

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on December 16, 2018:**

**"Transforming Life Lessons
for the Church Today from Ephesus:
Part 5 (Ephesians 2:11-22)"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows us what Jesus Christ has done for us, such as creating a single new humanity, reconciling us to God the Father and building us together into the spiritual temple of God.]

Notes

Introduction:

- We have come here today to worship God and to acknowledge that Jesus is here and He is alive.
- Paul said that he made his entire life about preaching Christ.
- Paul's message in Ephesians is very much in tune with the Advent season, as we will see.

Recapping Transforming Life Lessons (2:1-10):

1. Not-yet believers are spiritually dead.
 - Now this point could raise an eyebrow, but let's see what we mean by that.
 - Paul is just acknowledging the Biblical contrast between physical life and spiritual life.
 - Scripture tells us that spiritual life is so much deeper and so much more important than what our physical life entails.
 - So God shows us that spiritual life, when we receive the Holy Spirit, is so much more important, because that's when life truly begins.

 - Our denomination believes that there is always hope that all of those not-yet-believers will become believers at some point.
 - Some denominations teach that if one dies without having accepted God's saving grace, then there's no hope for them.
 - But that's not what we read in Scripture.
 - If this were true, it would place God in a box and that He is controlled by time and space – but Scripture tells us that God lives outside of time and space.
 - So, Paul is just making a contrast here as to who the Ephesians were, before accepting Jesus, and who they are now, as believers.

2. Not-yet believers are spiritually enslaved by society, Satan, and self – our sinful nature.

3. Not-yet believers are spiritually condemned.
 - The word "condemned" here doesn't mean they will never have a chance to accept Jesus.
 - It just shows that people, who haven't accepted Jesus yet, are focused on a me-centered world instead of a God-centered world, which separates us from God.

- We need to remember that we focus on Scripture in two ways: one is from a realistic, objective point of view – in other words the way God sees the world.
 - And then there's the subjective point of view, which is how we see the world, from our human perspective.
 - Now Paul contrasts the life of the not-yet-believers with the life of believers.
4. Believers are made spiritually alive in Jesus Christ by God's mercy, love, grace and kindness.
 - This could not have happened with Jesus' advent, His first coming in the past and that He will come again in the future.
 5. Believers are raised with Jesus Christ, and seated with him in heaven.
 - Now our physical address is whatever our mail box says it is.
 - But the objective reality, as to how God sees us, is that we are seated with Jesus in the heavenly places, which means we are citizens of heaven.
 6. Believers have been given grace as a gift of God and nothing to do with our works.
 7. Believers are God's workmanship created for good works which God prepared before so we would walk in them.
 - God created us and then redeemed us to be involved in His works so that we can reach others and share God's saving faith with them.

Ephesians 2:11-12:

- Paul once again summarizes who we were apart from Jesus Christ and what it means to be alive in Jesus Christ.
- We need to remember that Paul is writing to the Ephesian church, which is composed mainly of Gentiles.
- At that time, there couldn't have been a greater class warfare than Jew versus Gentile.
- Gentiles were despised and considered the dirt of the earth by the Jews because they weren't included in the covenantal relationship with God like the Jews were.
- The Gentiles were called this derogatory term by the Jews as "the uncircumcision."
- Today, we, in the church, shouldn't believe that we are exclusive to God over everyone else.

Ephesians 2:11 (NASB), Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands –

- Paul is going to contrast the fleshing human practice of circumcision with the spiritual practice of having our hearts circumcised by the Holy Spirit to become spiritually alive.

12) remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

- This was the Gentile world before Jesus made that change.

- That would be a pretty bleak existence for the Gentiles back then.
- And it's also the very existence of those who don't know Jesus Christ today.
- For those in the church for a long time, it's hard to remember what our former life was like when we didn't have a relationship with Jesus.

Ephesians 2:13-18 – Here, Paul will show us what Jesus Christ has done for us:

13) But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14) For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

- Paul was saying that there was a spiritual separation between Jews and Gentiles.
- And he is also referring to the physical dividing wall at the temple in Jerusalem.
- There were a series of walls around the temple and within it.
- Within the temple there were walls that separated women from men and the converted gentiles from the Jewish men.
- And, of course, outside the temple, there were walls that even kept the Gentiles from approaching the temple, let alone entering it.
- Paul is now going to show how the temple has been spiritualized and what it means to us today.

