

Ephesians 2 (Part 4): 14-22 • Created to Be One

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This is part 4 of Ephesians chapter 2 and yeah. We covered verses 10 through 13 last week and we're going to be picking up in verse 14. But I would like to read, if you would indulge me, verses 11 through 13 again for the sake of continuity and clarity I think, for the passage that we're going to be looking at today.

Beginning of verse 11, follow along please with me as I read. *“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.” (ESV)*

Now, here's where we're picking up the text in our new study. *“For he himself (verse 14) is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility¹⁵ 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 (that refers to the Gentiles) and peace to those who were near. (referring to the Jews)

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.” Stop there, let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge you in this place and we acknowledge you in our study of God's Word. Recognizing as we do that you are the one who

makes the Word come alive. You are the one Lord, who enables us to understand what's being said in the scriptures.

Father God, we come to you that work of enlightenment might continue in our hearts as we look at these verses again. Lord, help us to not just see what they say, but to understand what they're saying to us and how you would have us to apply these truths.

We ask that you would do this Father in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.

I want to just remind you that the letter that Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus was written at a time when he was, we believe he was under house arrest in Rome. It might have been a little bit worse than that as far as his incarceration goes.

But chapter 1 of this letter begins with the apostle Paul outlining for us, our spiritual blessings in Christ. And we went through those in our first study and we looked at just the wealth of incredible things that are ours in Jesus. Many of the things we even noted that many Christians don't have any experiential understanding of on a day to day basis, and yet they're ours for us to take advantage of.

And what we heard repeatedly was Paul used the phrase, in Christ, or, in Jesus. And he would talk about our spiritual blessings, in Christ. He would talk about the things that are ours, in Jesus. And what this means is, they all come through Him. Jesus is the source of all of these things for us. He continues to use that phrase here in the chapter we're going to be looking at today as well.

Then when we began chapter 2 of this letter, Paul began to write about our salvation and how that salvation comes about. He talked about the fact that we are saved by grace and through faith. We talked about how important that first part of Ephesians chapter 2 is, to bring balance to our understanding of how we're saved, and it actually wars against legalism.

I had a guy write me, or write a comment on one of our messages online. And he goes, man, you're really messing with my legalism. And I thought, yeah, good. Right? That's what the Word of God does. It's not me. The Word of God will mess with your legalism and that's what Ephesians, that first part of Ephesians chapter 2 does. It reminds you and I, that we're not saved because of anything we've done. We're not saved by being good, by keeping the law, by following rules. We're saved by grace. Paul emphasizes to us, it is a gift.

I trust that everybody here today has received the gift of life in Jesus Christ. If you haven't, man, don't delay, just get that taken care of. All right. Best thing you'll ever do in your life.

In the second half of this chapter now; chapter 2, Paul has been writing about the Gentiles and I'm assuming that we're all Gentiles. There might be a one or two of you, I don't know, who have a little Jewish blood in you. But for the most part, I would have to say we're all Gentiles.

And we talked last week about how Paul painted this pretty dire picture of the condition of the Gentiles. He talked about how lost we were. He said we were cut off and we were without hope and without God in our lives.

And then we ended with verse 13 last week where Paul said, but through Him, we have been brought close, a wonderful verse. Notice it doesn't say we came to God. It says He brought us close and there's just some beautiful things that God has to say in that. And of course, that's very good news for you and I who are Gentiles.

When God begins to, through the apostle Paul, paint this picture of just how hopeless we were, apart from Christ. Cut off from all of His blessings, all of the wonders of His love, and how we were then brought near to Him. And we're all going, yeah, sweet, that is pretty good stuff.

But I got to tell you, for the Jews who were seeing the Gentiles come to faith in the first century. It was a hard thing to watch. It was a hard thing to deal with because you see they had been raised and the Book of Acts shows this. Jews had been raised believing that Gentiles were godless and they were right. Gentiles were raised without the law. Because of that, they didn't have the moral foundation, the godliness, the understanding of God's requirements. They didn't know any of that stuff.

And so Gentiles deserved the name that the Jews gave them, all of the derogatory terms that they used. And the Jews despised them. And so now you have a situation, and again, the Book of Acts bears this out. How, first of all, you have all these Jews getting saved and there's a great number of Jews that got saved pretty early on.

