

Jesus Is Our Peace

Ephesians 2:11-18



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FOCAL Ephesians 2:11-18^{KJV} Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; (12) That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (13) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (14) For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; (15) Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; (16) And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: (17) And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. (18) For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

America is founded on Christian principles. Though our system of law is based on the Ten Commandments of Sinai, it is the *Cross of Christ* that has had the greatest impact on this nation and its people. If you don't believe this, the next time you're traveling down the highway - any highway - count the number of times you see the Islamic "Star and Crescent" on the side of the road. Look for the number of times you see the "Star of David" displayed to commemorate the death of a loved one. Now count the number of times you see the Cross of

Christ. Open your eyes, look, and see the influence that the Cross of Christ has had on even the unbelieving. Jesus promised this when He said:

John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

The Cross of Christ is life changing in a positive and progressive way. Those who accept Christ as Lord strive to be more like Him. The Cross is not only that which saves the believer, but it is the standard by which all believers live. God is love, and love was demonstrated at the Cross of Christ. Jesus commanded His followers to

Matthew 16:24 ... deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Just the other day I overheard a dear lady commenting on "Chris" and how his "employer was against him". This lady spoke so passionately about Chris that I assumed he was a brother or a close relative. When I asked her about Chris she informed me that he is one of the contestants on "American Idol". This lady, precious as she is, is not following Christ - she is following Chris - and that's not the same thing! I am sure that Chris is a decent enough person, but he will never replace Christ. You can see Chris on television, but what good will that do you? Will Chris or any of the Hollywood actors you see save you? Will these people abide with you as you go through the trials of life? When you watch a hoodlum on *MTV Cribs* and look at his 10 cars or her 10 million dollar house, what do you gain from this? Many of these people have made vast fortunes by teaching your children how to curse or to use drugs. My Beloved, from such things turn

away.

The Christian is a person who strives to live in the Presence of God at all times. We have believed on Jesus Christ, we have been saved by His Cross, and now we are brought nigh to Jesus. If you do not know Him as both Savior and Lord today is a great day to meet Him, our Jesus, our Redeemer, our Savior and Guide.

1. By Christ's Blood We Are Brought Near

FOCAL Ephesians 2:11-13 Wherefore

remember¹, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; (12) That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (13) **But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**

The Lord reminds the Church to **remember** where we were, and to **think on** where we now are. That word translated **remember** in verse 11 literally means *keep on calling to your remembrance, keep on remembering*. Humans, unlike God (**with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning - James 1:17**), have a

¹ Present Active Imperative of G3421, *μνημονεύω*, *mnēmoneuō*, *mnay-mon-yoo'-o*, From a derivative of G3420; to *exercise memory*, that is, *recollect*; by implication to *punish*; also to *rehearse*: - make mention, be mindful, remember.

tendency to forget things. God never forgets - this is why sin is troublesome to humanity. When you sin once it's like slapping God in the face. Since He never changes, and never forgets, the impact of sin remains forever.

Illustrate I am told that - in the Rock Hill community - you all had paths to one another's houses through the woods. Every child could get to another child's house by means of these pathways, easily passing through what would have been impassable underbrush without that path. A dear member told me that one day a *mad dog* came into this area, and the men of the community went out to hunt it. When the dog was killed it was buried in the middle of one of the paths. This dear lady told me that it was a long time before she went to her friend's house by that path, because she was afraid of the mad dog buried in the middle of the path.

When man sinned, his act of disobedience planted a barrier in the pathway between God and man. Unless God opened the path no one had any hope of getting to God. In the Old Testament God had a *chosen people*, the children of Israel, whom He loved and saved. It was to Israel that the Lord made His promises. The Law was given to Israel. The Covenants were given to Israel. There was no pathway for the Gentile to get to God. The Bible says:

FOCAL Ephesians 2:11 Wherefore **remember**²,

2 Present Active Imperative of G3421, μνημονεύω, mnēmoneuō, *mnay-mon-yoo'-o*, From a derivative of G3420; to *exercise memory*, that is, *recollect*; by implication to *punish*; also to *rehearse*: - make mention, be mindful, remember.

that **ye being in time past Gentiles³ in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;**

You were *Gentiles, foreigners to God and to the promises of God*. The Chosen People, God's Israel, called you the *uncircumcision*, pagans, outsiders. You were, the Bible says,

FOCAL Ephesians 2:12 ... **aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:**

Illustrate How far removed were you, as Gentiles, from God *before the Cross*? I can give you a very good illustration from among the *first Chosen, God's Israel*. In Israel you see a perfect representation of man's separation from God. The Temple of God, the place where Israel worshiped, was divided up into sections. In the most Holy place (**Hebrews 9:3-5**), that which we call *The Holy of Holies*, here was God's glorious Representation, the Shekinah Glory. This place was separated from the rest of the Temple by a very thick curtain, some say it was about a foot thick, so that none would accidentally look into it and die. Once a year only *one person, the High Priest of Israel* entered into this place and made

