

# Ephesians

God's Peace Mission

Ephesians 2:11-22

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11

Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

2023.3.12



## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you?  
...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?

- This week's message follows up on the bad news of last week's message, so let's review what we learned about the human predicament.



How does Ephesians 2:1-3 describe humanity? What does Romans 1:17-23 add to the picture?

In what ways do you agree or disagree with that picture of humanity without Christ? Be specific.

**Which** of the five things lost humanity lacks (Ephesians 2:12) strike you as most horrifying—and **why**?

- Ephesians 2:14 says that all of humanity can be reconciled **to each other** through Christ's death, while v. 16 says that humanity can be reconciled **to God** through Christ's death. **Which** of those reconciliations—"horizontally", with other humans, or "vertically", with God—**most** concern you, and why?

There is enmity between people ("horizontally", v. 15) **and** between us and God ("vertically", v. 16). Which of those have you experienced? Please tell us a bit more about that.

Which of those do you think about more—and why? Which one bothers you more—and why?

- The good news, of course, corresponds to and addresses the bad news. So, through salvation we now **have Christ, have citizenship, have God's covenant, have hope, and have God!**

Which of those possessions confuse you? Review the Sermon Summary to refresh your memory.

Choose one of those precious possessions, turn to your neighbor, and tell him why you love it so.

Close in prayer now, thanking God for his rich, gracious provision in Christ.

## Sermon Summary

Conflict is as old as humanity. The first child born to Adam and Eve murdered his own brother. I recently read that from 1500 BC to AD 850 there were 7,500 “peace covenants” agreed upon among various nations. None of them lasted longer than two years! The only “covenant” that has lasted—and that will last—is the one made by God himself which was sealed by the blood of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus’ “peace mission”, detailed in Ephesians 2:11-22, can be summarized in three words: **separation**, **reconciliation**, and **unification**.

**I. Separation** The impact our sin has had on relationships was separations. The first century Jew divided the world into two groups: Jews and everyone else. You were one or the other. Jews were incredibly nationalistic. True, God had chosen them as his special people, but God’s intention was that Israel be a light to the Gentiles, that they too might be saved (Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 42:6). But Israel failed in her missionary mandate. And rather than leverage her privileged spiritual position, rather than serve as an attractional magnet, drawing the nations to her God, the Jews erected a spiritual wall to keep Gentiles out. In the early days of the church, this division between Jew and Gentile continued to be an ongoing tension. The big question facing early Christians was, “Do Gentiles have to become Jews in order to become Christians? Do they have to be circumcised and follow the various Jewish dietary and ceremonial laws?” Jews and Gentiles had never related socially before—would they now view each other as equals, or would the same old divisions continue? Paul began by reminding his Gentile readers what their life was like before coming to faith in Christ. They were **without Christ**. Yes, Ephesus had the great temple to the goddess Diana, but pagan religion is not pleasing to God; rather it is a spiritual tragedy. They were **without citizenship**. Israel was God’s special nation; the Gentiles were not. They were **without the covenants**. While a blessing for the Gentiles is included in God’s covenant with Abraham, God never made a direct covenant with the Gentile nations (Genesis 12:1-3). Gentiles also were **without hope**. Apart from Christ, humanity is hopeless. Finally, they were **without God**. Oh, they had hundreds of “little g” gods, but other religions represent a **devolution** in spiritual thought, not an **evolution** (Romans 1:18–23).

**II. Reconciliation** But now the Gentiles, who formerly were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ (2:13). Just when things looked the darkest, God stepped in and did a miracle. Jesus’ crucifixion looked like a defeat, but God raised Jesus from the dead! From tragedy to triumph! From the cross to the crown! Time and time again in Scripture we see these great reversals. Things are bad, God’s people are standing on the precipice, but God steps in and changes everything! Jesus broke down “the barrier of the dividing wall.” He demolished the wall that was separating Jews and Gentiles. What is this wall? I think that the wall to which Paul is referring is not a physical wall, but a spiritual wall—the Mosaic Law which required Jews to live separate lives (special dietary requirements, circumcision, no intermarriage). There are two aspects to God’s law: the moral and the ceremonial. God’s moral law is unchanging, but all the ceremonial laws, which separated Jews and Gentiles, were obliterated through Jesus’ death on the cross. Before Christ, these groups could not eat or worship together; now they can. Jesus’ death brought peace, both theologically and practically. Peace only comes when “self” dies, and the only place that self truly dies is at the foot of the cross (Galatians 2:20). Jesus **is** our peace (2:14); he **made** peace (2:15), and he **preached** peace (2:17)!

**III. Unification** Believers are one nation (19a), one family (19b), and one temple (20-22). Israel was God’s chosen nation, but they rejected their Redeemer and suffered the consequences. The church has a role and function in the present age that is similar to that of Old Testamental Israel (1 Peter 2:9 cf. Exodus 19:5-6), yet the church has not replaced Israel (see Romans 11)! We also are one family, with God as Father and every believer as brother and sister. Finally, believers have been built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit: a new Temple. At first, God “walked” with His people (Genesis 5:22, 24; 6:9). Then he dwelt with his people in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:8; 40:34–38), and later in the Temple (1 Kings 8:1–11). God’s next “dwelling place” was the physical body of Jesus Christ (John 1:14). All of these “dwellings” were rejected by sinful mankind (1 Samuel 4; Ezekiel 10:18-19; Luke 19:14). Today God dwells in the hearts of those who have trusted Christ (1 Corinthians. 6:19–20). Believers have been united in one new humanity; we are one nation, one family and one temple. There is no theological place for prejudice or divisions in Christ’s church.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any passage.  
Let's use it to explore the peace we gain through Christ...*

**Monday**— Study Romans 5:1-11

**Tuesday**—Study Philippians 2:1-8

**Wednesday**—Study Galatians 2:11-14

**Thursday**—Study James 2:1-9

**Friday**—Study Colossians 3:23-25

**Saturday**—Study Deuteronomy 10:14–21

Need blank copies for doing more  
"Five Question Bible Study"?  
e-mail: [Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com](mailto:Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com)

### Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]