You remember when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 people came to faith that day and you got to know it's just spreading like wildfire. You already got thousands of people in the body of Christ, but they're Jewish. And then over time, we start seeing Gentiles get saved. It actually starts with the

Samaritans. And the Samaritans start getting saved. And they're, I don't know... Because remember, Samaritans are half breeds; half Jew, half Gentile. And then, they start preaching to the Gentiles and the Gentiles start getting saved. And the Jews were like, what in the world? How can this even be happening?

You and I don't think like this. We don't understand what the Jews were going through. I was listening one time to a pastor talk about this and he likened it, I thought it was a neat illustration. He likened it to you, imagine yourself now in the position of the Jews. You're the child of a king. He's the king of a nation, some nation. And you, along with your brothers and sisters, enjoy very much being children of the king. And you're very happy, and life is going along very well. But one day, your father, the king, comes home, and he has this individual standing next to him, this little street urchin, who is the worst of the worst. Repulsive to look at, even worse to smell, and you happen to know that this person is known for speaking against your father and persecuting your family.

And yet your father stands here with this little person, this grimy little, get out of my sight type of an individual, and he says, I've adopted this child. And he's going to be part of our family and we're all going to be one big happy family. What would your response be? Yeah, right. I think you get it.

Well, I think that's actually a fairly accurate sort of an illustration because that's essentially what happened to the Jews. They were raised believing the Gentiles could not be saved. They were raised believing that they were the worst of the worst and now they're facing this influx of Gentiles coming into the church.

This is a huge challenge. The Jews struggled very much believing that God could love and save the Gentiles like He loved and saved the Jews. It just didn't, it just wasn't something that they had ever entertained. Not only were they facing the challenge of embracing these people who have been hostile to them over the years, openly hostile. Godless people.

But they're also faced with the challenge of caring for these people in a way that honors the heart of the Father. Because there's no denying, Dad's got a big heart. I mean, how in the world could He ever have reached out to these people in the first place if He didn't have a big heart? And guess what? The Jews are His children, and so are they not to reflect the heart of their Father in some way, shape, or form? Well, this is the challenge that faced believing Jews and it was a very tall order.

In these first verses that we're looking at today, in Ephesians chapter 2, Paul begins to speak of this very crazy, weird relationship that is now happening between Jew and Gentile.

Now, let me stop you for a moment because historically speaking, this is interesting. But I know that you're not dealing with problems between Jews and Gentiles. It was Paul's issue, it's not ours. You don't probably go to work or go to family reunions and you don't see a separation of the Jews over there and the Gentiles over there, and they won't talk to each other, and they won't be civil to one another. You're not dealing with that.

But you're dealing with other issues. You're dealing with other hostilities. You're dealing with other divisions. And I think we're going to find as we go through these verses that the Lord is going to have something to say to all of us about these sorts of things.

But we're going to use the context that Paul is using here, related to Jew and Gentile, and I'll let you, through the Holy Spirit, bring application to what's going on in your life.

Look at verse 14, again. Paul writes this, *"For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility."* I want you to notice that the first thing Paul admits is there is a dividing wall of hostility. And do you have in your life someone or some group with whom there is a dividing wall of hostility?

If there's someone in your life whom you are divided from because of hostilities, anger, issues, and that sort of thing, pay attention because God's Word has some important things to say here.

I want you to notice the next thing that we're told here in this verse. It says that Jesus has broken down that dividing wall of hostility. How did He do that? Well, the very first few words of verse 14 are key. You should underline them in your Bible if you do that sort of thing. I'm not saying you have to, but I have. Anyway, the words are these, *"...he himself is our peace,"* those are incredible words. He Himself is our peace.

I want you guys to notice what it doesn't say. It doesn't say, He Himself encourages us to make peace with those with whom we have hostilities or divisions. It doesn't say that, does it? It doesn't even say He Himself commands us to be at peace with those with whom we have problems. What does it say?

He himself is our peace. He is our peace. Jesus is the peace of the divisions and the issues that we have with people and this is an incredible statement here because Jesus, we know how, what it's talking about.

You see, Jesus works peace. He's able to work peace from the inside because He's living inside of us. He's living in our hearts. And so He works peace from the inside versus working from the outside.

Every child who has ever had a problem with their sibling and had their parent try to reconcile them knows what it's like to try to create peace from outside. My brother and I were constantly getting into tiffs and he would inevitably beat me up because he was 2 years older, bigger, stronger and I think he rather enjoyed it. He's a good friend today, thank you, Lord.

