

# “Peace with God”

(Ephesians 2:11-22 ~ Part 3)

## Introduction

➤ One of my newest favorite dead Christian authors (pastor and preacher), is the great reformed American theologian R.C. Sproul (1939-2017). Sproul famously defined sin as “cosmic treason” against God. In his renown book, *The Holiness of God*, Sproul described sin in the following way:

✓ Illust: “Sin is cosmic treason. Sin is treason against a perfectly pure Sovereign. It is an act of supreme ingratitude toward the One to whom we owe everything, to the One who has given us life itself. Have you ever considered the deeper implications of the slightest sin, of the most minute peccadillo? What are we saying to our Creator when we disobey Him at the slightest point? We are saying no to the righteousness of God. We are saying, ‘God, Your law is not good. My judgment is better than Yours. Your authority does not apply to me. I am above and beyond Your jurisdiction. I have the right to do what I want to do, not what You command me to do.’

The slightest sin is an act of defiance against cosmic authority. It is a revolutionary act, a rebellious act where we are setting ourselves in opposition to the One to whom we owe everything. It is an insult to His holiness. We become false witnesses to God. When we sin as the image-bearers of God, we are saying to the whole creation, to all of nature under our dominion, to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field: ‘This is how God is. This is how your Creator behaves. Look in this mirror; look at us and you will see the character of the Almighty.’ We say to the world, ‘God is covetous; God is ruthless; God is bitter; God is a murderer, a thief, a slanderer, an adulterer. God is all of these things that we are doing’” (R.C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God*, p.151-152).

➤ The Bible teaches that every person is a sinner by nature and by choice (Eph.2:1-2; Rom.3:10-12). As such, every person is in an unholy rebellion against God. Consequently, every person deserves God’s just wrath and eternal condemnation. Thus, the sinner’s greatest need is to be reconciled to the holy God. This, however, is impossible for the sinner to accomplish on their own. Every person is helplessly, and seemingly hopelessly, in need of God’s saving grace.

Thankfully, God made a way for the sinner to be saved – by sending His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to be the (one and only) Savior for all who would ever believe. Jesus lived a perfect (sinless, righteous) life, and died a substitutionary and sacrificial death on the cross as the penalty for sin. Therefore, those who (by faith) receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are dressed in His righteousness and reconciled to God.

➤ This is the theme of the passage we have been studying over the last couple of weeks. The sinner can be at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom.5:1-2).

**Eph 2:11-22** ~ “Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called ‘the uncircumcision’ by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands – <sup>12</sup>remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

<sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. <sup>17</sup>And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup>For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

<sup>19</sup>So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

➤ This long (eleven-verse) passage of Scripture contains only one imperative verb – which often indicates a command (i.e., something that is imperative to do). It is found in the opening verse, translated “remember” (vs.11; *mnēmoneuō*) meaning “recall to mind”, “be mindful of”, “to memorize”, or even “don’t forget” [note: the “remember” in verse twelve is added by the translators, not in the original]. Consequently, this imperative verb is a command that runs throughout this entire passage, and provides for us a three-fold exhortation.

### **I. Remember who you were apart from Christ (vs.11-12)**

➤ This is the “bad news” of the Gospel (*euangelion*; “good news/message”). As we saw in Ephesians 2:1-3, before we can understand the good news of the Gospel, we must first understand the bad news of the Gospel. That is, before we can truly understand what it means to be saved, we need to truly understand what it means to be condemned – before we can truly understand our need for salvation.

Paul emphasized this point because it is all too easy for us (as believers) to forget or to misremember. We need to be reminded of, and commanded not to forget, what we need to remember. For failing to remember (biblically) can lead us into unbiblical thoughts about our lives apart from Christ [i.e., thinking that we were ‘basically good’; that our sins were ‘not that bad’ (or not as bad as others); that we did ‘not need God’s mercy’ (or not as much as others); or that we somehow, or to some measure, deserved God’s grace].

➤ In Ephesians 2:11-12, Paul did this by reminding these (predominantly) Gentile Christians that – apart from Christ – A) they did not belong to God’s people, and B) they did not have God’s salvation:

*“Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called ‘the uncircumcision’ by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands – <sup>12</sup>remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world”* (vs.11-12).

