

Our Peace in Christ

LIFE IN CHRIST #4 - Pastor Gary Combs - October 11, 2026 - Ephesians 2:11-22

INTRO: Good morning church! We are continuing a series this morning entitled, "LIFE IN CHRIST: An Exposition of Ephesians." Over the past three weeks we have been encouraged by the blessings, the prayer, and the transformation that the Believers in Christ have received. The key phrase in Ephesians is "in Christ." Paul uses some form of this phrase 36 times in his letter.

The apostle Paul knew Ephesus well. He had spent three years ministering there around A.D. 52–55. Ephesus was one of the greatest cities of the Roman world, with an approximate population of 250,000. Located on the western coast of Asia Minor, it became an important center of Christian influence. Paul wrote Ephesians around A.D. 61–62 while under house arrest in Rome during his first Roman imprisonment.

Finishing up chapter 2, the apostle Paul describes the peace with God and one another we have received in Christ.

Need: We live in a world that longs for peace, yet seems unable to find it. Nations are at war. Families are divided. Friendships are broken. Even in our own hearts, we struggle with anxiety, guilt, and unrest. We want peace in our world, peace in our relationships, and peace within ourselves. Yet, no matter how hard we try, lasting peace seems just beyond our reach.

Why is peace so difficult to find? The Bible tells us that our greatest problem is not political, relational, or emotional. It's spiritual. Sin has separated us from God, and that separation has affected every other relationship in our lives. We cannot have true and lasting peace until we first have peace with God. And that's a peace we cannot achieve through our own efforts. We need a Savior.

Trans: That's the good news of today's passage. Paul reminds us that Jesus didn't merely come to teach us how to find peace. Paul doesn't say that Christ merely gives us peace, although He certainly does. He says that Christ IS our peace! That's a powerful distinction. Peace isn't merely the absence of conflict. It's the presence of Christ!

BODY: In the apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he called the Gentile believers to remember how Christ had brought them from separation to reconciliation with God and His people. We can remember what Christ has accomplished to give us peace with God. How can we remember what Christ has accomplished to give us peace with God? The text reminds us of three realities of our peace with God in Christ.

Read text: Ephesians 2:11-22 (ESV) 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. 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, 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. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

THREE REALITIES OF OUR PEACE WITH GOD IN CHRIST:

1. We have been brought near by Christ's blood.

EXP: (11-13) Paul begins with the command, "Therefore remember" (11). The word "therefore" points back to vv. 1–10, where Paul explained how God saved us by grace, bringing us from spiritual death to life in Christ. Now he moves from our former spiritual condition to our former spiritual separation. He calls the Gentile believers to remember how far away they once were from God and His covenant people so they might more grateful to God and more loving to one another because of Christ's great sacrifice.

In v.12, he describes their former condition with five expressions of separation:

- (1) **Separated from Christ.** They were outside the messianic hope of Israel.
- (2) **Alienated from Israel.** They were outsiders to God's covenant people.
- (3) **Strangers to the covenants of promise.** They had no covenant claim to the promises given to Israel.
- (4) **Having no hope.** They had no assurance of salvation or eternal life.
- (5) **Without God in the world.** They lived without a saving relationship with the one true God.

But notice the dramatic change: "But now in Christ Jesus" (13). These words echo the great turning point of verse 4, "But God." "But now" we have been "brought near by the blood of Christ" (13).

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“Remember” (11) (μνημονεύω, *mnēmoneuō*) - a present active imperative, meaning “keep remembering” or “continually call to mind.” The only imperative in this section. Remember, for we are a forgetful people.

“Gentiles in the flesh” (11) (ἔθνος, *ethnos*) - a tribe, nation, people group; Gentiles, non - Jews.

“The uncircumcision” (11) (ἀκροβυστία, *akrobestia*) - having the foreskin, uncircumcised; a Gentile.

“Made ... by hands” (11) (χειροποίητος, *cheiropoiētos*) - made by the hands. Circumcision was external and did not necessarily change the heart.

“Separated from Christ” (12) (χωρίς, *chōris*) - separate, apart; without Christ.

“Alienated” (12) (ἀπαλλοτριόω, *apallotriōō*) - to alienate, estrange; shut out from fellowship and intimacy

“Strangers to the covenants” (12) (ξένος, *xenos*) - a foreigner, a stranger. outside the promises of God.

