

SEPTEMBER 15, 2019

RECONCILED

Ephesians 2:11-22

INTRODUCTION

BROUGHT NEAR (Ephesians 2:11-13)

As I write this all of Florida and other parts of the United States are preparing for Hurricane Dorian. This is a tense situation because there is literally *nothing* we can do about our situation. We cannot control the storm. We are simply in a position that is out of our control. This feeling describes the picture Paul lays out regarding the Gentiles as a people. Paul reminds them that they too had no control over their spiritual fate. Spiritually they were outsiders. They *were* called the uncircumcised which is equivalent to any ethnic slur in our day (Ephesians 2:11). Regarding the promise of God, they *were* distant and, as a result, *were* totally without hope (Ephesians 2:11). That was their spiritual position before the Lord prior to Christ. But now, because of the redeeming work of Christ and their faith, reconciliation has taken place between with the Lord (Ephesians 2:13). The position in which they were hopeless and powerless to change, has now been changed by the death of Christ. By faith they have been washed in His blood and brought to intimacy with the Lord.

PEACE DECLARED (Ephesians 2:14-18)

Paul changes his language from *"you" and "your"* to *"our."* Jesus is now *"our peace"* – Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:14). He is not only our peace with the Lord but He is also the peace between the Jew and the Gentile. The death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus has definitively changed and destroyed the cultural divisions that existed between them. The walls of division and hostility due to the dividing nature of the law has been abolished in Christ (Ephesians 2:14). The Jews held to the Law but the Gentiles refused to do so. This was the dividing nature of the Law. But Christ, in keeping the Law, has now united those who were once divided for centuries (Ephesians 2:15). This unifying work of Christ was not for social or political reasons. It was theological! Christ united Jew and Gentile to present both, together as one, to God (Ephesians 2:16). The cross was God's idea because unity is God's plan. Divisions in the church, whatever they may be, are an offense to the gospel since the gospel is the declaration of peace and unity with the Lord (Ephesians 2:17-18).

CTIZENSHIP GRANTED (Ephesians 2:19-22)

When visiting the Dominican Republic I experienced something that was, at one point, odd but in another way, captivating. While I saw people of every shade and color they all identified each other simply as Dominican. There were no distinctions made. They were one as Dominican's. They were the same people of the same country and this is how they spoke of one another. Paul says that when we come to know Christ by faith our citizenship changes. This, however, is not simply a matter of informing us of our new home but also is a reminder that color and culture do not matter in the Kingdom of God. We are all, regardless of our hue, culture or country of origin, fellow saints and members of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19). What should define us and what makes us distinct from those outside of the kingdom is this: we belong together because Christ has brought us together. This is to be our identity in this world so that Christ's glory can be manifested through our unity to this world. Our mantra is not our culture. Our standards are not from our worldly family. We belong to a faith family whose creed and standard is the whole counsel of God (Ephesians 2:20).