➤ Gentiles were by nature without Christ, without grace, without promise, without hope, and without God. While no one is saved by ancestral lineage or human bloodlines – “*not all who descended from Israel belong to Israel*” (see Rom.9:6-8; Jn.1:11-13) – the Gentiles were uniquely estranged from the saving grace and promises of God.

### **II. Remember what Christ did for you (vs.13-18)**

➤ The first command: remember who you were apart from Christ (vs.11-12). The second command: remember what Christ did for you: *“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. <sup>17</sup>And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup>For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father”* (vs.13-18).

➤ While it is important to remember the enormity and depravity of our sin (i.e., the “bad news” of the Gospel; see Eph.2:1-3, 12), it is also important to remember the “*rich ... mercy*” (2:4), “*the great love*” (2:4), and “*the immeasurable riches of ... grace*” (2:7; 1:7) of our Savior (i.e., the “good news” of the Gospel).

These verses identify three specific ways in which Christ reconciled us to God: 1] Christ reconciled believers to God by His blood (vs.13; that is, His substitutionary and sacrificial death; cf., Eph.1:7; 1Pet.1:18; 2Cor.5:21); 2] Christ reconciled believers to God by His peace (vs.14-17; Rom.5:1-2; i.e., He is our peace, He made peace, and He preached peace); 3] Christ reconciled believers to God by His access (vs.18; c.f., Eph.3:11-12; 1Pet.3:18; Heb.4:16; i.e., the only way to be in God’s saving grace, and in God’s divine presence).

### III. Remember who you are in (because of) Christ (vs.19-22)

- We are also commanded, as believers, to remember who we are in (and because of) Christ. To put it another way, we are to remember 1) What we were, 2) What Christ did, 3) What we are now. As is abundantly clear in this passage, and throughout the Bible, while God's salvation was first for the Jews it was not only for the Jews. Everyone who has been saved and will ever be saved are all saved by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Old Testament saints were saved by their faith in the Messiah to come; New Testament saints are saved by their faith in the Messiah who has come).
- Specifically, in Ephesians 2:19-22, the apostle is referring to the salvation of Gentile Christians. But as we have seen (and will see again) God's salvation is for both Jews and Gentiles, and comes only through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

**Eph 2:19-22** ~ "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."

- In these verses, Paul outlined three realities associated with, resulting from, being saved – that is, what it means to be "*in Christ*" (1:3).

#### A. All Christians are CITIZENS in God's kingdom (vs.19a)

- Again we are immediately reminded that we have no right or merit to be citizens in God's kingdom. For we were ("*no longer*"; *ouketi*, no longer/more) "*strangers and aliens*" (vs.19) – outside of God's chosen people and outside of God's salvific promises – "*remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world*" (vs.12).

**Eph 2:12** ~ "that you were at that time without the Messiah, alienated from the citizenship [*politeia*] of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." (NET)

- In a radical conversion, they are now "*fellow citizens*" (vs.19; *synpolitēs*). To be a "*citizen*" is to be the exact opposite of a "stranger" (*xenos*, or "foreigner") or "alien" (*paroikos*; or "sojourner"). Implicit in this is being a citizen in God's kingdom. Apart from Christ, every sinner is a citizen of this world – of the kingdom of darkness, the domain of the devil (see Jn.12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2Cor.4:4) – and a stranger and alien to the kingdom of God.

**Eph 5:8** ~ "for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light" (see Eph.2:2)

**Col 1:13** ~ "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son" (see 1Jn.5:19)

**1 Peter 2:9** ~ "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

- To be a "*citizen*" (*politēs*) – whether by birth or naturalization – is legally or officially belonging to a specific country, which (ideally) affords certain rights and protections from that country. This is the exact opposite of being a foreigner or sojourner.

Spiritually speaking, through Christ, Gentiles are now (legally, officially) citizens in God's kingdom. Apart from Christ they Consequently, they are able to benefit from the rights and protections given to those who belong to God – namely, the seemingly infinite "*spiritual blessings*" (1:3) that come to those who are in Christ, including salvation!

