

# “We are His House”

Ephesians 2:11-22

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at Believers City Church  
in Menomonie, Wis  
on November 27, 2022

## Ephesians 2:11-22

*11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no*

*hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

## 2:11-13

In the previous 10 verses of chapter 2 of Ephesians, Paul told us that God has “made us alive” even though we were “dead.” Emphatic language for sure. **Dead** in our sins. **Dead** in our trespasses. He said that we were lost on the path of this world. Now...having drawn such a vivid picture, we are come off those first 10 verses of chapter 2, with Paul saying “Therefore, *remember...*” Or, because of all that, you need to “think back.”

Paul wants us to “recollect.” To kind of “wake up.” He wants us to call to mind what it was like before He found us. This is so very important for us today! We must never forget where we came from and how God brought us to this point. When we forget, we start thinking we’re ok...that we *in and unto ourselves* are on safe standing...that we have “arrived” ...we’re “done,” and need to go no further. Eventually that state leads us to believe that we ourselves have done something...that we ‘got it going on’ and pride then is certainly around the corner to cause us to fall!

We must never forget our journey...that place from where God found us and rescued us. If we fail to regularly do this, we are destined to return there once again. Hear me on this! For I have seen it over and over again, and watched people throw away years...in some cases *decades*, to only find themselves right back where they started, with only a hard heart to show for their time and efforts.

I watched those who came in carrying the baggage of overt pride...and it was eventually, *albeit years later*, pride was all they carried out the door of this church as they left. For others it was depression, and that was the baggage they left with. Some were lost in themselves and they left alone. For others it was drugs. For others it was sex. And they eventually died from their drugs, and went to prison for their sexual indulgences.



Paul says we must know clearly what we used to be. What are our “closet skeletons.” Remember it often. Everyone around you knew it clearly back then: they whispered about you, they called you names, if only behind your back.

Paul was seemingly a little miffed by those who were doing the name calling. Things haven't changed much. Just like then, the ones that seem to do the greatest damage are often those who claim to be ‘inside the sheepfold.’ Certainly after 30 plus years of ministry I have come to absolutely recognize that fact. The greatest evils that I have seen leveled against this church and yes even myself, was by those who claimed the mantle of Christianity! It is the dirty little secret of greater Christianity: *we eat our own*. There always has been and will always be those who feel that they are very righteous and holy because of some external act. In Paul's day these folks were those who felt that because they had made the external act of circumcision, they were righteous. Certainly more righteous than those who had not!

For us it is “because I go to *this* church and not *that* church” ...because I put some money in the offering, or because I am in the ministerial community. Because I look right, speak right, or whatever. Such thinking, again, forgets where each of us came from and the patient outpouring of His mercy and grace to get us to where we stand today. It forgets that we really had nothing to do with it and God did it all!

These things that I do are merely external acts, and while they have value as the overflow of a changed internal man, they do not affect us from the outside in. Real faith never does. Our outward actions are always a reflection of the inward man. The good ones *and the bad ones!*

The ultimate effect of all of this is disunity...division within the greater body of Christ, often even within the local body. It is truly one of the most shameful displays within greater Christendom. It brings shame and ridicule upon the name of Christ, and for many it stands as *the* reason they will have nothing to do with the local church. I mean, if people who call themselves Christians can be so wicked and mean to each other, then why would I want to be a part of it? With “friends like that”...*well*.

We began separate from God and apart from the body of Christ. But once we were redeemed, we became part of the same family, regardless of denomination and local church. Galatians 3:26 tells us “*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*” You are especially a very portion of the body of the local church of which you participate! And the greatest degree is within the clarity and commitment of *Covenant Membership*. Such a bond represents a level of marital bond. I know that a lot of believers want all the benefits of union with one another without the commitment. It's like a worldly couple that just lives together without the commitment of marriage. That is not us. That is not this church. Such folks will find it easy to divide...but Christ's church is a picture of marriage and vice-versa...and such is not to be broken. Divisions in both come from idolatry, pride, self-centeredness, adultery and divorce ...and it was never meant to happen...*not once*.

As I have stated in the past, it is in fact impossible to live the scriptural definition of a Christian apart from a local church, apart from serving and taking your place within a body of Christ. When I renege on my promises and hurt that body, I lie to Christ and hurt his body which is the church. And God states clearly in scripture that He *hates* lying.

God is not pleased with division while inside or outside the church, which is a very precious thing to Him and represents His “bride.” His “love.” Yet many will do so just the same, and scripture refers to them as “*enemies of the Cross*”...whose “*god is their belly and their glory is in their shame.*” This infighting is a heartache to God and a smug satisfaction to Satan.

Galatians 3, verse 27 says “as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

I’m not so naive to believe that we will all agree on every minor point, but why must people who call themselves Christians, lie, slander, and attack others within the faith? Scripture says because they are not Christians. (1 Jn 2:9, 4:20, 3:15, Lev 19:17) 1 Corinthians 3:10 says “you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn’t that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren’t you living like people of the world?”

