilled the Law in Himself and ended the reign of the Mosaic law that separated Jews and Gentiles.

H. **Slide13** (15) **one new man** - The word **new** (kainos) means, *new or fresh in character or quality*, **rather than new** (neos) in the sense of *recent in time*.

1. Jesus **didn't** Christianize the Jews **nor** Judaize the Gentiles.

He didn't create a half-breed. He made an entirely new man.

I. **Gospel Tie:** Jesus destroyed the barrier of hostility, sin, law, judgment, and brought us to God by the cross. Those who were **far** are now **near**. **Peace** isn't just an idea; it's **a Person**, **and** His name is **Jesus**.

J. **Transition:** And once He *brought us near*, His mercy didn't stop there ...

V. **Slide14 3 ONE NEW HUMANITY IN CHRIST (16-18)** *reconciliation* **Read**

A. Jesus reconciles not only *humanity to God* **but** *people to people*. **Jews and Gentiles are now one family.**

B. **Illustration:** Think of a **quilt** made from scraps of very different fabrics, alone, they're just pieces, **but** stitched together by skilled hands, they become **beautiful and functional**.

C. **Gospel Tie:** The **cross** unites Jews and Gentiles, outsiders and insiders, forming one new humanity. **We're not defined by background, status, or culture; we're defined by Christ.**

D. **Transition:** And now, this **reconciled, united** people is being **built** into something even greater ...

VI. **Slide15 4 BUILT TOGETHER AS GOD'S DWELLING (19-22)** *a holy temple* **Read**

A. **Note**, throughout this book, **you** isn't used for individuals, **but** to **the corporate body**. **It's written to a group of people.**

1. **Thus** ... we are now *fellow citizens* (19), of the same heavenly country.

2. We now *live in the same household of God* (19b), **we're family!**

a) It's someone with *refrigerator rights* (go to frig w/o asking). Nellie.

B. (22) **The goal** of this temple is to become *a dwelling place for God*.

1. And the word for temple? (not *ieron* = *entire temple complex*) **but** *naos* = *inner sanctuary, where the gods dwelled*.

C. **Illustration:** Picture a master builder laying a cornerstone first. Every stone after that is carefully aligned, creating a strong, enduring structure. We are the living stones; Jesus is the cornerstone. Together, we form God's holy dwelling, a home where He lives by His Spirit.

D. **Gospel Tie:** We're no longer strangers; we're family, secure in Christ, joined together for His glory. **The building isn't complete** *without each of us*.

1. **To be a Christian without a church family, is to be an orphan.** [nothing wrong w/being an orphan, **but** an orphan *naturally longs to be in a family*]
2. To say, *I have a relationship with God*, **but I have no family**, is to say, *I'm missing out on something*.

E. **A dwelling place for God to reside** – Wow, Peace, access, one, one new man, Hope, nearness, fellow citizens, members of the household of God, part of His holy temple, and ... *the dwelling place of God*.

1. And **remember**, this is **all** of **God** (vs.4).

F. **Application:** From alienation to life, from walls to unity, from strangers to God's household, **Jesus did it all**. **The cross** doesn't just **forgive**; it **unites**. It doesn't just **bring peace**; it **builds a new humanity**. And it doesn't just **make us holy**; it **makes us home**.

G. **So wherever you are today: far off, divided, broken, or feeling like an outsider.** **Know this:** **Jesus** is breaking walls, bringing peace, and building you into His house. **It's all Christ. It's all gospel. It's all God's doing.**

H. **Questions:**

1. What walls in your life do you need Christ to break down?
2. How does knowing you are part of God's household change the way you see yourself and others?
3. Who in your life needs you to reflect Christ's peace this week?

I. **Keywords:** remember, near, new, walls.