But we were constantly, my parents had to try to resolve issues between my brother and I. And of course you remember how your parents probably did that with your siblings. My mother would say, Steve, Paul, now you shake hands and be friends. As if that's going to work. Yeah, shake your hand, put her in the vice, buddy, sort of a thing.

But you know what's going on there? It's someone imposing peace from the outside. We see this even politically. For example, when the United States of America gets involved between the Palestinians and the Israelites trying to bring peace in the Middle East. And it's happened, several presidents have done it.

Get together and get the Palestinians to sign a peace accord and the Israelis to sign a peace accord and then they bask in the glory of having had them do something. But what they're doing is they're imposing peace from without rather than allowing it to happen from within. Do you get it?

Jesus brings peace from within, because He's living in the heart of the individuals who are struggling to find peace. That's why Paul says, “...*he himself is our peace*,” right? We don't have to go and take peace classes as believers because we have the instructor living in our heart.

And when we come to know Christ as our Savior, one of the first things He does in our hearts is begin to nurture that understanding and heart to have peace.

And do you know that there's a blessing when we reach it? Remember what Jesus said in the Beatitudes? “*Blessed are the peacemakers*,” right? There's a blessing that goes along with cooperating with the Holy Spirit's desire to bring peace where there has been hostility, hardship, anger, and separation.

This is a work of the Holy Spirit. It's a work that Jesus does. Guys, don't ever forget, He is the Prince of Peace. Listen, there is going to one day be peace in the Middle East and it's going to happen when the Prince of Peace sits on the throne of David in Israel, in Jerusalem, on Mount Zion, and He rules and reigns upon this earth. And that's when it's going to take hold.

But He is peace. Please understand. He is the Prince of Peace. You with me? And that is why Paul speaks of this work of Jesus.

Now, if we keep reading, we see how Jesus does this further. Verse 14, he says, “...*he himself is our peace, (look at this) who has made us both one.*” And this is the crazy thing. Jesus comes along and He takes rival factions. I mean, people who are just doing this and He, when they come to Christ, He makes them one. In other words, He takes the 2 and makes them 1.

And the way He does that is by eliminating the distinctions that caused them to be separated in the first place. You know, what's fascinating? There's a groundswell of peace in the Middle East that will never, frankly, probably rise to any great level until Jesus comes. But do you know that when Palestinians and Jews come to Jesus, they're at peace?

There are wonderful, glorious testimonies of Palestinians and Jews coming to know Jesus Christ as Savior and King, and suddenly they got no problems with each other. He obliterates the dividing wall of hostility, because that wall is based on distinctions. I am a Jew, you are a Muslim, right? We don't get along. We never have, we never will. You hate us? We hate you. You're of the descendants of Abraham, we're the descendants of Ishmael. You have your scriptures. We have ours. There it is. It's a chasm as wide as we can possibly make it.

And then they come to Jesus and He just takes all that out of the way. He removes it. How does He do it? By making the two, one. Suddenly those distinctions fall away, racial distinctions. And by the way, can I just stop for a moment to say, the world likes to tell you there's all these different races. There's only one race, you guys, there's the human race.

God only made one race. There's all kinds of different people and some of them even speak different languages, but there's only one race. But we create these things. We create racial distinctions. We create a political distinctions. You a Democrat or Republican, or you Independent? You a progressive? I hate progressives. We have all these sociological distinctions. He's got money, he

doesn't. He has the, we have the haves and the have nots. Again, we create all these distinctions. They are created in the heart, the sinful heart of man.

You come to Jesus, He breaks them all down and suddenly, you're one. It's like, we're just, we're... It's funny, I ran into someone just last Sunday.

After church, Sue and I stopped by Albertsons to grab a couple of things. We always see a lot of people from church at Albertsons. Anyway, I dropped her off and I was just circling the parking lot, and I saw a motorcycle. And, of course, when I see a motorcycle parked, I have to go look at it. I drove over and looked, and I was..., right as I pulled up next to this motorcycle, the owner came walking over. And so we started, so I just said, hey, beautiful motorcycle. And it was a woman about my age and we just got to chatting. And I found out that she'd been part of a Christian motorcycle group and they'd just been hanging out at a church as a group.

You ever go by churches and see all these bikes out there? And there's this..., she's a stranger to me in terms of earthly relationships goes, but I suddenly realized she's my sister and I'm her brother and we talk like we're sister and brother. We just have this instant rapport, this instant connection because we've been made one in Christ, you see. It's just there. We don't have to manufacture it. We don't have to go, well, I'm a Christian, are you a Christian? I guess that means that we ought to probably get along.

