

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

Again, as in 2:1-10, we are admonished to remember what was once true in order to understand and appreciate what is now true. The pivot point is being in Christ Jesus by the death of Christ. Something happened in the death of Christ and our being united with Christ that completely changes the landscapes of our lives . . . especially in relationship to each other and God. Let's follow the Apostle's first two points in drawing our attention to the magnificent results of Christ's death to establish a new people.

1. Remember what it was like to be on the outside. 2:11-12

The contrast in this case is between the Gentile believers at Ephesus and the Jews, who seemed to have all the benefits and advantages concerning a relationship with God.

- Gentiles by birth (11) – a class of people from a Jewish perspective
- Circumcision/uncircumcision – physical sign contrasted with inward heart circ.
- Editorial comment . . . 'made in the flesh by hands' – Paul distanced himself from confidence in external rites
- Focus is on description of barriers between Jews and Gentiles – a serious problem
- Jewish privileges/blessings . . . Romans 9:4-5 . . . gentiles excluded from all of these

Remember you were on the outside of what God was doing . . .

- Separated from the Christ. 12
- Estranged from God's chosen people. 12
- Foreigners to God's promises. 12
- Having no hope. 12
- Without God in daily life. 12

This sounds similar to 2:1-3 but is a description from an additional perspective of salvation history.

1Thess. 4:5, 13 – 'like the Gentiles who do not know God'.

The contrast is that this is so different from the Jews who had every possible advantage. These two people groups were divided and hostile toward one another. To think that people as different and distinct as the Jews and Gentiles would be made one man, is incredible. Immense barriers would need to be removed. Outside help and inside transformation would have to take place for these two divided people groups to ever live together in love as one.

1. Remember what it was like to be on the outside. 2:11-12

2. Remember what Christ accomplished in his death to bring the outsiders near. 2:13-18

Note the dramatic change that is introduced to this description of division, privilege, and trouble in verse 13. There is a radical change that has taken place for those 'in Christ' because of the death of Christ. Those far off have been brought near.

Four memorable themes are taught in these verses to help you appreciate the powerful reversal accomplished in the death of Christ that allows you to now be near others and God in this new creation called the body of Christ, His church. These are the truth themes that should guide and motivate our daily behavior . . . such as 4:2-3; 4:13ff; 4:23,24; 5:21.

a) Christ is our peace. 14-15

Christ brings everything together. Peace . . . well being, wholeness, harmony; well being in the widest sense possible.

Cmp. Isa. 9:6 Micah 5:5

Christ is our peace is explained/developed by three descriptive clauses . . .

- He makes two into one. 14 uniting Jews and Gentiles into one people
- He breaks down walls that separate. 14 the dividing wall which is the fence
- He destroys hostility in various forms. 15 law, commandments, ordinances

Purpose/result of Christ making/being peace . . . create in himself one new man. 15

Corporate identity; not a mixture of the best of both but brand new

Christ is our peace . . . far to near; two become one; walls removed; hostility destroyed

Cmp to big picture of 1:9-10 . . . mystery – to unite all things in and under Christ

b) Christ is our reconciler. 16

Reconcile is a transformation of the state or condition of your relationship with God. It is fundamentally a change. Be reconciled to God is a command to change your status with God.

Cmp. 2Cor. 5:16-21

- Both in one body
- Through the cross
- Killing that which divides

Horizontal and vertical of relations cared for by Christ's death . . . he destroyed hostility

- a) Christ is our peace. 14-15
- b) Christ reconciles you. 16

c) Christ preaches peace. 17
 'and having come, he preached peace'

Through his life, teaching and ministry along with the apostolic preaching, Christ pursued both the near/Jews and the far/Gentiles with his message of peace through his death.

Cmp Isa. 52:7 57:19

Point: You cannot claim to know/follow Christ without having heard and received this message of wholeness with others and with god only available in Christ. This is the message preached and believed . . . peace/the end and absence of hostility between you, others and God.

d) Christ provides access. 18

access is an introduction, a bringing near . . . a free entry into God's presence

cmp. Rom. 5:1-2; E3:12

through Christ . . . in one Spirit . . . to the Father . . . the Trinitarian privilege of the new community!

This unhindered entry together as one new humanity is not limited to Jewish privileges . . . old limitations and distinctions no longer have significance.

Take Aways

1. A significant portion of the appreciation and motivation of living for Christ is established in the contrast of then and now. Forgetting or minimizing the 'then' truths leads to a powerless, enslaved life as a Christian. Remember what you were . . . memorize it and retrain your memory.
2. An ongoing weakness of ours is a shallow understanding of the death of Christ. Wrestle with the truth that the death of Christ compels you to pursue loving community with those that you have been made one with regardless of the difference, divisions or hostilities. The relational implications of Christ's death are radical. Pursue peace/working through barriers by the power of Christ today.
3. Peace is available to nations, groups, families, churches, marriages and individuals only through Christ. By grace, through faith, trust him today. He will save you from death, slavery to sin and condemnation. He will also put the pieces of your broken life and relationships together as you submit to him.