15) by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,

- Here we see that Jesus Christ first abolished the Law of Moses.
- And secondly, He created a single new humanity.
- Now, the Law of Moses had up to 600 laws and ordinances that made it humanly impossible to keep on their own.
- Paul tells us that Jesus eliminated the Law of Moses.
- The Greek word means "it was declared inoperative."
- Now, this doesn't mean that aren't rules to live by because Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount that the New Covenant shows us that there are morals and ethics to live by.
- These morals and ethics reflect God's love we have for others.
- The law has become a reflection of how of we extend God's love toward others.
- There is a certain ethic that comes with being a believer – we don't hate, we don't hurt, we don't steal.
- Now the physical things that were abolished were clean and unclean meats, the observance of special days, circumcision, etc.
- When there is separation between people, there is an elimination of peace.
- So, how can we make ourselves separate from others today? Could it be through politics? Through race such as black versus white, brown versus yellow, etc.? Through socio-economic status?
- Jesus, the head of the church, said these issues should not separate us into divisiveness.

- We shouldn't allow beliefs or physical issues to divide us because Jesus removed both the physical and spiritual barriers that were separating us.
- Jesus restored peace among us by removing those distinctions.
- Every one of us seated here today are one new humanity as a result of Jesus' incarnation and what He then accomplished.

16) and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17) AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;

- Here, Paul tells us that the third thing Jesus Christ did for us was to reconcile us to God, the Father.
- The words "far" and "near" in Scripture have some deep meaning to them.
- Those who were "near" were those who had God's covenantal promise.
- And those who were "far" didn't.
- Paul is telling the church at Ephesus that this has been eliminated and changed once and for all.

18) for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

- It's through Jesus that we all have access in one Spirit to the Father.
- We've talked about the three moments of salvation –
 - 1) The Father declared it from the beginning of time.
 - 2) Then the Incarnation – when Jesus came to this earth in the flesh, His divinity and humanity were forever tied together.
 - 3) The third moment of salvation is when the Holy Spirit personally reaches into us and illuminates us and shows us who we are – then we personally begin to live out that salvation.

Ephesians 2:19-22 – Here Paul us what we have become in Jesus Christ:

19) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

- We have become citizens in God's Kingdom.
- And we have become members of God's family.
- And finally we have become God's temple.

20) having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21) in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22) in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

- The New Testament church has become the spiritual temple of God, because God knew the physical temple would soon be destroyed.
- So, what does this last verse have to say to us today about being built together?
- Pastor Craig asked the members to respond to this question, "How are we being built today? Here are our answers.

- One of the ways we are being built is through prayer.
 - Another way is through knowledge (reading scripture). But knowledge also means an intimate experience with Jesus.
 - Our reactions with other people showing God's love in that we don't return evil with evil.
 - Unity with one another. Our humanity divides us, but our spiritual nature unifies us. Being unified reflects the very nature of the Triune God. From the very beginning, the Father, Son and Spirit, who were distinct personalities, were so united that they were considered one.
 - We being built through suffering. Yes, our suffering is part of that transformational process, because we do suffer in this life.
 - Participating in each other's lives, which takes going out of our comfort zone.
 - And through our kind words to others.
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- So, these are the many ways we are being built and transformed.
 - It happens when we come together for worship, when we come together for fellowship, when we come together and give our offerings and especially when we are scattered and go out.

 - This afternoon, we will have the opportunity to go out and have a prayer walk in our immediate neighborhood to ask for blessings to occur in whatever is going on in the people's lives.
 - If they happen to join us for church next week, that's OK, and if they don't join us next week, that's OK, too.

 - We're here to simply be a light and to be blessing to others and to reach out to those who don't have the same hope as we do.
 - When we live out our life with God, our hearts are transformed to the very heart of Jesus Christ and that's a supernatural thing.

Closing prayer