

TWO PLUS ONE EQUALS ONE

Ephesians 2:11-22

INTRO: Let's look again at my favorite chapter in the Bible, Ephesians chapter 2. Last week we looked at the first 10 verses of this great chapter. Today, I want us to look at the rest of the chapter, verses 11-22.

What a great passage of scripture! The first three verses of Ephesians 2 speak of man's dire condition without God. Verses 4-9 tell us about the great grace of God and how He desires to save us. And verse 10 speaks to God's work through us to bring glory to His name. The first 10 verses of this chapter tend to get the most attention, BUT TODAY, I want us to look at the remaining verses, 11-22.

My sermon title for today is, TWO PLUS ONE EQUALS ONE. You'll see what I mean in a moment. I have known a lot of people in my years of ministry that struggled with the idea of belonging. A myriad of reasons were strewn about as they spoke of why they found it difficult to believe that God could love them and would desire to have a relationship with them. But thankfully, God, through Jesus Christ, settled that debate once and for all. Let's look at these verses together and I pray they will bring you the same peace of mind they have given to me through the years. NOTICE...

1) OUR PAST: vv 11-12 *"Therefore remember that formerly you who are Gentiles in the flesh and called uncircumcised by the so-called circumcision (that done in the body by human hands)— 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world."*

"without hope and without God in the world." Can you imagine anything worse than that, *"having NO HOPE and WITHOUT GOD (having no help) and left to die alone IN THIS DARK SINFUL WORLD. That's where we were, that was our condition, before God sent His Son to die for our sins, and before we accepted His mercy, love, and grace.*

Much like last week, in vv 1-10, Paul starts us out by looking to the PAST. These verses emphasize what Paul has already been talking about. He starts v 11 by saying, *"Therefore"*, meaning, in light of what I've just said. In vv 8-10 Paul wrote, *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."* *"THEREFORE..."* having that knowledge... (Read the above verses, vv 11-12)

The word translated *"Remember"* means, "memory, as the basis of learning and of motivation for future action." Just 30 short years after this letter of Paul's was delivered to Ephesus, Jesus would rebuke the Ephesians. In **Revelation 2:4-5** *"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent."*

Remembering is the basis for appreciating all that God has done in our lives. Remembering who we were before our encounter with Jesus allows us to rejoice in our present day troubles and difficulties. EVERY Christian in this church could testify about how much better things are now, than before we knew the love of Christ. God help us to remember!

I) OUR PAST: vv 11-12 **CONTINUED** **ILLUS:** Lewis Johnson writes that..."it is never bad for us to take a look back at what we were, and what we have become, by virtue of the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's never bad to shed a tear or two for the salvation that has come to us.

When was the last time you remembered your salvation experience? Perhaps now is a good time to pause and recall your, "so great a salvation". It is excellent "preventative medicine" for your soul. Nothing, more inspires gratitude in a saved sinner than a look back to the pit from which he or she has been extracted by Divine, Amazing, Abounding Grace! **NOW NOTICE...**

II) OUR PRESENT: v 13 *"But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ."*

"But now..." Here we have this strong adversative, highlighting the glorious, dramatic contrast with the dismal state just enumerated in v 12 when he told us we were, *"without hope and without God in the world."* Now Paul reverses the picture, and begins to paint a fresh and glowing contrast. *"But now in Christ Jesus"* formerly Christ-less, separate from Christ, but now in Christ Jesus. When we trust the Savior, God places us in Christ Jesus and accepts us in the beloved. From then on we are as near to God as Christ is. There can be no greater contrast!

"...you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ." Blood is the basis of life. This is Paul's second mention of the blood of Christ. In Ephesians 1:7 he wrote, *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us."* And no other blood sacrifice could satisfy the righteous demands of God's holiness and His just hatred of sin. Only the blood of the spotless, sinless Lamb of God could take away the sins of the world and bring sinful men near to God.

1 Peter 1:18-19 *"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without spot or blemish."*

Oh how Jesus Christ has changed things for all mankind, if only we would believe.

Notice...

III) OUR PEACE: vv 14-18 *"For HE Himself is OUR peace..."* Let's stop here for a moment. Here the pronoun, *"He"*, is intensive, meaning *"He and no other"* Christ Himself, and He alone, is our peace with God, and so with each other, be they Jew or Gentile. Christ is not merely our Peacemaker, but our very Peace itself. In this verse we see a fulfillment of Isaiah's famous prophecy, **Isaiah 9:6** *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."*

Vv 14-18 *"For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has torn down the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and decrees. He did this to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace 16 and reconciling both of them to God in one body through the cross, by which He extinguished their hostility. 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."*

I) OUR PAST: vv 11-12

II) OUR PRESENT: v 13

III) OUR PEACE: vv 14-18 CONTINUED Albert Barnes writes that..."The peace here referred to, is that by which a union in worship and in feeling has been produced between the Jews and the Gentiles. Formerly they were alienated and separate. They had different objects of worship; different religious rites; different views and feelings. The Jews regarded the Gentiles with hatred, and the Gentiles the Jews with scorn. Now, says the apostle, they are at peace. They worship the same God. They have the same Savior. They depend on the same atonement. They have the same hope. They look forward to the same heaven. They belong to the same redeemed family. Reconciliation has not only taken place with God, but with each other."

ILLUS: During World War II a group of American soldiers was exchanging fire with some Germans who occupied a farm house. The family who lived in the house had run to the barn for protection. Suddenly their little three-year-old daughter became frightened and ran out into the field between the two groups of soldiers. When they saw the little girl, both sides immediately ceased firing until she was safe. A little child brought peace, brief as it was, as almost nothing else could have done. Jesus Christ came as a babe to earth, and in His sacrifice on the cross, He Himself became peace for those who trust in Him. His peace is not temporary but permanent.

V 16 *"and reconciling both of them to God in one body through the cross, by which He extinguished their hostility."*

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross by Isaac Watts

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er His body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

I) OUR PAST: vv 11-12

II) OUR PRESENT: v 13

III) OUR PEACE: vv 14-18 CONTINUED Peace comes from Jesus, by way of the cross... John 14:27 *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

IV) OUR POSITION: vv 19-22 *"Therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. 21 In Him the whole building is fitted together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in Him you too are being built together into a dwelling place for God in His Spirit."*

TWO PLUS ONE EQUALS ONE!

CONCLUSION: Let me give you a couple of walking points before you leave...

1) Never look for peace where it can't be found: Colossians 3:15 *"And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful."*

2) Never build walls where God has tore them down: In America, we have a lot of walls. Some necessary, some not. There are the walls which, 160 years after the end of slavery in America, still divides black and white. There are walls which divide the two genders - men and women; there are walls of social status - the divide of affluent and the poor. Listen to me, *the ground is level at the foot of the cross!* This "peace" we have in Christ— this restored relationship— is meant to be both Vertical & Horizontal!

One last verse...

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation: The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."*