**Phil 3:20** ~ “But our citizenship [*politeuma*] is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”

**Heb 11:13-16** ~ “These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. <sup>14</sup>For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. <sup>15</sup>If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup>But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.”

➤ As is evident (again), in the last part of the verse, that this is true for all Christians – both Jews and Gentiles: “*fellow citizens*” [*synpolitēs*] “*with the saints*” (vs.19a).

**Eph 3:6**~ “This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”

**Gal 3:28-29** ~ “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.”

➤ This is a great reminder, to every Christian, that this world is not our home. For we know that all Christians are in the world but “*not of the world*” (Jn.15:19; 17:14, 16; 1Jn.4:5-6), and we are therefore “*strangers [xenos] and exiles [parepidēmos] on the earth*” (Heb.11:13). We are not to get bogged down with the cares of this world; we are not to be seduced by worldly things and pleasures; we are not to be in love with this world or with the things of this world. Our citizenship is in heaven, and we are pilgrims in this world.

✓ **Illust:** “Nothing makes a journey more difficult than a heavy backpack filled with nice but unnecessary things. Pilgrims travel light” (Randy Alcorn; [tweet](#), 8/10/15).

**John 15:19** ~ “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

**1 Peter 2:11** ~ “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners [*paroikos*] and exiles [*parepidēmos*] to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.”

**1 John 2:15-17** ~ “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life – is not from the Father but is from the world. <sup>17</sup>And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

## **B. All Christians are CHILDREN in God’s family (vs.19b)**

➤ Paul shifts here to a similar but different analogy: moving from Christians being citizens in God’s kingdom to Christians being children in God’s family – “*members of the household of God*” (vs.19b).

Contrary to the popular and heretical teaching that “every human is a child of God”, the Bible explicitly and repeatedly teaches that only true believers (Christians) are children of God (see Eph.1:5; Jn.1:12-23; Rom.8:15, 23; Gal.4:5; 1Jn.3:1). At about the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (circa 1900), Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930) – a well-known theologian and church historian who promoted liberalism and universalism – wrote a book titled, *What is Christianity?* In it, among other liberal and universal teachings, Harnack “defined the essence of the Christian faith as the ‘universal fatherhood of God’ and ‘the universal brotherhood of man.’” While not a new teaching, this book had a sizable (negative) influence on Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (and beyond).

✓ **Illust:** “Adolf von Harnack, a famous German professor of church history, wrote a book that perfectly models the thought of this period. In *What is Christianity?* Harnack defined the essence of the

Christian faith as the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. Harnack's indebtedness to liberalism, humanism, and universalism is apparent in his book as it denies the exclusivity of Christ. To be true to Scripture, we do affirm the universal Creatorhood of God, for all people are made by Him (Acts 17:28). However, He is Father only of those who believe in His only-begotten Son – the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the point of John 1:12-13”

(<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/fatherhood-god>).

➤ Unfortunately, the teaching of the “universal fatherhood of God” and/or “the universal brotherhood of man[kind]” has led many “Christians”, including prominent church pastors and leaders, to wrongly conclude that everyone is saved (except for, as some would concede, the “really bad people” or those who outright reject God). It is a false teaching, and one that every true Christian needs to reject and denounce.

✓ **Illust:** Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892): Believe the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God to His people. As I have warned you before, abhor the doctrine of the universal fatherhood of God, for it is a lie and a deep deception. It stabs at the heart, first, of the doctrine of the adoption, which is taught in Scripture, for how can God adopt men if they are all His children already?

In the second place, it stabs at the heart of the doctrine of regeneration, which is certainly taught in the Word of God. Now it is by regeneration and faith that we become the children of God, but how can that be if we are already the children of God? [John 1:12-13]. How can God give to men the power to become His sons if they have it already?

Believe not that lie of the devil, but believe this truth of God, that Christ and all who are by living faith in Christ may rejoice in the Fatherhood of God” (Charles Spurgeon, sermon “Our Lord's Last Cry from the Cross” (Lk.23:46); 1889).

