

# “Therefore Remember You Who Were Far Off . . .”

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths © 2009 - [pastorpat@waukeshabible.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabible.org)  
September 20, 2009

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

The “therefore” forces us back into our previous thought: Therefore remember . . . . It is a call not to forget from where you came (2:1-3) and what God has now done (2:5, 6). The entire work of God is to restore the fellowship and harmony and peace that once existed but was broken by humanity’s rebellion against Him. It is only as we declare our autonomy and make the story about us that the breach is formed and conflict exists. Oh how painfully sad whenever there is conflict and strife within the body of Christ. All of the division that exists by geography, economics, gender, race, allegiance, intellect, ability, sense or the lack thereof is corrected at the cross in the person of Christ. His work makes it possible for the curse to be reversed. It does not matter how it is expressed; in God all things are (ultimately) reconciled. As far fetched as the idea appears to be, the intent of God is to reconcile all things created (not just human relationships). The cross is God’s pronouncement as it relates to this conflict.

The entire thought of Ephesians 2:11-22 calls us to peace. The peace His people enjoy with Him and within His body is the result of God as Trinity engaging the fullness of His resources in canceling our sin debt and adopting us as sons and daughters. Thus peace is to exist where there was once separation and alienation. What was once assessed as two are now to be seen as one. God has built a good work; this work is His body, the Church. The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone. As will be seen further on in Ephesians, there is only one church.

**There is no oneness apart from Him and there is no division within Him.** Any time there is strife it is because we make the story about our needs, our feelings, and our wants and not about Him and what He is doing in us and through us to those around us.

It would matter little if we were far off or near. Either way, in the absence of Him we are excluded from hope and are without God in the world. The only means through which peace can be restored is in Christ. There is no peace without Him. He becomes the peace, and in His absence peace is unattainable. In Christ all barriers are broken down. He absorbs the conflict and resolves the confusion. This does not negate the hierarchy, but it does remove the conflict by lifting the curse. Its dominion over us is broken, and our citizenship within the kingdom of darkness has been transferred into the kingdom of His dear Son.

Often when we speak of local churches, we become very particular as to who is or is not acceptable. Often those we deem acceptable are those who best conform to our personal preferences and ideals. This is unfortunate and tragic. What God calls clean we have no right to call unclean. I find it tragic when some are so quick to identify those with whom they disagree as false teachers or “wolves.” False teachers and wolves are unbelievers. It is possible for a believer to believe in error or for a teacher to teach error, but this does not qualify him or her as a false teacher. And although I might not align myself ecclesiastically

*Continued on the other side...*

with all Christian churches, let us not presuppose that there is anything wrong with them or with us.

All those who profess Christ are within His one body. They have access in one Spirit to the Father. Since this is true, we need to be careful lest we judge them harshly. We should not speak ill of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

What can we do? Read the passage in front of you. Note how Christ is our peace. He is what we all have in common. Do not allow yourself to speak ill of other people or the churches they attend. If you find yourself disagreeing with the position others hold to, learn to disagree agreeably. Do not complain. Grumbling is so unbecoming of Christ and His Church. Learn to celebrate the enormous diversity that exists inside the one body of Christ. It is small of you when you cannot enjoy the vast variety that does exist in the larger body of Christ.

I believe all of us are on a journey of discovery. We must always learn to think bigger than we are and larger than our own presuppositions and comfort zones. It is only as we embrace the one body of Christ and Christ as her head that we can be at peace within the larger community of faith.

Learn to live at peace with yourself and then with others. It is only when you live at peace that you will be able to speak peace. Oh may God enlarge our hearts so that we can embrace the diversity and celebrate the enormous richness within our immediate fellowship and then that of the larger body of Christ even when it would appear significantly different than who we are in our pursuit of God.

May we continue to be a place where peace is preached and where the walls of separation, once for all removed by the person and work of God, are never rebuilt.

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.