

Sermon: Union with Christ, Unity with Each Other.

Delivered by **Josh Stringer**, discipleship pastor, on July 12, 2020

Bible text explored: Ephesians 2:11-22

¹¹Therefore 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— ¹²remember 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. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by 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, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. [ESV]

Review and application:

1. What (*verses 11-12*) did Paul urge his audience to remember about their hopeless situation when they were . . .
 - . . . full of darkness? (See *Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-18; 5:8*)
 - . . . excluded from a covenant relationship with God?
(See *Romans 9:4-5*; see also *Genesis 17:14* and *Romans 2:28-29*.)
2. How did the wall at the Temple in Jerusalem (*verse 14*) symbolize the exclusion of all Gentiles from the covenant?

Do we really understand that—were it not for Jesus’ sacrificial death—we would be equally without hope and God in the world?
3. What (*verses 13-18*) is the mighty reversal introduced by the words “but now”?
How (*verse 14*) did transforming two peoples into one make Christ our peace?
4. In what sense (*verse 15*) did Christ abolish the law? (See *Romans 7:6*.)
How did Jesus kill the hostility . . .
 - . . . between humans and God?
 - . . . between those who were “near” (Jews) and those “far off” (Gentiles)?
5. How could believers influence current racial and class divisions by speaking up with gospel language and authority?

Now that we are no longer strangers (verses 19-22), Paul express our status in three ways:
6. Who (*verse 19*) must be included as . . .
 - . . . fellow citizens with us?
 - . . . members of our own family? (See *Ephesians 3:6*.)
7. As a gathered people (*verses 20-22*), how could we become *building blocks* the Spirit uses in shaping a holy temple?