

Ephesians 2:11-19

A New Kind of Humanity

When I was a kid – growing up in Santa Ana – one of the things me and my friends enjoyed – **hot day – good old fashioned Water balloon fight**

Remember once – filling up a water balloon – I wanted to see how big I could get it.... Burst.

A)The Latex material was expanding – expanding –the tension was building – **Boom – water all over.**

B)Harmless in a water balloon – Scary in life.

C)Some of you grew up in homes where there was **tension between your parents**

1)Growing – getting bigger and bigger – everyone was on egg shells awaiting the event – the word – that would pop the Balloon so to speak.

Maybe it wasn't your parent's marriage – maybe it is your own marriage – Growing tension

A)We see it in our culture – Racial tension – we have seen the Balloon get popped – over and over

B)A Shooting, an arrest – a post on social media.

C)We may not experience it so much here in CA – **more of a melting pot**

1)But in different parts of the country – people live on edge – **racial tension** – when will next balloon pop?

There was an enormous RACIAL tension in the first century world – Jew and Gentile

A)To fully understand the tension – and problems – lets consider **The Backstory:**

B)Mankind was a mess – living in rebellion against God – suffering the consequences of that rebellion –

C)**Rebellion marked by idolatry immorality and violence** –

D)It was in the midst of the mess that God put a plan to save man in motion. –

1)He reached out to a man by the name of Abram living in Ur

Abraham was also an idolater/ But God chose him to be the one that the rescue mission would start with.

A)Genesis God told Abraham that if he would follow him – that he would make him a great nation

B) God told Abraham (Genesis 22:18) that *“through his offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*

C)Abraham believed God – and the mission started.

1)**God was going to do something special through this race of people.**

D)That's why Jesus said *“Salvation is of the Jews”* (John 4:22).

THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT for us if we are going to have context for what Paul is saying here.

A)The descendants of Abraham were uniquely the people of God.

Aa)The Jews *really are* God's chosen people.

Deuteronomy 7:6 NLT For you are a holy people, (set apart) who belong to the LORD your God. Of all the people on earth, the LORD your God has chosen you to be his own special treasure.

B)They are **uniquely** the people of God — and among all the people groups in the world they were incredibly privileged

Romans 9:4 NLT They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's adopted children. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He gave them the privilege of worshiping him and receiving his wonderful promises.

C)DON'T MISS THIS — They never did a thing to earn that unique relationship with the living God.

1)All of it had to everything to do with grace — Abraham wasn't seeking God – he was an idolater

D)God appeared to Abraham — for no other reason than God had decided that His rescue plan was going to run through **that** man's descendants.

THIS IS CRUCIAL — God made a distinction between the descendants of Abraham and the rest of the world —

A) But it wasn't so the Jews could boast as being superior to non-Jewish peoples — **but so they would be a blessing and a help to the Gentiles.**

B) On more than one occasion in the OT God says that the nation of Israel was to be a **light to the nations**

1) God set them apart that He might use them to be a light to the gentiles.

C) God wanted to reveal His nature and His goodness to the gentile world through the Jews.

God gave Abraham a symbol of the Covenant that he made with him and his People – mark circumcision.

A) Private Mark – inward calling – belonging to God

B) Symbolized – cutting away of the tendency to live for the flesh

1) Instead walk after the Spirit

C) Later, the Law of Moses commanded that every male descendant of Abraham be circumcised on the 8th day after their birth.

D) So God Chose the Jews and it was his God's plan was that the Jewish nation would be a blessing to the rest of the world.

What went wrong?

A) The Jews adopted an us and them mentality –

B) They looked at the world around them in terms of “circumcision” and “uncircumcision.”

C) Remember the words of David the shepherd boy when he saw the giant Goliath taunting the Israelites?

1 Samuel 17:26 For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”

C) David processed the world like this: There were those who uniquely belonged to and worshipped the true and living God. – **The Circumcised**

D) And then there were those who didn't worship God – they worshipped idols and were evil.

