

Living UP TO OUR Heavenly Calling

A study in the book of Ephesians

February 11, 2025
Led by Mary Lowman
Ephesians 2:11-22

Ephesians 2:11 - 22

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 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 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.

Jesus made it clear that he came for all people, not just Jews.

Matthew 28:18 - 20

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

He said to make disciples of *all nations*!

Earlier before the crucifixion, Jesus was explaining that he was the true Shepherd, who knows his sheep, etc. And then he said:

John 10:16:

I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Remembering Our Condition – Verses 11-12:

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.

Circumcision began with Abraham. God promised to make him the father of a multitude of nations, exceedingly fertile, and God told Abraham that throughout the generations every male among you shall be circumcised.

Genesis 17:10: *This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised.*

Side note: Why were males required to have a sign of the covenant with God, but females were not?

It is clear from Paul's teachings that God is no longer after the physical act of circumcision but requires a circumcision of the heart that all people both Jew and Gentile can experience.

Romans 2:28-29: *A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. ²⁹ No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.*

Philippians 3:3: *For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—*

Colossians 2:11-13: *In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins...*

Paul told the Gentile believers to remember that they were at that time separated from Christ. What is the good that can come from remembering who we were?

God was always giving the children of Israel ways to remember what he had done, what he required of them, etc. For example:



- The Mezuzah is a small parchment containing the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4: "*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.*") placed on the doorpost of a Jewish home, serving as a constant visual reminder of God's presence and commandments.



- Tefillin (Phylacteries) are small boxes containing scripture passages worn on the forehead and arm, acting as a physical reminder of the laws.



- Tzitzit (Fringes) are special tassels worn on the corners of garments, signifying the commandments to observe.

- Observing holidays like Passover: Regularly retelling the story of the Exodus through special rituals and foods, keeping the memory of liberation alive.

What can/should we do regularly to make sure we remember that we were once far off and separated from God but now we have been brought near through Jesus? How often do you recite what God has done for you?

The Great Response: Verses 13 – 14

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

With the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the church was born. Suddenly, Jewish Christians found themselves “married,” as it were, to Gentile believers.

This is one of Satan's most effective tools—to cause disharmony in the Body of Christ. And it doesn't take much. We can major on the minors so quickly.

Jesus is the One who brings us together. He is our peace. So, when there is disunity in the body of believers, what is the cause of it?

Furthermore, when there is no peace in your own heart, the reason is you've forgotten that Jesus is your peace. You've forgotten to invite him into your troubled heart and bring peace to your soul. It's always—always—about Jesus!

Two made One - Verses 15-18

... 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.

These verses tell us how Jesus broke down the wall of hostility. He did it in three ways:

1. First, for Christians, he ended the authority of the laws and customs of the Jewish religion.

Romans 10:1 – 4:

Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ² For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³ Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴ Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Jesus ended the laws and customs of the Jewish religion but he did not end the moral law. Now both Jews and Gentiles come to God in the same way: by faith in Jesus Christ.

2. Second, he 'wanted to make the Jews and Gentiles into one people'. The Jewish laws made Jews and Gentiles enemies. In his body, Jesus made them friends.
3. Third, God wanted to unite them with himself. He wanted them to have peace with each other.

What We Have Now Become – Verses 19-22:

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.

Before, the Gentiles in Israel were 'strangers and foreigners'. But now they are all citizens together. All are part of the church.

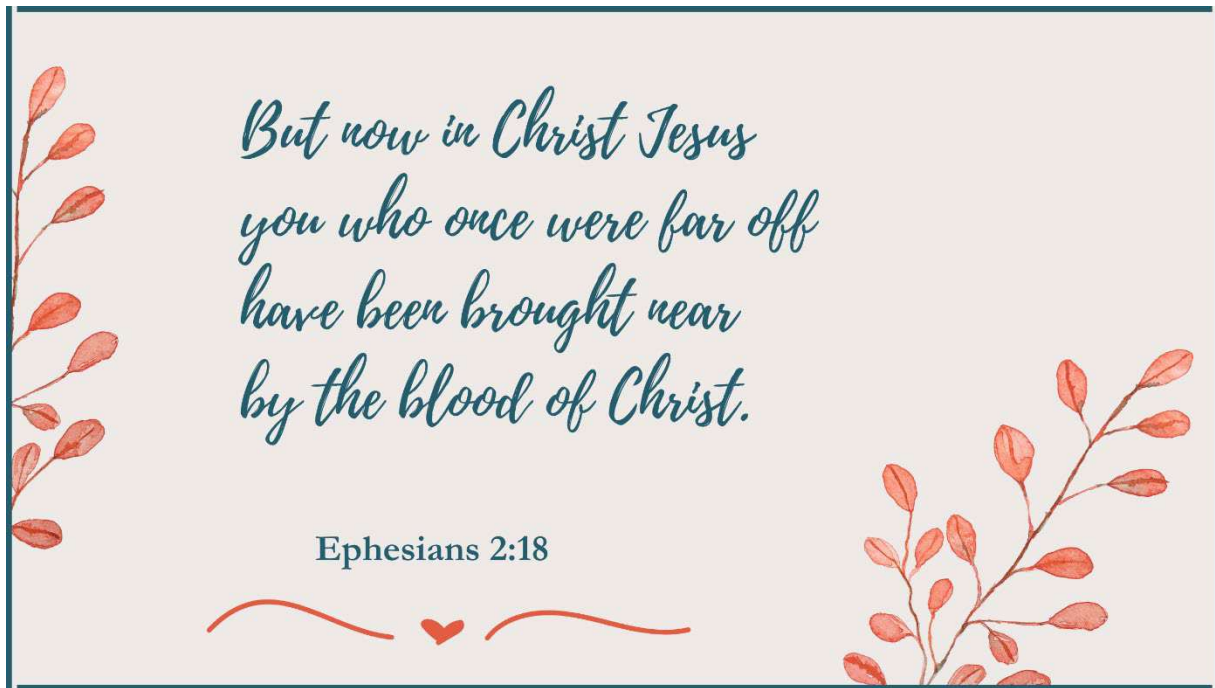
How important is it that we today who are true Christ-followers live in harmony?

Take-Aways

What can/will you do to put reminders in your life—reminders of God's goodness to you?

Have you ever written your story—the story of how you came to saving faith in Jesus? If not, please do so this week. Put it in writing! Even if you never share it, it will greatly encourage you to make a record of God's work in your life.

Memory Verse



Memory Verses for Ephesians

- Ephesians 1:11: *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.*
- Ephesians 1:17: *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*
- Ephesians 2:18: *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

Memory Helps:

- Type or write the verses over and over.
- Put them on cards and carry them with you. Use otherwise wasted time to quote the verses.
- Get a “buddy” to memorize with you and recite the verses to each other.