

Saved for Community

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

¹¹Therefore 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— ¹²remember 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. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by 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, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. – Ephesians 2:1-22

The Gospel of Jesus Christ Unites us to Community, to One Another

I. Building A Christ-Centered Community Starts with Remembering

“Mercy not only redirects our individual paths; it merges our paths together toward a unified destination.”¹

In Christ We Have Unity

“The church is ... made up of natural enemies. What binds us together is not common education, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, or anything else of that sort. Christians come together because they have all been saved by Jesus Christ and owe him a common allegiance. They are a band of natural enemies who love one another for Jesus’ sake.”²

In Christ We Have Access

In Christ We Have Community Implications

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it is built up in love.” – Ephesians 4:15-16

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“Transformation makes the church come alive. People no longer attend church simply to fulfill their weekly religious obligation. Instead they “do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourself. Let each of you look not only to your own interests, but to the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-5).”³

¹ Dustin Willis, Life in Community

² DA Carson, Love in Hard Places

³ Dustin Willis