1) **The UNCIRCUMCISED**

The PROBLEM: The Jews made an idol out of their unique and privileged ethnic status.

A) They found their identity in being God's chosen people **instead** of finding their identity in the God who chose them.

B) The thing that was intended to represent their unique relationship with God — “circumcision” — took the place of God!

C) They defined themselves as those who were “circumcised” thought of themselves as **“the circumcision”**

D) Nothing else mattered. Without circumcision you were nothing.

1) The Jews looked down on the uncircumcised in disgust

William Barclay gives us this historical portrait of “the Circumcision”:

QUOTE: Barclay — “The Jew had an immense contempt for the Gentile. The Gentiles, said the Jews, were created by God to be fuel for the fires of hell. God, they said, loves only Israel of all the nations that he had made . . . It was not even lawful to render help to a Gentile mother in her hour of sorest need, for that would simply be to bring another Gentile into the world. Until Christ came, the Gentiles were an object of contempt to the Jews. The barrier between them was absolute. If a Jewish boy married a Gentile girl, or if a Jewish girl married a Gentile boy, the funeral of that Jewish boy or girl was carried out. Such contact with a Gentile was the equivalent of death.”

Here in Ephesians 2 were told that this unique and privileged people went horribly wrong.

A) In **verse 14** and **verse 16** we find the word enmity or ESV *hostility*.

B) The word Paul uses in both verses means *hate*.

C) Their uniqueness and the privileges that were supposed to be a blessing to the rest of the world became the source of *hostility*.

D)The Jews came to despise — *hate* — the “uncircumcised” Gentiles because they weren’t circumcised, because they didn’t have the law.

E)The Gentiles did what comes natural to fallen man when hated; **they came to despise — hate — the Jews for hating them.**

1)The TENSION WAS HUGE – seemed beyond the possibility of repair.

Beyond the possibility of repair

A)The hatred was so deep that the very idea of reconciliation seemed absurd.

B)It seemed beyond possibility that those who so utterly and completely despised each other could **even in the smallest way be reconciled** —

1)let alone be found worshipping and adoring the same God and savior.

C)So Paul here frames the Gospel in terms of “circumcision” and “uncircumcision”

1)so that we see the **transformational power** of the Gospel —

2)the **power of the Gospel** destroys historic hostilities — tears down the walls of hatred and bigotry.

D)Such a relevant message for us living in this day and age where racial tension has increased significantly.

E)People of all races, colors, social and economic standings are brought together by the gospel of Jesus Christ

Paul is writing to a predominantly gentile audience in Ephesus – He begins this conversation by describing our condition apart from Christ.

¹¹ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—
¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Title: The uncircumcision

A)Our condition: Without Christ, aliens from commonwealth of Israel or **the citizenship of Israel**

B)Strangers or ignorant of the promises made to Israel –

1)and without God and without Hope in the world.

C)Pretty bleak description – outsider – outcast hopeless

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

C)Note: Paul doesn't say that the Jews and gentiles were finally brought near because they adopted a “love thy neighbor” ethic.

D)They weren’t brought near because they sat down at the negotiating table and found some tiny piece of common ground.

1)No! He says that they were brought near by the blood of Jesus!

How does the shed blood of Jesus bring together two groups divided by centuries of hostility?

A)Here’s how: The Gospel gathers everyone into a single group. – Sinners in need of a Savior.

B)Seen this in our current midweek study in the book of Romans – **Chapters 1-3 Paul builds a case – all sinners – Jew and Gentile alike**

1)Moral and immoral – Religious and non religious – all of us have missed the mark of God’s standard.

C)The Gospel brings me face to face with Jesus.

1)Jesus on the cross tells me the truth about myself. I’m THAT bad.

D)My sins **DID THAT** to the sinless Son of God.

THIS IS CRUCIAL: Vertical reconciliation precedes and produces horizontal/human reconciliation.

A)The Gospel is first and foremost about fixing what is broken between God and man.