No, it's just there. We're just, we're talking and it's easy and free. And hey I can say praise the Lord and you're not going to roll your eyes and there's all this stuff. It's cool. I'm just comfortable around this individual right away because in Christ we have been made one.

Look at what Paul goes on to say in verse 15 and 16. He says, "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, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby (look at this) killing the hostility."

I love how it says here that Jesus has killed the hostility in His body, literally by submitting to death on the cross. He killed the hostility that exists between us when we walk in those man-made distinctions that create animosity and hostility. How did He do that? He did it by helping us to understand, the cross is the only way that we get to God. Do you understand, people? The cross is the great equalizer. What I mean by that is, we understand as Christians, nobody comes to God differently than someone else. We all come the same way, on our

knees. We come in humility. We come with the understanding there's nothing I deserve good from God, and yet He gives it anyway. We come confessing our sin, recognizing His forgiveness, and accepting His free gift. We all come the same way. You see?

Do you understand how that just puts us on an equal playing field? Nobody comes to the Lord with their head held higher than the next person, right? We all come the same, completely defeated, hopeless, unable to restore or reconcile our circumstances and reconcile ourselves with God, completely unable to do that. And yet we accept His free gift on the cross and all those things are accomplished through Him.

But we know that, you see, as Christians, we know that it was just through Him. It wasn't through us. And so understanding that, I look at my brothers and my sisters in Jesus and I go, yeah, we're just all the same.

See, He's abolished, He destroyed that sense of personal superiority. It's gone. There is no superiority in the body of Christ. We're all mess ups, we know that, right? We're all recipients of God's free gift of love and forgiveness. There's not one of us in this room that is better than another in terms of how we came to Christ.

That's what the gospel says. Let me show you how Paul lined all this out, and this was difficult for the Jews to get over time but they did. Romans chapter 3, probably one of my favorite passages in the Bible.

Romans 3:20-23 (NIV)

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; (Paul says) rather, through the law (all we really do is) we become conscious of our sin. (just how much of sinners we are) But now (he says, listen here) a righteousness from God, apart from (being good, keeping the) law, (that sort of thing) has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. (look at how Paul, how he ends it) There is no difference, (here he says, between Jew, or Gentile, or rich, or poor, or male, or female, or Muslim,

or Jew, or..., you know what I am saying? Doesn't matter where you are from, there's no difference) *for* (we've) *all have sinned and* (we've all fallen or) *fall short of the glory of God,*

And we're all saved the same way. Right? Do you get it? Do you see the equalization that takes place under the gospel's message? Well, this is something that the Jews had to absorb over a period of time because you see these early Christian Jews had been raised with the law and the law was their means of righteousness. Sure glad Jesus died for us. He's the fulfillment of the sacrificial system.

But, they kept, the early Jews, they kept going to synagogue, as long as they could anyway. They even were bringing their sacrifices and stuff like that. The law to them was the means by which they were right before God. But slowly over time, God propagated this gospel through guys like the apostle Paul.

What a brilliant stroke it was to have Paul share the gospel, right? He was a Pharisee and he met Jesus. I mean, here's a man who lived for the law and then he began to write things like, you know what? Nobody is ever going to be declared righteous in God's sight by keeping the law. Nobody. And the Jews were all like, what? See, that was like, I don't know if that's true.

See, the gospel is the great equalizer. And so that's why Paul is writing here in Ephesians. He says, whatever sense of superiority or whatever there was before, it's been abolished. It's been put to death through Jesus on the cross. We find some more results, look again at verse 15. I like this too.

He says, "*by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances,* (and this is interesting) *that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two,* (and) *so making peace.*"

Paul's speaking here of the body of Christ. We are now the body of Christ. Originally, the body of Christ was made up of Jews and Gentiles and it still is. But Paul says here that what God has done is He's eliminated those distinctions and He's made a new man. You with me?

He has created a new man. That man is no longer known by the distinction of Jew or Gentile. They're known by the distinction of Jesus, right? They're children of God. These are known by the body of Christ, that's our title, you guys. We're the body of Christ. All those other distinctions, they get checked at the door.

Beginning in verse 17, Paul begins to outline the benefits. Verse 17, he says, “...*he came and preached peace to you who were far off* (that’s the Gentiles) *and peace to those who were near.*” The Jews.

“¹⁸ For through him (speaking of Jesus) we both (Jew and Gentile) have access in one Spirit to the Father.”