“No hope” (12) (ἐλπίς, *elpis*) - without expectation of good, hopeless

“Brought near” (13) (ἐγγύς, *engus*) - near, of place and position; those who are near access to God.

“By the blood” (13) (αἷμα, *haima*) - blood; blood shed. Not by their religious efforts, moral improvement, or ethnic identity, but by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. The blood of Christ has accomplished what human effort never could. It has brought sinners near to a holy God.

ARG: Isaiah explains the fundamental problem: Our sin separates us from God.

Isaiah 59:2 (ESV) but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

It is the sacrificial blood of Christ that has brought us near and given us access to God.

Hebrews 10:19-22 (ESV) ¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...

ILL: **The torn veil in the temple.** The most holy place in the temple was separated by a great curtain. Only the high priest could enter, and only once a year, bringing sacrificial blood. That veil was a constant reminder that sinful humanity could not casually enter the presence of a holy God. But when Jesus died on the cross, Matthew 27:51 says, "And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom." Not from bottom to top, as though man had opened the way to God, but from top to bottom, because God Himself had opened the way through the blood of His Son!



APP: Do you feel far away from God today? Feelings can be fickle, but through faith in Christ Jesus, we have been brought near to God. Not by any effort of our own, but by the blood of Jesus.

Don't forget the spiritual condition from which Christ saved you. Remembering our former separation produces humility, gratitude, and worship. And stop trying to earn what Christ has already purchased. You can't make yourself worthy to approach God. But through faith in Jesus, His blood has opened the way.

We have peace with God because Christ has brought us near by His blood.

2. We have been reconciled through Christ's cross.

EXP: (14-18) Having explained that Christ's blood has brought us near, Paul now explains how Christ's cross has reconciled us to God and to one another.

The blood and the cross do not refer to two different works of Christ. Both describe His sacrificial death. But the emphasis shifts from our former separation to our former hostility, and from nearness to reconciliation.

V.14 begins with a remarkable declaration: "For he himself is our peace." Paul doesn't merely say Jesus gives peace. He says Jesus is our peace! The emphatic wording identifies Christ Himself as the source and embodiment of our reconciliation.

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"Peace" (14,15,17 - 4x) (εἰρήνη, *eirēnē*) - security, safety, harmony, peace. Equivalent to the Hebrew שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*). "Jesus is our *shalom*." *Shalom* is considerably richer than simply "the absence of conflict." It carries the idea of wholeness, completeness, well-being, harmony, and right relationship.

Paul then describes several accomplishments of Christ's cross.

(1) Christ broke down the dividing wall of hostility (14). Jews and Gentiles were separated by religious, ethnic, and cultural distinctions. Some see an allusion to the temple barrier that prevented Gentiles from entering the inner courts of the Jerusalem temple. That barrier vividly illustrated their exclusion. Archaeologists have found inscriptions warning Gentiles not to proceed beyond the barrier.  (Picture) The Greek inscription says: "No foreigner shall enter within the balustrade around the sanctuary and the enclosure. Whoever is caught will be responsible for his subsequent death."

(2) Christ created one new humanity (15). Christ "abolished" (καταργέω, *katargeō*) "the law of commandments expressed in ordinances." Christ fulfilled the law and removed its role as the dividing line between Jews and Gentiles. His purpose was to "create in himself one new man in place of the two."

"One new man" (15) (καινός, *kainos*) - new; of a new kind. In Christ, we are one people, one new man that represents all of God's people without exclusion. Christ didn't turn Gentiles into Jews or vice versa. He created one new humanity in Himself! This is the church!

(3) Christ reconciled both groups to God (16). The Greek verb (ἀποκαταλλάσσω, *apokatalassō*) means to reconcile, restoring a relationship that had been broken. Christ reconciled "us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility." The cross accomplishes two dimensions of reconciliation: Vertically: Christ reconciles sinful humanity to a holy God. Horizontally: Christ reconciles Jew and Gentile. And notice the powerful irony: Christ killed the hostility through His own death! 

(4) Christ gave both groups equal access to the Father (17-18). The peace Christ accomplished through His cross is now proclaimed to those "far off" and those "near."

