

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: September 20, 2009

Title: **The Consequences of His Cross: In Himself He Might Make the Two Into One New Man**

Text: Ephesians 2:11-22

Theme: The believer’s reconciliation in Christ produces unity among the various members of the one body.

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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.

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Introduction:

Chapter 2:1-10 speaks in detail of the salvation of Gentiles. Verses 2:11-22 elaborates about the impact that this has on Jews and Gentiles. "[Here we see God reconciling] the Jews and Gentiles, previously hostile people, not only to himself but also to each other through Christ (vv.11-16)."¹

Ephesians 1:3-14 speaks to the great lengths God has gone to secure worshippers for Himself. In this ingathering He fashions them into His body, the Church which is the fullness of Him who fills all in all (1:23). Ephesians 2:1-10 grants a large overview of the entire story as it works from death to life. Ephesians 2:11-22 depicts the consequences of God's work in the bringing together of all things in Christ.

The big idea of this text is to show how Jews and Gentiles have been brought together in the blood of the Messiah so that a new man would be created. This new man is neither Jew nor Gentile. This new man is the very body of Christ.

THE BIG PICTURE:

The Storyline:

God's intent was always to have both Jews and Gentiles within the one family. The curse caused a division where none was sought. God, in Christ, reconciled the races and the races with Himself.

The Problem:

We are always separating because of class or race. This is contrary to the gospel.

Questions:

1. What is the point of vv.11, 12?
2. What type of picture is Paul painting of his audience?
3. What does v.13 do?
4. What assumptions can we make from v.13?
5. What is this "middle/dividing wall"?
6. What is the predominant thought of v.14?
7. What two parties have been brought together and made one?
8. In what way have we been made one?
9. What are vv.15 and 16 doing?
10. What does "in his flesh" speak of?
11. What was abolished?

12. What has been established?
13. Both v.15 and v.16 speak of enmity. What is this enmity?
14. What is it making the law?
15. What does v.18 begin to describe?
16. What are the consequences of being reconciled?
17. What is the agent whereby this access is made possible?
18. What does this mean?
19. How do we promote a oneness within this community of faith?
20. What might a biblical ecumenicalism look like?
21. Where do you draw your ecclesiastical lines? How might they differ from others and how are they the same?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile but one new man.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose Christ as our peace.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of His peace working in us and through us to those around us.

Outline:

I. What Happened: “You who once were far off have been brought near” (2:11-13).

A. What We Were Before Salvation / “Separated and alienated” (2:11-12)

“Paul begins this section with the strong inferential conjunction which can be translated “for this reason,” to alert the Gentiles of the unenviable position of their having no relationship with God. The present imperative may suggest continuance, and hence the Gentiles were to continue to remember their former plight.”²

It would appear apparent that Paul is addressing Gentiles who are apart from and thus aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and all that this would entail (i.e., having no hope and without God in the world). “All these expressions emphasize the distance of unbelieving Gentiles from Israel, as well as from Christ.”³

Before we assume too much, let us not forget verses 16-18. Both Gentiles and Jews were in need of the peace offered by the person and work of God.

¹⁶ “and might **reconcile them both** in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. ¹⁷ AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO **YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;** ¹⁸ for through Him **we both have** our access in one Spirit to the Father” (Eph. 2:16-18).

Throughout Ephesians, Paul paints the darkest picture possible of what life is like apart from Christ. Today, you might never have felt the bite of depravity's sting, yet this is what you were and still are if you are without Christ.

Gentiles were separated from the Messiah and thus had no hope and without God in the world. How bleak such a picture painted.

Through covenants with the nation of Israel, the world was to be reconciled. Israel failed, but God would not, and in time He would keep the covenants of promise for the people of the world.

B. What He Has Done In Salvation / "brought near" (v. 13b)

Verse 18 speaks to our access before the Father. "Because of the peace accomplished, we have continual access. It is something we possess. This access represents the freedom of approach. It breathes the idea of being familiar yet with no idea of contempt."⁴

II. How It Happened: "By the Blood of Christ" (2:13b-18)

The "for" of verse 14 is explanatory.

