

“Remembering the Riches of God’s Redemptive Work” Part 4: Sermon Notes, Ephesians 2:11-22

Pastor Marc Wragg

Saving Grace Bible Church

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“AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; ¹⁸ for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.” (Ephesians 2:17-18 NAU)

Introduction

5 Truths to remember

1. We are to remember that we were Gentiles and were by nationality outside of God’s promises.
2. We are to remember that our present condition with Christ gives us a close relationship to God.
 - a. We saw this as Paul gave three contrasts
 - i. Contrast of Time – Formerly vs Now
 - ii. Contrast of Condition – Far off vs Near
 - iii. Contrast of Status – Without Christ vs With Christ
3. We are to remember that Christ has abolished the law in order to bring peace between the Jew and Gentile and between God and Men

Now as we approach Christmas, it is amazing how in God’s providence that we come to a text where the message of Christmas is proclaimed.

4. We need to remember that Christ came preaching a message of peace

** This passage teaches us how to draw near to God

- Some try to experience God
- Others try to search all religions and find a new understanding of God
- Still others try to look within and find God – In the last couple of weeks I had someone tell me that life is about finding what is good for you and doing it. So in this theology God is what you make Him to be
- There are a seemingly an endless supply of ways people try to access God
- BUT our text this morning tells us the one and only way to God

** This text also tells us why peace is so elusive today

- You would think that the technological advancements of our society would bring peace...
- We are comfortably provided for. We have vast wealth and seemingly endless supplies. I just read an article recently which described how scientists engineered salmon. The DNA of the fish has been changed so that the fish grows faster and larger than before, which would provide more food for more people. Our technology and study has increased our abilities to produce large quantities of food
- We are more historically informed: We have years upon years of recorded history to study and learn from
- We are more socially advanced: We have seen governments come and go. We have spent generations studying human behavior. We have even come up with 5 Diagnostics and Statistics Manuals (DSM5)
- We have advanced governments and we have even setup a United Nations government to create an international forum for peace and order
- And yet we cannot find peace. We cannot stop violence. We cannot stem the tide of war and threats of war
- We have Muslim nations like Iran looking to destroy Israel and anyone, like the US, who would help them
- We have the War on Terror that persists year after year
- Plus the endless conflicts in tribal regions in Africa, drug cartels in Central and South America, and the ethnic cleansing throughout regions of the former Soviet Union.
- There is a constant hope for peace, but little ability to actually find peace

Our text this morning takes us to the only Root of peace.

Outline for this section of Scripture:

The first two points setup the third which is found in our text this morning. Points 1 & 2 Found in the Scriptures as a whole while point 3 in our text in Ephesians

Peace Lost – How did we lose it?

Peace Desired – What are we really looking for?

Peace found – Where is it found?

Peace Lost

How did we lose it?

The book of Genesis

Book of beginnings

- Beginning of Creation
- Beginning of Mankind
- Beginning of Nations

In this book we learn about the relationship between God and Man.

Man Created in God's image Gen 2

"Let us make man in our image"

Fellowship between God and Man on the Earth in the Garden of Eden.

- Garden of peace, no known enemies, Garden of provision, Garden of communion
- Most importantly communion with God

But Satan, the Serpent of old, deceived Eve and both Adam and Eve fell

- They were all judged and both Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden
- This was a significant event
 - o First experience of death – death of animals to cover Adam and Eve
 - o First experience of judgment
 - o First experience of this world suffering for the sin of humanity – again death of animals to cover Adam and Eve
 - o First experience of shame in God's presence
 - o Now no longer will Adam and Eve communion freely with God as they did before

**** After the fall there is no more peace**

Gen 4 death of Able by his brother's hands

By the time you get to Genesis 6 you see the ugly consequences of our fallen condition.

Gen 6

"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD." (Genesis 6:5-8 NAU)

**** While peace was lost there was a promise**

Promise of Seed who would crush the head of the serpent

Promise of a blessing to Abraham to make of him a mighty nation

Promise of a return to peace

**** But before peace could be found, the extent of our fallen condition had to be revealed.** In comes the law to further reveal that there is no peace:

By the Law

But before the fulfillment of the promise there came the Law.