Now, guys, you understand what Paul just said? This is one of the most amazing things. You and I have access now to God the Father through the Spirit. And you know what? You and I are like, yeah, so? Duh, I go to God whenever I want. I can just waltz into His presence whenever I want. Right? Isn't that true?

Do you understand under Judaism, if you wanted to go and be in the presence of God, you had to be the high priest. That means one man, one tribe, one day out of the year he could go into the Holy of Holies and experience the presence of God. And if you weren't that man, sorry Charlie.

Fact of the matter is now as believers, and again we're believers, we're not Jews or Gentiles, we're just believers. We have unlimited access to the Father through Jesus Christ. We can come whenever we want into His presence and enjoy... and it really is incredible. We can kneel before the eternal Lord of the universe and call Him Father. That was something the Jews they struggled with Jesus.

When Jesus referred to God, the Father as His Father, they didn't like that at all. In fact, they considered that blasphemy. You call God your Father, thus making yourself equal with God. Well, the fact of the matter was, He was equal with God. He is equal with God. He is God.

But they were tweaked because that was just something that Jews didn't do. You and I, we get to do, we're like, Father, have you ever, count how many times somebody says Father during their prayer. And, Father, I just really pray, Father, that, Father, I just pray, Father, that you would really just be with me, Father. And it's like, if you stop and listen, it starts to get comical. But the fact of the matter is, we just say it freely. We can come at any time. What an amazing blessing.

He says in verse 19, “*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,...*” Do you know what it's like to feel completely like you don't belong? Have you ever walked into a room and there were people that were like, they were used to being there and you're the new guy on the block. Maybe you took a new job and everybody's been there for like 10 years and you're the new employee and

they're all looking at you like, what? And they're not sure they want to let you on the inside. And that's a really lousy feeling, to be on the outside.

Well, how much worse of a feeling is it to feel like you're on the outside as it relates to God? Paul says here, you are no longer on the outside. You're no longer estranged from your Father in Heaven. You're no longer an alien related to what He's doing. And the word alien simply means non-citizen.

And that's why he goes on to say here in verse 19, “...*but you are fellow citizens with the saints*...” And the word saints means holy ones, that means the children of God. You are fellow citizens.

Now, the whole term citizen, that's something that the people living under Rome, they understood that citizen had a very specific connotation as it relates to privileges, rights, protections, and that sort of thing. If you are a citizen of Rome, then there were certain rights that you had.

Do you remember when they stretched out Paul to flog him? And they were getting ready to start beating him up and Paul just said to the guy, so, is this legal to flog a Roman citizen without some kind of a hearing or trial? And the guy was like, let me get back to you and he runs off and talks to his master. And tells the guy, hey, this guy's a Roman citizen the guy comes back and ask him, is that true? Are you a Roman citizen? Paul says, yeah, I was born a citizen. He was like, I am so sorry.

Because he could get in deep yogurt for doing that sort of a thing to a Roman citizen. Citizenship has its perks. What does Paul say? You and I are fellow citizens with all the Saints in God's kingdom. Guess what? There are perks to being a citizen, right? But there's even..., it gets better. We are not only called citizens, we are called family members. Look what he goes on at the very end of that verse.

He says, not only are you a citizen, but you're “...*members of the household of God*.” That means you're a member of the family. Now, when I say that, I know that there are some people who didn't have a good family history background, and for you to hear those words, you are now the member of God's family. You might be thinking, eh!. But I just want you to know there's no negatives here.

You may have been raised in a very dysfunctional family unit where you couldn't wait to move out when you were able to. I get that, and I'm sorry for that, but I want you to know that does not reflect on God's family. God's family

and the blessings that go along with being a family member are always good. Always rich in blessings and privileges.

And all of this Paul says is, verse 20, *“built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.”* Get that? *“...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.”* Here, we are the body of Christ. We are *“built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.”* What does that mean? It means it's not the work of man, it is the work of God's Holy Spirit working through apostles and prophets.

By the way, he's talking about the foundation of who we are. That's not still going on, that foundation was already laid. You with me? I'm not saying that there can't be people who might even refer to themselves as apostles today. We usually just call them missionaries, which is probably better. Because the word apostle does have a connotation of authority.