Until we came to Christ, we had ‘no hope.’ It can’t be any more clear than that. We were all “without God”: lost, blind, and alone. But now...we are *in Christ*. There is that phrase once again: “*in Christ*.” As part of his attempt to cause us to remember how and from where we came, Paul brings the story to the present with “but now...”

But **now** ....we are ‘*in Christ*.’ We tend to think of ourselves as solely “having Christ in our lives,” and therein lies the beginning of the problems. Salvation is not Christ joining your world, but you joining His! And ‘in Christ’ there is only ‘general admission seating.’ No premier boxes or special reservations! We are all there together...in Christ. We move as He moves: we move *where* He moves, and *when* He moves, because we **are in Him**! That’s why we can call Him ‘Lord’: because He is literally controlling our lives and our very movements.

We were once very far away. And if we are truthful, nobody need tell us that, for we know it already! We were far away from God! But He brought us near. No, we did not find Him, **He found us**! He paid our debt, He broke down the wall between us and God...a wall that separated us from our Creator and was built out of our sins.

2:14-16

Christ did not merely bring us peace, but He literally *is* our peace! When we come to Christ we set aside our previous identity, whether it be American, Jewish, male, female, criminal, doctor, black, white, college grad, etc...and we are united in one new identity...**Jesus Christ**. He makes peace between all peoples and unites them into one.

We are told that He “broke down the wall” between us. First of all, *what wall*? The wall between works and faith...the wall between law and the cross. The wall between life and death, and chaos and peace. Literally the wall between us and the Father...**the wall of sin**.

Remember, if a non-Jew came into the temple, it was a death sentence for him for doing so. Yet at the moment of His death upon the cross, Christ tore that curtain between the holy place and the ‘most-holy’...between God and man. The temple curtain was a minimum of 4 inches thick, 60 feet long and 30 feet wide. It weighed somewhere around 4 tons and took 300 men to handle it. It was big. But not as big as the spiritual curtain that separated us from God!

With His very flesh he created one new man and one new body. The cost was huge...but so was the result. He was the only one who had the payment and the only one who could pay it. We now...no matter gender, race, or nationality, all come to God the same way...through grace...through faith in Jesus Christ. This is why we must fight to eliminate this idea that Christianity is a western or American religion. Jesus died to save all men and to bring us all together into one body.

We are the “body of Christ.” So many want to belong to the body of Christ, and not stay connected to the head, *Christ Himself*...and when things don’t work, we wonder why. Then, without communication between the parts

of the body, we begin to criticize what is going on within the body, because we are not a part of it any longer! We, in the church today, often get confused like the apostles. Jesus is not in the process of building a new world here, but rather, a new **man**.

2:17  
'Peace' was the first word Christ spoke to His disciples in the upper room on the night of His resurrection (Jn 20:19). It is what He is, and what He brought for a world at war. So many of us war with others, we war with God, and we war with ourselves. But Christ 'preaches peace' to those near and those far. To those who are close to salvation and righteousness, and those who are so very far away. Those who are in the latter camp know what this is about!

Distance from the cross has no bearing on Christ or His message of peace! He preaches peace to those in his backyard and those in the 'utter most parts of the earth.' To those near and those far away in other countries. No matter where you are today, His message of peace is for you. You can never be too far away to be reached by His peace. Jesus is preaching peace to you who are so far away...

2:18  
Through Christ all believers can "come boldly unto the throne of grace" (Heb 4:16). "*Likewise, the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*" Rom 8:26

The evidence that we have such unity is free access to the Father. No Old Testament saint ever had access to God in such a manner, let alone look at Him as a Father. It's as if Jesus opened the door, and the Holy Spirit that we all share escorts us into God's presence. In verse 18 all three Persons of the Trinity are directly involved in the prayers of the humblest believer: *he prays to God the Father, ...approaching Him through the Lord Jesus Christ, ...in the power of the Holy Spirit.* So much for those who reject the scriptural truth of the Trinity!

2:19-20  
All this new relationship has brought us new and very special benefits. Firstly, we are no longer strangers or foreigners in the kingdom or from God. That's good news! But it's also rather disturbing news for the other side. For it is starkly truthful of our pre-salvation state! It tells us that until we come to Him, we are "strangers and foreigners" to God and kingdom. But now...*in Him*, we are "fellow citizens and members of the household of God."

We are the bricks in God's house. A house that has been built on all the apostles and the scriptural saints...all those who have gone on before us, and Jesus Himself is our cornerstone holding the whole thing together. This is the same thing Peter herein tells us...that we are "living stones" being fit together to build a holy priesthood. (1 Peter 2:5).

2:21-22  
We are the "holy temple" of the Lord! This "building" ...it is alive and it's growing. We must not forget that this church is not a building or an organization, but an "organism." It comes only by being "joined together." We are the church. We are the body of Christ. May we never take that lightly! We now are to come together to serve God and each other with the gifts that the Spirit brings to each one of us. It is serious business folks...because when we do so we are the "dwelling place of God in Spirit." We are...*His House*.