



Title: He Himself Is Our Peace (Ephesians series)

Text: Ephesians 2:11-18

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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.

- Gentiles: remember your hopelessness before you came to Christ.
- Jews: The good thing that God gave the Jews in order to make them holy so that they might display the goodness of God became an occasion for pride. Something in the human heart that takes God good gifts and elevates the gift and then causes us to look down on everyone who doesn't have.

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,

Abolishing the law? What about Matthew 5:17?

- Important to think through questions like this when the Bible seems to contradict itself.
- Two solutions:
 1. Some theologians break the law into categories: Moral, Ceremonial, Civil
 2. He abolishes the condemnation of the law.
 - **Colossians 2:13-15**
 - **Romans 8:1-4**

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.

THREE TRUTHS

1. JESUS CREATES A NEW HUMANITY AND REDEFINES IDENTITY.

- We are more connected to our Arabic Christian brother than our unbelieving American relative.
- The things I have in common with a Christian on the other side of the world, or the other side of town, who is of a different skin color and culture than I am, are a million times more eternally important than the things I have in common with my unbelieving relative who grew up with me in the same culture.
- There is no room for "camps" in the body of Christ.
- "The Gospel reshuffles our identity deck" --Keller

2. JESUS DISMANTLES THE MERIT MACHINE OF SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

- Jesus not only removes the condemnation of the Law, he takes away our ability to prop ourselves up by it.

3. GOD DOESN'T JUST PARDON SIN, HE BRINGS HIS PEOPLE PEACE IN CHRIST.

Questions:

1. Non-Christian

- You do feel cut off, without hope. You're thinking about Christianity wondering if there is some secret or formula or maybe some culture that may help you "do better."
- The good news is that you can have peace with God and people through Jesus Christ.

2. Christian—is the peace this passage speaks of elusive to you? Why?

Legalism—you are trying to put the merit machine back together.

License—are you exercising your grace and freedom in Christ to justify sin?

Anxious—is there some idol in your heart that still holds power?

Complacent—have you turned the peace Jesus brings into mere self-absorption.