- The Law also came with a reward

"So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD." (Leviticus 18:5 NAU)

"And admonished them in order to turn them back to Your law. Yet they acted arrogantly and did not listen to Your commandments but sinned against Your ordinances, **By which if a man observes them he shall live.** And they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck, and would not listen." (Nehemiah 9:29 NAU)

*"if he walks in My statutes and My ordinances so as to deal faithfully-- **he is righteous and will surely live,**"* declares the Lord GOD." (Ezekiel 18:9 NAU)

"I gave them My statutes and informed them of My ordinances, **by which, if a man observes them, he will live.**" (Ezekiel 20:11 NAU)

"And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; **DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.**" (Luke 10:28 NAU)

- Jesus talking to the lawyer seeking to trip Him up
- Obey the law and you will live

"For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness." (Romans 10:5 NAU)

"However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, **"HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM."** (Galatians 3:12 NAU)

The Law came with its own reward. Keep it and you live. Keep it and Peace is restored. Keep it and you will be with God.

- Finally, a reversal of the fall
- Finally, an opportunity to have paradise restored

- All we have to do is perfectly keep the law
- “Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, ‘All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!’” (Exodus 24:3 NAU)
- This is after hearing Exodus 20-23 and all the laws given to the people by Moses from the Lord
- **The problem is that the Law does not make one holy. Righteousness does not come from the law. The law only exposes sin and with it judgment.**
- “He who violates the law in 1 part violates the whole law. Every transgression breaks the whole law “(James 2:10)
- No perfect obedience >no life> no life no peace,
- The reward of the law is never realized and therefore it is never experienced
- **THE LAW THEN DRIVES US AWAY FROM GOD** because it reveals how far apart we are from God. Now friends I am speaking in human terms here. From our perspective each time we sin we move further and further away from God. And the law not only exposes our sin but Rom 7 says that sin took the commandments of God and caused us to sin more. The commandments of God only caused us to rebel against God more. Rom 7:7-12
- This is why legalism will never work. It never solves the real problem.
- The law revealed that there was a separation between holy God and fallen Man
- As we saw last week the Law also caused a division between Jew and Gentile
- Paul described it as the dividing wall
- Which physically was the court of the Gentiles and the physical separation between Jew and Gentile which the Law demanded
- But more so, it was all the commands and the resulting attitude created within the Jew by the Law. The enmity needed to be destroyed and in Christ the commandments were removed.
- The Law brought the end of peace because the Law exposed sin and the Law push peoples apart

Peace Lost in the fall > Peace lost by the Law > finally peace lost because of our enemies

Because of our enemies we are without peace. Again, apart from Jesus Christ you remember what Paul said about our previous condition:

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” (Ephesians 2:1-3 NAU)

- Dead
- Walked according to this world
- According to the prince of the power of the air
- Lived in the lusts of our flesh
- Indulging the desires of the mind
- Were by nature Children of wrath – That is our nature acted and the results are the wrath of God

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 1:13-14 NAU)

“For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” (Romans 5:10 NAU)

We lacked peace because we were enemies in need of being rescued (Rom 5:10)

Peace was lost. The peace we had with God was gone and peace between men was gone.

- The law provided a futile basis for peace
- Peace lost in the fall > Peace lost by the Law > finally peace lost because of our enemies

(See John Piper The Future of Justification in Appendix 2 for a good discussion on the law from Galatians 3)

Peace Desired

What are we really looking for?

Our version of peace verses God’s version of peace

Our Version:

Ultimately we want a peace

- Emotional stability
- Physical health
- Financial Strength

- Spiritual depth
- Mental Intelligence

But in the end, we will just be satisfied with the absence of conflict

“Can’t we all just get along?”

We are willing to call the absence of conflict “peace, but this falls short of God’s standard of peace. This never works for a standard because you are not in the presence of God, at least not in a way where you can see His face and know His reactions. So therefore you do not know by experience if the absence of conflict brings peace with God

On the other, hand the Bible tells us that God pulls away from sinners:

"Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and **hide My face from them**, and they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will come upon them; so that they will say in that day, 'Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?'¹⁸ **But I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they will do**, for they will turn to other gods." (Deuteronomy 31:17-18 NAU)

"Then He said, **I will hide My face from them**, I will see what their end *shall be*; For they are a perverse generation, Sons in whom is no faithfulness." (Deuteronomy 32:20 NAU)

“You see, if we interpret the absence of conflict as peace, then we will miss God’s divine judgment upon our sin. God says He hides Himself from sinners. He removes himself from the wicked.