3 G1484, ἔθνος, *ethnos, eth'-nos*, Probably from G1486; a *race* (as of the same *habit*), that is, a *tribe*; specifically a *foreign (non-Jewish) one* (usually by implication *pagan*): - Gentile, heathen, nation, people

sacrifice for the children of Israel. The High Priest went into this place carefully, only after making sacrifice for his own sins. The High Priest was closest to God. Next you see the *Court of the Priests*, a place just outside of the Holy of Holies. Here the Levites, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, could go to make sacrifice for the people. Going further out you find the next court, the *Court of Men*, and beyond that the *Court of Women*. The priests could go past these two courts, but the women stopped at the doorway of the Court of Men. Each court moves farther from the center of where God is, farther from the Holy of Holies. Now we go *outside* of the Temple, and *outside* of the city of David. Here we see the *lepers of Israel*, poor souls that - by the very Law of God - were forbidden to come into Temple to worship, and if they came into the city they were to cry out "unclean! unclean!". The lepers were the farthest from the center of where God was, the farthest from the Holy of Holies, and yet they were *still Israelites, children of God, chosen and under Covenant*.

You must go *beyond the lepers* to find the Gentiles! We were *not* of Israel, *not* of the Chosen, *not* of the seed of Abraham, *despised* of Israel. This is the place the Gentile - that's you and I - were before God offered us all salvation through the Cross of Christ. God had a Chosen People, and you were not it. When the earthly ministry of Christ began we read:

Matthew 10:5-7 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, **Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: (6) But go**

rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (7) And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

There would certainly come a time when salvation would be offered to the Gentiles. It was prophesied that Messiah - our Savior Jesus Christ - would be

Luke 2:32 **A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.**

and that

Matthew 12:21 **in his name shall the Gentiles trust.**

But you need to remember, Beloved, that *before* He was **Jesus** He was **Yeshua**, Joshua the Savior to Israel. The Bible tells us to **remember**.

Remember that you were not a part of Israel, God's Chosen People.

Remember that no Covenants of Promise were made to you.

Remember that you had no hope.

Remember that the wrath of God stood as a barrier between you and Him.

A holy God could not wink at sin, and you, an unholy being, could not have fellowship with the thrice Holy God. What a distance! — an impassable mountain sundered you from your God. It has all gone now. The mountains have sunk into the sea, our transgressions have all gone, but, oh! what hills they were once, and what mountains they were but a little while ago! In addition to these mountains, there was, on the other side nearest to God, a great gulf of divine wrath. God was angry, justly angry, with us. He could not have been God if sin had not made him angry. He that plays with sin is very far from knowing anything of the character of the Most High. There was a deep gulf. Ah! even the lost in hell know not how deep it is. They have been sinking: but this abyss hath no bottom. God's love is infinite. Who knoweth the power of shine anger, O Most High? It is all filled now, as far as we are concerned. Christ has bridged the chasm.⁴

Illustrate Oh, what a terrible thing this was! Lost, undone, unloved. The thunderhead looks so terrible. The skies are dark, brooding, and God's wrath hangs over us all. Will a storm shelter save us, or will we die without hope!

Then, just as things seem so dark, a the cloud looks so black, as it appears a funnel of doom will appear in the sky to destroy us - then the storm breaks. Two words, joyous and wondrous words, shine out to bring light into our lives. - IN CHRIST!

FOCAL Ephesians 2:13 **BUT NOW in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**

The doorway to our salvation was not by natural birth, but the doorway is by supernatural birth **in Christ**. We who are Gentiles **were far off from God**, farther than the leper of Israel, but have not been **brought near by the Blood of Christ**. His Blood represents the Justice of God being poured out on God the Son. His Blood represents the Blood of the Lamb on the door posts of the house, saving us from the death angel. His Blood represents everything to the Christian.

Illustrate & Compare I have heard it said that some Christians tire of the preaching of the Cross. I say unto you, if you tire of the Cross, if you tire of the Blood, then you need to reexamine your own salvation. Though I love all the doctrines of Christianity, there is none more dear to me than the Blood of Christ. And Beloved, nothing should be more dear to you than the Blood of Christ. We praise God for Christ's first coming, being born of a virgin, but it is *His Blood that brings us near to God*. We love the examples that Jesus gave us as He walked this earth, but *it is His Blood that allows us to call God "Our Father"*. We praise and magnify God for the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, but *it is His Blood that brings us into the Family of God*. We who are Christians indeed look forward to the Coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the clouds and the glorious Rapture of the Church, but *it is His Blood that demands He return for us who believe*. The love of God

caused Jesus Christ to go to the Cross and die, but it is His Blood shed on that Cross that brings us near to God.

We are near to God because the Blood of Christ *sealed a covenant between us and God*, and because that Blood proves that God's Justice is satisfied. The Christian is pardoned, not through a rite of circumcision nor baptism nor communion, nor good works. The Christian is pardoned *because of the Blood of Christ*, Blessed Be the Name of God!