B)David, king of Israel, understood this. After committing adultery and murder David confessed:

Psalm 51:3-4 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,

C)Every destructive word, attitude, and action in human history is the outcome of man’s refusing to be governed by God.

What the Cross did:

¹⁴For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, ¹⁶and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Brought peace – The same message was preached to both groups – peace with God

**A)Enemies – friends – Kids – intimacy – Bride.
Talked about this Wed night – Romans**

B)Wedding – Two special moments – Bride shows up

C)Walking down the isle – Groom – crying – women running away –now one is coming towards him

D)Vows – Kiss – Intimacy – Honeymoon – Intimacy

Paul sais that Jesus came and preached Peace to both Jews and Gentiles

A)He was the way to Peace with God

B)But Not just peace with God put peace with each other

**C)He Abolished the hostility – broke the wall –
➤ No longer separated by the law – doers vs breakers – we have all broken the law of God**

Jesus on the cross makes “circumcision” and “uncircumcision” irrelevant!

A)There is only one group of humanity — sinners.

B)Every tribe is made up of sinners who need the same grace!

C)Every tribe is made up of sinners who need the same mercy!

1)Every tribe is made up of sinners who need the same love.

D)So I’m no longer defined by my race, my age, my gender, my nationality,

1)or any other thing that culture would use to categorize me.

E)I simply am a sinner needing a savior.

Jesus brought peace between the two groups

Jesus Created one new Humanity

A)The Gospel creates a NEW KIND OF HUMANITY,

Aa)a new people group held together by the fact that they are *all* in Christ.

Ephesians 2:15-18 The Message — *Instead of continuing with two groups of people separated by centuries of animosity and suspicion, he created a new kind of human being, a fresh start for everybody. Christ brought us together through his death on the cross. The Cross got us to embrace — and that was the end of the hostility.*

B)When someone becomes a Christian their genetic information isn’t changed.

1)They still have the same biological, racial and ethnic components.

C)They aren’t lifted out of one socio-economic context,

1)or one national or cultural context, and placed into one big homogenous box with other Christians.

No there are still those things that make us distinct

A)But Even though ethnic and cultural differences can still be distinguishable/ **they no longer define us.**

B)The blood of Jesus changes all of that!

C)Because you are a new man IN Jesus you longer identify yourself primarily on the basis of being Jew or gentile,

D)Black or white, Asians or Hispanic, Native Americans or any other ethnic group you can name.

None of those things define the authentic Christian.

A) We have a New Identity: I Am a New Man in Jesus.”

1) JESUS REALLY DOES CHANGE EVERYTHING!

B) See our new relationship with Jesus brings about a deep and personal transformation:

C) We see people differently – we see ourselves differently – all broken

D) Paul – I don’t want to know anyone after the flesh

1) See people in Christ – brothers/ sisters

E) Most beautiful thing – Gospel brings a oneness a unity

1) that can even affect change in a culture —

Because of our union with Jesus we are called to process race, culture and gender in a whole new way.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

God didn’t send Jesus to die on the cross for this race or that race.

A) Jesus was nailed to a cross for the human race!

Revelation 7:9–10 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’ ”

Paul says it again in his letter to the Colossians

Colossians 3:11-14 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. ¹²Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has

forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

B) The reality of the Gospel creates a love and harmony amongst all people groups

C) Because of Jesus we are freed from the replacement identities and the tribal mentalities

1) Produced throughout history that breed division, hatred and bigotry.

D) In Christ we can actually appreciate diversity and at the same time live in deep unity

E) Because we understand that *how* we do life is nothing compared to *who* Jesus is

1) and *what* He has done to reconcile us — first to God — and to one another.

The Cross of Christ –

- Brought Peace
- Created a new kind of Humanity

Gave us the Same Access

A) Through Jesus we both have the same access to the Father! – The Prince and Buckingham Palace

B) Veil torn - WELCOME – Come boldly – throne of Grace

C) Throne is the central figure in Heaven – Throne of Grace