

LIVING THE CHRISTLIFE
WAYNE BARRETT
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Studies in Ephesians
Ephesians 2:11-22

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

—Ephesians 2:11-22

vv 11-12—the state of the Gentiles before the work of Christ

Called “the uncircumcision”—actually was a slang, vulgar word—highlighting the division that was in place

Separate from...alienated...strangers (foreigners)

“having no hope and without God in the world”

This would not have been the way they described themselves at that time

It was, nevertheless, their condition

“Having no hope...without God in the world”—a condition that persists today

There is no hope outside of Christ. The Church must be faithful to proclaim this message.

v 13 – “But now in Christ Jesus...”

Paul returns to the centrality of Christ as Savior and the focus of God’s work in creation

“in Christ Jesus”—and in no other way

“you who once were far off have been brought near”—“far off” from God and the saved people of God, now brought near

“by the blood of Christ”

There is no salvation without the cross

Compared to the need for salvation, no “self-improvement” program is worth talking about

v 14 – “for He Himself is our peace...”

This is key—and this is transformative!

Jesus broke “down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility”—not just the wall of bad mutual feelings

The dividing wall was **real**—it was the wall of the old covenant between those who sought to keep the law,^a those who were chosen, and those who did not and were not. It was, we would say, “legit!”

But “in his flesh,” through his death on the cross, Jesus tore down the wall. The curtain of the temple, separating God from men, was torn in two representing “the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh.” (Hebrews 10:20)

v15 – “by 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...”

by-abolishing-the-law-of-commandments

So many Jews could not accept this—but it is this role and power and work of Christ which is at the essence of salvation in Him

It is no longer about the law—it is about Christ, and being found in Him

But He did not merely abolish the law of commandments—he fulfilled them and created “**in himself** one new man in place of the two”

“in himself”—not according to some new rule. In HIMSELF! Christ **is** our salvation, and He is the salvation of all who call on His name.

“in place of two”—the Jewish mindset was: there is us—chosen by God—and there is everybody else (Gentiles). That wall is what Christ abolished.

“One new man”—“new” is a key word. This did not exist before Christ.

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”—2 Corinthians 5:17

This is much more than a belief system—this is new birth; transformation—all accomplished in Christ.

“making peace”—between Jews and Gentiles and all with God

“and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.”

“both” are reconciled by Christ, now “in one body”

“through-the-cross” – again, accomplished on the cross

“The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the **law**.” (1 Corinthians 15:56)—all defeated on the cross

Paul continues to expand on the work of Christ:

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

“I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners, ¹⁹ creating the fruit of the lips. Peace, peace, to the far and to the near,” says the LORD, “and I will heal him.”—Isaiah 57:18-19

v 18 — “For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.”

Another key verse

How has this “new man” been formed? Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ Himself, the presence of Christ in us!

This is the NEW covenant—the covenant of adoption in Christ.

V 19 – “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens...”

^a but who were still saved by election through faith

Referring back to v 12

You are “fellow citizens”—there is no distinction

v 20 – “built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets”

This speaks to the authority of the Scriptures and the practices of the early Church

“Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone”

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.—Psalm 118:22

Often quoted in the NT referring to Christ

vv 21-22—“in whom the whole structure...”

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit

And the entire Church is a temple of the living God—in us!

THIS is who we are. NOT a people merely with shared beliefs or a shared philosophy—but a

“dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”