✓ **Illust:** J. C. Ryle (1816-1900): “What more common, on one side, than vague talk about the universal Fatherhood of God? ‘All men,’ we are told, ‘are God's children, whatever be their creed or religion; all are finally to have a place in the Father's house, ‘where there are many mansions’ ... Statements like these can never be reconciled with the plain language of our Lord in the passage before us. If words mean anything, no man is really a child of God, who does not love Jesus Christ” (J.C. Ryle; *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of John*; 8:37-47).

➤ To be sure, every human being is created by God but not every human being is a child of God. God is the Creator of all mankind, but not the Savior of all mankind. The description of ‘child of God’ can only rightly be used of those who are saved by God – the salvation that is by God’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

The truth revealed in Scripture is that everyone is indeed a child – i.e., everyone has a spiritual father. A person is either a child of God (by receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior) or a child of the devil (by rejecting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior). Furthermore, God’s Word is abundantly and unmistakably clear that everyone is a child of the devil unless/until they become a child of God – i.e., until they are truly saved.

**John 8:37-45, 58-59** ~ “I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. <sup>38</sup>I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.’ <sup>39</sup>They answered him, ‘Abraham is our father.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, <sup>40</sup>but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. <sup>41</sup>You are doing the works your father did.’ They said to him, ‘We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father – even God.’ <sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup>Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. <sup>44</sup>You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup>But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.’ ...



<sup>58</sup>Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am’ [see Ex.3:13-15]. <sup>59</sup>So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.”

**John 1:11-13** ~ “He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

➤ As Christians, we are to remember that we are *“members of the household of God”* (vs.19; *oikeios ho theos*). Unlike everyone who rejects Jesus Christ, we are children of God! This is an incomprehensible reality! As a Christian, God is your heavenly Father. You have been adopted into His eternal and holy family (Eph.1:5; Rom.8:15, 23; Gal.4:5). You are a son and or a daughter of the sovereign, self-existing, Creator God. That makes you, by God’s grace, incredibly special and immensely valuable! We are commanded to remember – to never forget – this great truth.

**Gal 3:26** ~ “for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.”

**Rom 8:16-17** ~ “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

**1 John 3:1** ~ “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. ...”

**Ps 23:6** ~ “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

### **C. All Christians are STONES in God’s temple (vs.20-22; 1 Peter 2:5)**

➤ From the analogy of *“fellow citizens”* (vs.19a) and *“the household of God”* (vs.19b), Paul shifts to the analogy of the building of the temple of God: *“<sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit”* (vs.20-22).

The fact that Christians are *“a holy temple in the Lord”* (vs.21) is a common theme throughout the Bible. For example, the apostle Paul referred to this many times in his letters to the Corinthians as he expounded for them the teaching of the Old Testament:

**1 Cor 3:16-17** ~ “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? <sup>17</sup>If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.” [note: each occurrence of “you” is 2<sup>nd</sup>, per., pl.]

**1 Cor 6:18-20** ~ “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup>Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup>for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” [note: each occurrence of “you” and “your” is 2<sup>nd</sup>, per., pl.]

**2 Cor 6:16** ~ “What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, ‘I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.’” [cf. Lev.26:12]

➤ Through the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit – which comes to every believer the moment of genuine conversion (see Eph.1:13-14; Jn.3:5-16; Acts 1:8; Rom.8:9) – every individual believer is essentially a temple of the Lord, but collectively all believers a part of God’s holy temple (this may be applied to both the “local” church and the “universal” church).

➤ In Ephesians 2:20-22, this analogy of God's people being God's temple is described in three glorious ways.

1. *"the foundation"* (vs.20-21)

First, God's temple is *"built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets"* (vs.20a). This is no doubt because they were the ones through whom God spoke, revealing His redemptive plan in and through Jesus Christ. Some view the *"apostles"* as representing those who proclaimed the Gospel in the New Testament, and *"prophets"* as representing those who proclaimed the Gospel in the Old Testament. Others see both *"the apostles and prophets"* as those used, during the New Testament era, to proclaim the Gospel before the New Testament canon was complete.