The absence of conflict with God means He is not in your life and that state is worse.

** It is better to be in close conflict with God, because he cares for his sons and disciplines them, than it is to be apart from God and have no conflict.

On the other hand we have God’s peace:

We receive the peace of Christ John 14:27- we are looking for God’s peace:

"Peace I leave with you; **My peace I give to you**; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." (John 14:27 NAU)

His peace is:

1. **Peace with the Father** – Able to approach the Father. The ability to call God, “Father”. To know you are not an enemy of God

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (Romans 5:1 NAU)

2. **Peace with His enemies** – Heb 10:13; Acts 2:35 His enemies will be made a footstool

“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14 NAU)

“and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.” (1 Thessalonians 5:13 NAU)

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.” (Romans 12:18 NAU)

3. **Peace with all of Creation** – The whole creation groans waiting for its redemption

What kind of peace?

- Peace which is the absence of Conflict
- Peace which is the absence of Worry
- Peace which is the absence of an Enemy
- Peace which is the absence of a Threat

How do I know if I have this peace?

- Your life will be marked by Rest
- Your life will be marked by Unity
- Your life will be marked by Reconciliation
- Your life will be marked by Restoration

** An unbeliever can have peace for some amount of time with another unbeliever. I do not want you to think an unbeliever cannot have any peace at all. What I am saying is that in unbelief you cannot have peace with God which is the ultimately the peace we all need

Secondly, I am saying that the peace an unbeliever does experience on earth only serves as a reminder of what peace is and that this peace is not experienced with God which is the person that matters most.

** We are not looking for superficial peace we are looking for real peace. A peace which restores us to God and allows us to dwell with Him and His people.

Peace Found

“AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; ¹⁸ for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.” (Ephesians 2:17-18 NAU)

** Our passage takes us to the source of peace!

As verse 14 says "He is our peace"

Our text here says that He has come announcing peace. This is the message of the Scriptures.

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." (John 14:27 NAU)

- Peace is given to us
- Jesus says it is my peace that I give to you
- True Christians are peaceful

The Bible says more about this peace:

This is a peace from God Romans 1:7 - Origin

"to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and **peace from God** our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 1:7 NAU)

Peace with God Rom 5:1 - Purpose

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Romans 5:1 NAU)

Peace of God - Source

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7 NAU)

Peace announced by Heaven's Messengers

"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." (Luke 2:14 NAU)

- This announcement is a proclamation that the only One who can bring peace has arrived
- An announcement that God's peace is made available to us, to mankind, Men and Women alike

One more Promise: It is a peace that will get bigger and better

"There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this." (Isaiah 9:7 NAU)

- No end to the increase of His government or of peace
- He will be established from then on and forevermore

- God's own zeal will accomplish this
- He will reign, as Handel's Messiah proclaims from Revelation 11:15, forever and ever
- And this text says there is no end of the increase of his government and of peace. His peace will get deeper and richer and fuller. It will keep expanding

**** Now back to our text to continue Paul's discussion of the Gospel and its work in the Church.**

We have seen Paul discuss:

Peace found in Jesus Christ vs 14

Peace found With God's people and with God vs 15-17 – we saw this last week as Christ abolished and united

Now we see Peace is announced to all vs 17

“He came and preached peace . . .”

Paul does not use the normal word for preached here.

- Kerusso – used 93x example Gal 5:11
- Didasko – used 97 x example 1 Tim 6:2
- Euaggelizo – used 77 x example Eph 2:17 29%

This is where we get our English word Evangelize, or Evangelical

The phrase he preached peace comes from the verbal form of evangelize. **He proclaimed the good news of peace.** He proclaimed the gospel. He evangelized peace. He promised good news, peace with God, He gave an offer of hope. The first gospel preached was the promise of Peace, Gen 3 the promised Seed.

The first message of hope in the NT was an announcement from an angel that God has sent Peace to the Earth.