2. By Christ's Breaking, Peace Is Given To Us

FOCAL Ephesians 2:14-18 **For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;** (15) Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; (16) And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Jesus Christ did not *bring peace* - the Bible says **He IS our peace**. Faith in Jesus Christ does not *lead* to peace. No, my Beloved - Jesus IS our Peace. The believer in a real and actual union with Jesus Christ has been *raised up and made to sit* with Him in the Heavenly places. The Christian is supposed to be a creature who is *at peace* because he or she is *in Christ*.

First of all, Jesus brought peace between the Jew and the Gentile. The Scripture says:

FOCAL Ephesians 2:14^{NIV} **For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility**^{NIV}

Prior to Jesus Christ's coming there was a wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile. The Jew looked down on the Gentile, considering us dogs. But Beloved, the Gentiles also often looked down on the Jews. Nazi Germany is proof of how far away the Gentiles went from God in order to persecute God's First Chosen. From the Day of His Ascension into Glory our Lord Jesus Christ said:

Acts 1:8 **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

The Gospel of Christ was not merely offered to Jew or Gentile, it was to be offered to Jew *and* Gentile. **God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son. (John 3:16)**. Jesus Christ's Blood brought *all peoples* under the covenant promises of salvation. The Scripture

says:

Galatians 3:26-29 For **ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.** {27} For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. {28} **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.** {29} **And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed,** and heirs according to the promise.

There is no need for Jew nor Gentile to fight or war with one another. Those who have been saved by faith in the Savior are **all one in Christ Jesus.** If we are **Christ's, we are Abraham's seed.** We are **all equally heirs of God** through the riches of God's Grace. You will find no teaching of *hatred* in Christianity as you find in other religions. The Jew, surrendered to Christ, will love his Gentile brother. The Gentile, saved by faith in Jesus Christ, will love Israel and pray for her people.

On a larger scale, the Christian is supposed to be at peace *with all Christians.* Where fighting and wars abound in the Church, this is a sure sign that Jesus Christ is no longer in attendance. **He is our peace.** Those who bring war to Church are like Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, who brought *strange fire* before God and were destroyed for their trouble (**Leviticus 10:1-3**).

James 4:1 **From whence come wars and**

fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

Christians are not called to war with one another **He is our Peace.** If we will see souls saved at our local Churches, the *peace of God* must reign.



Secondly, and more importantly, Christ our Savior brings lasting peace between **the Believer and God.** People have asked me if those who believe in other *religious systems* cannot be saved. Here is your answer. **He is our peace.** It is the Blood of Christ *alone* that **broke down the middle wall of partition between us.**

The unbeliever is *hostile towards God* because God rejects the sinful lifestyle of the sinner. Jesus said:

John 3:19-21 **And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. (21) But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.**

Unsaved man is hostile to God, for God rejects the sins that man enjoys doing. God is wrathful toward man because sin is an offense to God. Jesus Christ **is our peace**. His Cross, His suffering, His Blood provided a path between the believer and God. On the **Godward side** the Blood of Christ *paid the penalty of God's Broken Law*. Our text tells us:

FOCAL Ephesians 2:15-16 **Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;** (16) **And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:**

God is angry at sin, at the violation of His Holy Law. Jesus Christ **abolished in His flesh the enmity - even the Law of commandments contained in ordinances**. I want you to understand this, dear friends. You either stand before God *on the basis of the Law*, or you stand before God *on the basis of what Jesus Christ did for you*. If you stand before God on the basis of the Law, the Law will become the noose that hangs you. If you stand before God *on the basis of the Blood of Christ*, then you are at peace with God *because of what He did*.

The Christian is someone who is **reconciled to God**. Jesus Christ is the Great Mediator. His Blood brings reconciliation between God and the believer. His Risen Person *continues to bring reconciliation* between God and the believer.

In Christ I am at peace with God. The Christian is *at peace with God*. God is our Father, not just "God". The Scripture says:

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore **being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (2) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand,** and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The believer is *saved by Grace*, and the believer *stands by Grace*. You are a being *conceived by Grace to stand in Grace*. You are saved to peacefully and consistently serve God - not as the Heavenly Taskmaster, but as our Heavenly Father.

3. You Are Encouraged To Enter Into His Blessing

FOCAL Ephesians 2:18^{KJV} **For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.**

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the key to salvation. Without a relationship by faith with Him we have no hope. But through Jesus we have access to God the Father through God the Holy Spirit. If you have been saved, the Cross is not only your salvation, it is also the *standard by which we live*. Follow the standard, dear

One, if you know Jesus Christ as Savior. The standard is not selfishness, but selflessness. Jesus is coming soon - we do not know when, but He does come. The great preacher **C.H. Spurgeon** stated:

"I think the Church would do well to be always living as if Christ might come to-day. ... Let her always be living as if he would come now, still acting in her Master's sight, and watching unto prayer. Never mind about the last vials, fill your own vial with sweet odors and offer it before the Lord. Think what you like about Armageddon; but forget not to fight the good fight of faith. Guess not at the precise era for the destruction of Antichrist, go and destroy it yourself, fighting against it every day; be looking forward and hastening unto the coming of the Son of Man; and let this be at once your comfort and excitement to diligence - that the Savior will soon come from heaven⁵"

5 CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN.NO. 476, A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 12TH, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

