

UNITY IN CHRIST
EPHESIANS 2:11-22

PAUL THE APOSTLE WROTE THIS LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS AND SURROUNDING AREAS IN ASIA MINOR IN ABOUT AD 60. PAUL IS ON HOUSE ARREST IN ROME, WAITING FOR A DEATH SENTENCE AS HE WROTE THIS EPISTLE. PAUL POURS OUT HIS EMOTIONAL REVELATION OF IDENTITY AND FUNCTION AS A BODY IN CHRIST. IN CHAPTER 1 AND THE FIRST PART OF CHAPTER 2, PAUL WRITES THAT SALVATION IS BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST. THAT BY CHRIST'S SACRIFICE OF A PERFECT LIFE LIVED AND LAID DOWN IN DEATH ON THE CROSS, THE SINNER IS REDEEMED, JUSTIFIED, ADOPTED INTO THE FAMILY, AND RECONCILED BACK TO GOD HIMSELF, FOR HIS GLORY. THIS WEEK AS WE PICK IT UP AT THE END OF CHAPTER 2, PAUL LEADS THE CHURCH TO REMEMBER WHO WE WERE BEFORE CHRIST. IN THE MINDSET OF GRATEFULNESS, WE ARE TO SEEK UNITY WITH OTHERS IN THE BODY OF CHRIST. ONE GOD, ONE SPIRIT, ONE CHURCH, ONE BODY. THERE WAS MUCH DIVISION STILL HAPPENING BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE IN THE CHURCH BACK THEN. WHY? OLD HABITS ARE HARD TO BREAK. UNITY IS PEACE, UNITY IS LOVE. DIVISION IS EGO, DIVISION IS SELF FOCUSED. LET'S JUMP INTO THIS, I'LL START IN VERSE 8 TO GIVE CONTEXT.

Ephesians 2:8-12 NIV

⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God's

handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

GOD ORIGINALLY ASKED THE ISRAELITE MEN TO SET THEMSELVES APART PHYSICALLY AS A SIGN OF WHAT HAPPENED SPIRITUALLY. UNFORTUNATELY, THE JEWS USED THAT AS A WAY TO FEEL SUPERIOR TO THE GENTILE NATIONS

WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN A GREAT BLESSING!! WE WERE SLAVES TO SIN WITHOUT GOD AND WE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO THE FOLD WHERE EVERY COVENANT AND EVERY PROMISE GOD HAS MADE TO HIS PEOPLE IS NOW OURS.

“UNCIRCUMCISED” WAS A DEROGATORY STATEMENT TOWARDS GENTILES

CIRCUMCISION WAS A PHYSICAL SIGN TO SEPARATE THE JEWISH PEOPLE FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD

PAUL IS REMINDING THE GENTILES TO BE GRATEFUL FOR WHAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED FROM GOD. THE SAME COVENANT PROMISES THAT THE JEWS RECEIVED

Romans 9:3-5 NIV

³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, ⁴ the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. ⁵ Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

IT STARTED WITH ABRAHAM

Genesis 22:17-18 NIV

¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

NOTICE HOW GOD SAID ALL NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED THROUGH YOUR SEED...THAT WOULD BE JESUS

GOD WANTED ISRAEL TO BE A FUNNEL NOT A BUCKET. ISRAEL WAS TO SHOW THE WORLD THE WAYS OF GOD BUT THEY (BEING SINNERS LIKE EVERYONE ELSE) MADE IT ABOUT THEM. THEY ELEVATED THEMSELVES AND SHUT OUT THE WORLD.

CHRIST ELIMINATED THE NEED FOR PHYSICAL CIRCUMCISION

1 Corinthians 7:19 NIV

¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts.

Romans 2:28-29 NIV

²⁸ A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. ²⁹ No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.

IT IS A CHANGED HEART AND LIFE THAT MAKES A CHILD OF GOD. WE ARE REAL JEWS BY ADOPTION AND OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Ephesians 2:13 NIV

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT LOCATION, PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY...FAR AWAY FROM THE TEMPLE AND FAR AWAY FROM THE COVENANT AND PROMISE

Ephesians 2:14-15 NIV

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,

JESUS DOESN'T MAKE US PEACEFUL, HE IS OUR PEACE. WHEN JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS, THE WALL OF HOSTILITY BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE WAS DESTROYED. IN THE TEMPLE, THERE WAS A WALL THAT KEPT THE GENTILES OUT. A SIGN READ "NO GENTILE MAY ENTER WITHIN THE BARRICADE WHICH SURROUNDS THE SANCTUARY AND ENCLOSURE. ANYONE WHO IS CAUGHT DOING SO WILL HAVE HIMSELF TO BLAME FOR HIS ENSUING DEATH." THIS PHYSICAL BARRIER ILLUSTRATED THE BARRIER OF HOSTILITY AND HATE THAT ALSO SEPERATED THE TWO GROUPS

PAUL IS NOT TALKING ABOUT GOD'S MORAL LAW BUT THE CEREMONIAL LAW WITH IT'S COMMANDS AND REGULATIONS CHRIST FULFILLED THE MORAL LAW AND ABOLISHED THE JEWISH CEREMONIAL LAW (WASHING, FOOD, SACRIFICES)

Galatians 3:27-29 NIV

²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

EVERYONE NEEDS JESUS, EVEN THE MODERN DAY JEW

Ephesians 2:15-16 (PART OF 15)

His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile

both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

RECONCILE/APOKATALLASSO/REUNITE, RESTORE RELATIONS BETWEEN

Ephesians 2:17-18 NIV

¹⁷ 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 access to the Father by one Spirit.

JESUS PREACHED PEACE TO JEW AND GENTILE
IT IS ONLY THROUGH CHRIST THAT EITHER HAVE ACCESS TO
THE FATHER, BY ONE HOLY SPIRIT

Romans 5:1-2 NIV

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus=Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

Ephesians 2:19-21 NIV

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief

cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

CITIZENS OF HIS KINGDOM AND FAMILY MEMEBERS IN HIS HOUSE

THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE FAITH WITH THEIR LIVES, JESUS IS THE CORNERSTONE....THE CHIEF (ESSENTIAL) CORNERSTONE
A CORNERSTONE HOLDS THE WHOLE BUILDING TOGETHER, EVERYTHING RELIES ON THE STABILITY OF THE CORNERSTONE

WE, THE GLOBAL CHURCH, BEING DIVERSE IN CULTURE AND BACKGROUND ARE JOINED TOGETHER IN CHRIST MAKING US UNIFIED AND HIS HOLY TEMPLE

Ephesians 2:22

²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

WE ARE PERSONALLY A TEMPLE AS WELL, TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR TEMPLE THAT GOD HIMSELF LIVES IN BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT

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