

Reconciliation and Unity in Christ

July 18th & 19th, 2015

Ephesians 2:11-13

“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—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. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

Religion vs. Relationship

...remember that at one time you gentiles in the flesh, called ‘the uncircumcision’ by what is the circumcision...

- ❖ The contrast between these two groups, Jews and Gentiles, is evident throughout the New Testament. The Jews were chosen by God as His people, yet in their zeal to please God by works they rejected Jesus and His atonement. The Gentiles although not recipients of the Jewish covenants, received salvation by trusting in Jesus.
- ❖ Religion is the way people try to please God; relationship, on the other hand, is the ability to live in communion with God.
- ❖ Religion looks like...
 - ☞ Performing rituals that are not from the heart
 - ☞ Going through the motions
 - ☞ Doing good works in order to try to earn your way to God
 - ☞ Repeating meaningless phrases, prayers and creeds that are not from the heart
- ❖ Relationship is a life that worships from the heart.
 - 📖 Mark 7:1-8
- ❖ Someone once said, “Religion is spelled DO; Christianity is spelled DONE!”

...the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands...

- ❖ The reason Paul brings out that the circumcision was made in the flesh by hands is to make a contrast between carnal circumcision and the circumcision of the heart which is made by God.
 - Colossians 2:11 “In Him also you were circumcised, with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,”*
 - Philippians 3:2-3 “Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.”*
- ❖ In a way, circumcision was not God’s ideal because, in the kingdom of God, righteousness is not obtained through self-reliance but only through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - Galatians 5:6 “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.”*
 - Galatians 6:15 “For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.”*
- ❖ In the law, the call was made only to the Jews, but now in Christ, the call is for both Jews and Gentiles and is all about having a relationship with Jesus.
 - Romans 8:3 “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh [religion], could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,”*

- ❖ Paul reminds the readers of Ephesians that now in Christ we are living in a grace covenant, and he emphasizes the importance of being thankful to God for the immeasurable riches of His grace in the person of Jesus Christ.

📖 Hebrews 10:1-10

**f Humility, thankfulness and love is the response of believers
as we see the new covenant of God taking place in our lives!**

Apart from God and His blessings

...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...

Separated from Christ

- ❖ *Ephesians 2:14 “For He Himself is our peace...”*

Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise

- ❖ *Romans 9:4 “They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.”*

Having no Hope and without God

- ❖ In Christ, we have reconciliation with God and access to the blessings that belong to God’s people.
- ❖ Before our reconciliation with God, we were enemies of God.

Romans 5:10 “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.”

Colossians 1:21-22 “And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled...”

...But now in Christ Jesus you...have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Forgiven and accepted

- ❖ Paul is reminding the Ephesians of the sad condition in which they lived as Gentiles in the flesh.
- ❖ These verses shows that now the Gentiles have the same prominence as the Jews and are also proof of the unconditional love of Jesus to everyone who believes.
- ❖ We have been brought near by the blood of Christ, not by circumcision or religion but by the blood of Christ, not to join a group or an association but to live in a relationship that is everlasting.

There are many characteristics that define each one of us,
but as Christians we are one in Christ!

Endnote:

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