"He preached" (17) (εὐαγγελίζω, *euangelizō*) - to bring good news, to announce glad tidings

"Access" (18) (προσγωγή, *prosagōgē*) - the act of bringing to, access, approach. Verse 18 gives us a beautiful Trinitarian statement: "For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father."

ARG: **Through Christ's blood on the cross God has reconciled everything to Himself.**

Colossians 1:20 (NLT) and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

We are now Ambassadors of Reconciliation:

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 (CSB) ¹⁸ Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. ¹⁹ That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us.

ILL: **Fall of the Berlin Wall.** For nearly 30 years, it was the most visible symbol of the division between communist East Germany and democratic West Germany. In 1989, its fall became a powerful symbol of freedom, reunification, and the collapse of an oppressive rule. The cross has become our symbol.

APP: Christ is our peace. He broke down the dividing wall, created one new man, and gave us equal access to the Father through the same Spirit. When we love, forgive, serve, encourage, bear with, and walk alongside one another, we demonstrate the reality that Christ has made us one and that God truly dwells in us. Therefore, racism has no place with us. We're not a "white church," nor a "black church." We're a "red church" a people redeemed by the crucified Christ, who spilled His red blood that we may be reconciled to God and to one another!

We have peace with God because Christ has reconciled us through the cross.

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3. We are being built together into Christ's temple.

EXP: (19-22) Paul now moves from what Christ has accomplished to what we have become because of His saving work. "So then" (19), introduces the glorious result of everything Paul has just explained. Notice his progression: 1) You belong to the kingdom, 2) You belong to the family, 3) You are becoming His temple.

"**Fellow citizens**" (19) (συμπολίτης, *sumpolitēs*) - one word in the Greek; possessing the same citizenship.

"**Household of God**" (19) (οἰκεῖος, *oikeios*) - belonging to one's household, related by blood, kindred

"**Foundation of the apostles and prophets**" (20) (θεμέλιος, *themelios*) - laid down as a foundation.

"**Cornerstone**" (20) (ἀκρογωνιαίος, *akrogōniaios*) - the corner foundation stone. The cornerstone was carefully positioned because it helped determine the orientation and alignment of the walls.

"**Joined together**" (21) (συναρμολογέω, *sunarmologeō*) - to join closely together: to frame together: parts of a building, the members of the body

"**Temple**" (21) (ναός, *naos*) - used of the temple at Jerusalem, Temple. Paul isn't saying, "You Gentiles now get access to the temple," but something much more radical, "You and Jewish believers together ARE becoming the temple."

"**Dwelling place**" (22) (κατοικητήριον, *katoikētērion*) - an abode, a habitation.

ARG: The church is the people not the steeple; they are the temple of God:

1 Corinthians 3:16 (ESV) Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

Christians are the living stones which Christ is using to build His house:

1 Peter 2:4-5 (ESV) ⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

ILL: **Construction site.** You see piles of lumber, stacks of bricks, pipes, wiring, and dozens of pieces that don't look like a house. None of those pieces were designed to exist independently. Each one has a place in something bigger. Church, we are growing together into a holy temple. The church is not merely a religious institution or organization. It is God's spiritual dwelling place, built on Christ and inhabited by His Spirit!

APP: Let us live as members of God's household and living stones in His temple. Don't settle for merely attending church. Be the church! God has not saved us to live isolated Christian lives. He has placed us in His family and is building us together for His glory.

CONCLUSION: We began by acknowledging that we live in a world longing for peace. Yet the peace we need most is not something we can achieve through human effort. It's something Christ has already accomplished through His death on the cross. Think of what Paul has reminded us of today:

- We were far off, but Christ's blood has brought us near, giving us ACCESS to God.
- We were divided, but Christ's cross has reconciled us, making us ONE with God and with one another.
- We were strangers, but Christ is building us TOGETHER into God's own dwelling place.

And all of this is possible because of one glorious truth: "**For he himself is our peace!**" Have you received that peace through faith in Jesus Christ? Have you been reconciled to God?

And if you're a believer, are you living in the peace Christ has purchased? Are you walking in unity with His people and taking your place in His church?

You don't have to make peace with God. Jesus has already made peace through the blood of His cross. Your response is to receive Him by faith and live in the peace He has accomplished.

Remember how far off you were. Remember what Christ has done. Remember who you are now in Him. Let's pray.