Notice again the intervention of God with, "But now!" "[This] denotes the contrast between their present condition and that prior to conversion."⁵ Peace and reconciliation are intertwined concepts. Because peace exists, reconciliation can take place. The word peace is used three times in this short paragraph (2:14, 15, 17). In addition to peace you have words like "brought near" (2:13), "one" (2:14, 15, 18), "reconcile" (2:16), "access" (2:18), "fellow citizens" (2:19), "joined together" (2:21), and "built together" (2:22). There is a oneness created by the cross that is to be manifested on earth as it is in heaven.

The question I would like to consider is how did this union happen? We begin in verse 13.

A. By the blood of Christ (vv. 13, 16 ["through the cross"])

We were once at "arms length", but are now brought into His presence. Verse 13 produces an element of hope where there is only darkness and despair. From verse 13 we can assume three things. First, apart from God's intervention we would still be without hope and without God in the world. Secondly, whereas once we were far off now we are near. Thirdly, the basis for this access is the life and death of Jesus Christ.

"As the sacrificial death of Christ is the only means of redemption, so also is it the only means of reconciliation. The cost of bringing the Gentile *near* was dear."⁶

There can be no peace that does not originate from the cross.

B. He broke down the barrier of the dividing wall (vv. 14, 15)

From the text, verses 14 and 15 should be read as being in parallel. The breaking of verse 14 and the abolishing of verse 15 are the same ideas. The enmity of verse 15 is explained as the Law of commandments; contained in ordinances are those elements that formed the barrier of the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile.

“The ‘middle wall of partition’ refers to the Mosaic Law, but may be symbolized by the wall in the temple which separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Court of the Jews, beyond which no Gentile was permitted to pass.”⁷

It is interesting to note how in verse 12 the Gentiles are alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and are strangers to the covenants of promise, whereas here in verses 14 and 15 the Law of commandments are broken down and abolished. The life and death of Christ made the demands of the law no longer applicable.

The language used by Paul is graphic. He speaks of a broken wall and abolished law and killing the hostility that existed between Jew and Gentile and between God and man. His intent was to reconcile humanity to the Father and Jew to Gentile. All of this happened because the Father blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ and as a consequence we became the adopted sons and daughters of God.

The Law given by God was never His means of reconciling sinners to Himself. Man’s rebellion put the Law, the shadow, in place of the Law-giver and the gift became the object of affection rather than the giver of the gift. Because of humanity’s perversion, the Law became a barrier between Jew and Gentile and between mankind and God. The Law’s intent was to bring us to Christ, not keep us from Christ or replace Him with Law. The Law is a wonderful servant but a horrible master.

III. What reconciliation looks like

A. Both Jews and Gentiles are now one (vv. 14, 15).

“In the present context **kainos** is used to show that Christ has created a whole new person entirely different from the two former persons, namely, Jews and Gentiles.”⁸

It isn’t that Gentiles become Jews or Jews become Gentiles. It is from Jews and Gentiles that God creates a new man, something that is neither Jew nor Gentile, but rather His own unique body.

I think it is impossible for us to fully grasp the severity of this union. Think of the oppression that has and does exist because of gender and race. Because of both we have sought to slaughter entire people groups. This travesty still exists within our world, but God in Christ has reconciled all people groups to one another and to Himself.

I believe N.T. Wright is correct when he notes, "If our churches are still divided in any way along racial or cultural lines, he would say that our gospel, our very grasp of the meaning of Jesus' death, is called into question."⁹

"Modern progress has made the world a neighborhood: God has given us the task of making it a brotherhood. In these days of dividing walls of race and class and creed we must shake the earth anew with the message of the all-inclusive Christ, in whom there is neither bond nor free, Jew nor Greek, Scythian nor barbarian, but all are one."¹⁰

When you contrast our strained relationships with those of existing nations and people groups it would seem as if we are extremely petty and small. And yet God reconciled the Jews and the Gentiles into one new man. Remember Isaiah 19, where God speaks of Egyptians and Assyrians joining Israel as the people of God and worshippers? Remember how strained such a thought currently appears? The cross makes all of this possible.