**1 Cor 3:10-11** ~ "According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. <sup>11</sup>For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

2. *"the cornerstone"* (vs.20-21)

Second, *"Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord"* (vs.20b-21). A *"cornerstone"* (*akrogōniaios*) serves as the most critical piece of the foundation as it ensures both the alignment and solidity of the building. The *"cornerstone"* gave the foundation both its orientation and its strength; its stability and integrity. The cornerstone of God's temple is Jesus Christ.

**Matt 21:42** ~ "Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" (cf. Ps.118:22-23; 1Pet.2:4-10)

**Acts 4:11-12** ~ "This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. <sup>12</sup>And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

As the cornerstone, Jesus Christ is the one *"in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord"* (vs.21). This temple is growing in the sense that new believers are continually being added to it – in and for Christ. It will not be complete until everyone who is to be saved comes to faith in Christ.

✓ Illust: *"Sunarmologeō* ["joined together"] refers to the careful joining of every component of a piece of furniture, wall, building, or other structure. Every part is precisely cut to fit snugly, strongly, and beautifully with every other part. Nothing is out of place, defective, misshapen, or inappropriate. Because it is Christ's building, the church is perfect, spotless, without defect or blemish. And that is how He will one day present the church, His own holy temple, to Himself (Eph.5:27)" (John MacArthur; *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians; 2:20-22*).

**Col 1:17-20** ~ "And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup>For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup>and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."

**Matt 16:18** ~ "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell [*hadēs*] shall not prevail against it."

3. *"being built together"* (vs.22)

Thirdly, Paul describes how all believers – Jews and Gentiles – are part of God's holy temple. *"In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit"* (vs.22). Notice the

“togetherness” within this verse. This is not only how we should see ourselves in Christ, but how we should see all others who are in Christ. There are no second-class (or first class) Christians in the kingdom of God.

Together, Christians are to be “*a dwelling place for God by the [Holy] Spirit*” (vs.22). This is yet another glorious truth – seemingly too good, too glorious, to be true. Christians are “living stones” in the holy temple of God. More to the point, every Christian a part of – a stone in – the temple of God. This is described as “*a dwelling place*” (*katoikētērion*) “*for God*” (vs.22), a habitation for the Spirit of God – not just on Sunday mornings, but each and every day. We who were once spiritually dead have, in Christ, become a spiritual home for God!

✓Illust: “The term for ‘dwelling’ connotes a permanent home. God the Holy Spirit takes up permanent residence in his earthly sanctuary, the church, the vast spiritual body of all the redeemed” (John MacArthur; *The MacArthur ESV Study Bible*; notes Eph.2:22).

✓Illust: “There is such a thing as a house of God, but that is not an inanimate structure, but a living and a spiritual temple. ‘In whom,’ that is Christ, ‘ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit’ [KJV]. The house of God is built with the living stones of converted men and women, and the church of God, which Christ has purchased with His blood – this is the divine edifice, and the structure wherein God dwells even to this day” (C.H. Spurgeon; sermon: “The Tabernacle of the Most High”; August 14, 1859).

**1 Peter 2:4-10** ~ “As you come to him, a living stone [*lithos*] rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup>you yourselves like living stones [*lithos*] are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>For it stands in Scripture: ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone [*lithos*], a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame’ [Is.28:6]. <sup>7</sup>So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, ‘The stone [*lithos*] that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’ [Ps.118:22], <sup>8</sup>and ‘A stone [*lithos*] of stumbling, and a rock [*petra*] of offense’ [Is.8:14]. They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup>Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

The encouragement here is that we (as Christians) are spiritually part of the holy temple of God. The conviction here is that we should live like we are part of God’s holy temple (see 1Cor.3:16-17; 6:18-20; 2Cor.6:16). As Christians, we are to faithfully live our lives in alignment to and from the strength of the cornerstone Jesus Christ. In fact, we are to live out that which we are in Christ: citizens in God’s kingdom, children in God’s family, stones in God’s holy temple.

## Conclusion

- As Christians, we are commanded to remember – and never forget: 1) Who we were apart from Christ, 2) How we were saved by Christ, and 3) Who we are now in Christ.