But if somebody wants to call himself an apostle, I'm not going to get bent out of shape about it. As long as they're understanding it correctly and I'm not saying that prophetic giftings are no longer functioning in the body of Christ. I believe they are. But when Paul talks about the foundation that has been laid by the apostles and prophets, he's talking about something that has been done. They did it, right? It is a done deal, and it's not being done anymore. We are no longer laying that foundation of the gospel. It's laid out, it has even been codified in the Bible. Alright? It is our spiritual heritage.

But I want you to notice here, it's not just apostles and prophets. If it were, it would be a work of man. You'll notice that it is apostles and prophets with Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone, and that is key. What is a cornerstone? A cornerstone is..., now we're talking construction language, right? You're building, if you're a builder and you're thinking in terms of building and the way they did back in those days, a cornerstone was key to the entire foundation. Let me show you the definition of the word, cornerstone.

cor•ner•stone

1. an important quality or feature on which a particular thing depends or is based.

An important quality or feature on which a particular thing depends or is based.

Let me tell you something. The body of Christ depends and is based upon Jesus Himself, not upon man. It's upon Jesus. He is the chief cornerstone.

And it says in verse 22, the last verse that we're looking at, *"In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."* With Jesus as the chief cornerstone, He's building a house. And guess what? You and I are the building blocks. And here's the cool thing about this house, God's going to live there.

Now, we already understand the concept of God living in us because through, when we came to Christ, He came to indwell us, didn't He? He came to live inside of our hearts. We're cool with that. We understand that we are all little mini temples of the Holy Spirit. But God is doing a building of people together, no distinctions that man likes to point to.

He abolishes all those distinctions, abolishes all the problems that cause those distinctions, and knits us together to become the building of God in which God dwells by His Spirit.

You guys remember in the Book of Revelation, when you get to the end of the book, an angel comes to John and he goes, I want to show you the bride of Christ. And John's like, sweet. And so suddenly he sees this picture of this temple, this beautifully adorned building coming out of heaven.

I once had a wonderful old aged saint before he went to be with the Lord, telling me, he goes, the Bible says we're going to be a building in heaven. And he took it literally, and I was well, not exactly. The picture is that we come together, we are knit together through Jesus, and He dwells in our midst.

You see, that's the picture that we're given in the Word of God. It's a symbolic representation, but we are being knit together. We've already received the Holy Spirit inside each one of us individually, but now we're being knit together as a people.

So let me ask you this question as we close. Are there any people in the body of Christ for which the dividing wall of hostility is still erected? I hope not.

If you are having an issue with someone in the body of Christ, I want to encourage you to pray. That God would bring that wall down because it's not a wall that He put up. It's a wall that you or the other person put up.

Now, here's what the Bible says. As far as it is in your power, live at peace with all men. Do you understand, Christians, that sometimes it's not in your power to live at peace? Sometimes you will make omissions to another person with whom

you have issues or problems and they just, they're not willing. They're just not willing. They're, yeah, I'm not interested. Well, you've done your part.

Now, what you need to do is pray. I mean, you should have been praying all along. But what we should be always thinking about as it relates to how we are dealing with others in the body of Christ with whom we have a problem is that, you know what, God has eliminated the dividing wall of hostility by knitting us together, we're one.

That person that you're having, you're having problems with, they're in your family. They are your brother or sister in Christ. And you are being knit together with that person into a home in which God desires to dwell.

Now, let's get over our issues and let's get to acting the way we're supposed to in the body of Christ. These things are not of God's making. These issues where we've got these divisions and we need to move past them. Even if it's a situation where..., there has to be there needs to be forgiveness. You see, even if there isn't complete and total reconciliation between you and that person, maybe it's not even possible. Maybe they live in another state or whatever. Fine, great.

You just make sure on your end of the deal that there's no..., that you're not propping up that dividing wall of hostility. You make sure on your side of the equation, that you are saying, Lord, I don't want that wall to be there and I pray in the name of Jesus that you would tear it down and I pray that you would restore this relationship with this brother or with this sister.

Now, that's what I'm going to continue to pray until I see that happen. But meanwhile, Lord, it's you that has to..., you're going to do the work and I'm just going to trust you to do that work, right?

We've let things fester in the body of Christ and that's really sad because Jesus has, let me put it this way.

Jesus suffered intensely that you and I might be one. He suffered and you know what? He deserves for you and I to be reconciled with one another. We owe it to Him. He paid. He paid for that unity. And he prayed for it, too.

We have a record in the Gospel of John where Jesus said, Father, I pray that they might be one as you and I are one. That's His heart and that's His desire. And we've thwarted that desire for far too long, and it's time to get it right.