B. God and humanity has been reconciled (vv. 16, 18).

Without the death of our Lord Jesus, the penalty for sin would still stand as an imposing and insurmountable wall between the sinner and His God. Our redemption is by grace, our reconciliation is by blood and thus accomplished. The cross and our position in Christ grant us unlimited access to the Father.

"The word Paul uses [for reconciliation] is the word used of bringing together friends who have been estranged."¹¹

"In this context the word indicates a lack of hostility and a mutual acceptance between those who were hostile or appeared to be hostile. It is not only a lack of hostility but it is also acceptance or friendship."¹²

Notice how the Gentiles are being described in this passage as: uncircumcised (v.11), aliens (v.12), having no hope (v.12), without God (v.12), afar off (v.17), strangers (v.19), and foreigners (v.19). What did they need? To be reconciled to God (vv.16, 18). Notice how the Jews are described as being near. Yet despite this, what did they need to be? To be reconciled to God (vv. 16, 18).

Now Paul turns to our relationship and thus stressing our unity.

IV. What we are now: "You are a dwelling place for God" (2:19-22)

Paul draws a conclusion to his thoughts with "consequently, therefore."

A. Negatively stated (v. 19a)

"So then,' Paul indicates that the unity described in vv.19-22 is based on what Christ did through his death, described in vv.14-18."¹³

The next statement is in contrast to that which has proceeded.

B. Positively stated (vv. 19b-22)

Notice the contrast created between vv. 11, 12 and v. 19. Once we were aliens and afar off, but now we are fellow citizens.

The coming together of Jew and Gentile and both being reconciled to God and granted access before Him is described as a “new man” (v.15), “one body” (v.16), and a “household of God” (v.19). There is a sense that “the building is under construction and inherent is the dynamic growth of the church.”

Notice the four-fold description of our new relationship as saved Gentiles.

1. We are citizens of His kingdom/country
2. We are family members of His household
3. We are individual elements making up His building
4. We are a temple for His indwelling

God creates a country, a household, a building, and a temple where He is its King, Father, Architect and God. This is something new. It is not marked by gender or geography. It is marked by Christ.

Notice the progression of thought found in vv. 20-22. First, we have a building built on a foundation and a cornerstone (v.20). Secondly, the cornerstone is what holds the entire building together (v.21). Thirdly and finally, the building is the habitation of God (v.22).

Shepherding the Sheep: (What’s the NEXT STEP)

1. The reader should know what we once were, but now are in Christ.
2. The reader should understand how the work of Christ produces change in the life of the recipient.
3. The reader should apply the finished work of Christ in his interaction with others within the same body.
4. The reader should see what a Christ-like life looks like as found in Ephesians 2:11-22?
5. A Christ-like life is unified and at peace with one another and with God.
6. A Christ-like life comes boldly to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit.
7. A Christ-like life keeps growing as the dwelling place of God.
8. The Christian can live the Christ life because that which separated us from others and God has been destroyed.
9. This paragraph stresses our redemption. Have you received God’s gracious gift? Do you know you are saved and on your way to heaven? What proof can you offer that would support your claim?
10. This paragraph (vv. 11-18) stresses our reconciliation. Have you been reconciled to

God? Do you see how hopeless your past condition was apart from God? Without God taking the initiative you would never have been reconciled.

11. This paragraph (vv.19-22) stresses our relationship. We are now one with the saints and with God. We are the dwelling place of the Almighty and Holy God. Think of the electrifying effect these truths should have on our lives.
12. This is really the nuts and bolts of salvation's consequences in the plan of God.
13. Many people still wish to see Israel as somehow special in God's dealings today. Our passage before us speaks concerning the issue.

¹ NIV Study Bible

² Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 353.

³ NIV Study Bible

⁴ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 388, 389.

⁵ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 361.

⁶ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 363.

⁷ *Criswell Study Bible*). "The wall is the Law" (Compton, Class Notes, Summer 1985).

BKC disagrees, p. 626.

⁸ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 378.

⁹ N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters*, 27.

¹⁰ William Barclay, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 113.

¹¹ William Barclay, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 117.

¹² Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 367.

¹³ NIV Study Bible