This message of peace is proclaimed by Christ after He conquered the grave and after He paid the penalty of our sins. He announced the message and He sent his messengers to proclaim it. We continue today announcing the same message that was proclaimed.

How was this peace brought about?

Through reconciliation

1. Reconciliation Accomplished 2:13

“But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been ***brought near by the blood of Christ.***” (Ephesians 2:13 NAU)

2. Reconciliation Applied 2:14-15

“For He Himself is our peace, ***who made both groups into one*** and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 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,” (Ephesians 2:14-15 NAU)*

3. Reconciliation Announced 2:17

“AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;” (Ephesians 2:17 NAU)

4. Reconciliation Allowed 2:18

“for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.” (Ephesians 2:18 NAU)

- We have peace which comes through reconciliation
- That means we no longer are warring with men
- And we are no longer warring with God
- Most importantly, God is not our enemy
- We are not fearing future judgment
- We now hope to enter into His presence with His blessing. We enter with God’s invitation. We enter with the peace He supplies

Our peace is found in Jesus Christ who has come and announced the peace of God to us all:

Vs 18

“for through Him we both have our access ***in one spirit*** to the Father.” (Ephesians 2:18 NAU)

Not Trinitarian here

Would be nice to say in verse 18, Through Christ, In one spirit, to the Father. Would be nice and tidy for our theology to make the point but it is not the point here.

The one spirit is not speaking of the Holy Spirit, the 3rd member of the Trinity, but **rather it is speaking of our solidarity with converted Jews who are accessing God.**

Jew and Gentile alike in Christ access the Father directly. They are in one spirit. As earlier they are both in One Body,

Vs 14 both groups into **one**

Vs 15 make the two into **one** new man

Vs 16 Might reconcile them both into **one** body

Vs 18 we both have our access in **one** spirit

** The key word here is one.

While it would be nice to make this into a reference of the Trinity the context does not support it. One the Holy Spirit is not referenced here and the context strongly supports the unity and solidarity of God's redeemed Jewish and Gentile people. The key idea here is the oneness brought to God's people in Jesus Christ.

** The source of our peace is Jesus Christ. He comes preaching a message of peace and He has given us a gospel of peace. This peace allows the Jew and Gentile to reconcile. This peace also allows us to enter into the presence of God. This is peace with men and peace with God. This is real peace.

Conclusion

Friends, there is no peace unless it is found in Jesus Christ.

- Back to our original discussion – why is peace elusive? Because peace is only found in Jesus Christ. Unless people unite in Christ there will be no peace

** Note here: I think the reason why we have so much division and separation today is because we are not united to Christ.

- We will talk about Christ
- We will sing songs about Him
- We will even name our church after Him and call people by His name "Christians"
- But the Church universal does not follow him
- If it did, there would be greater unity in the Church

God's peace comes in holiness. It is not the kind of peace which is the absence of conflict. It is not the peace which is the result of consequences avoided. Rather it is the peace which is the result of innocence.

- Christ paid for our sins
- Christ has brought us into one body

- Christ has now placed us by invitation into the presence of the Father. Holy and beloved (Col 3:12)

We should not be afraid to admit we have sinned. We should not be afraid that we have violated the law of God. We should not be afraid to acknowledge that we have fallen short of God's standard.

We should not be ashamed to admit that we have sinned, fallen short of God's standard, failed to reflect His holiness and have lived in open rebellion. **For the law comes to direct us to the promise. The promise is that there is peace with God found in the Lord Jesus Christ**

** There is no need to live in guilt because in Christ the guilt of our sin has been removed

** There is no need to live in fear because in Christ there is no punishment

** There is no need to live in doubt because in Christ there is the revelation of God

** There is no need to live in depression because in Christ there is joy

** There is no need to live in ignorance because in Christ there is all the fullness of wisdom and knowledge Col 2:3

Jesus Christ is our peace and this Christmas season we are reminded that Christ has come:

- to cancel the power of sin
- wipe the book of our debts
- free us from the bonds of slavery
- enlist us to be His companions
- adopt us to be His children
- and return us back to the Father

Peace with God and Peace on Earth, good will towards man indeed is found in the one who is our Peace; in the Lord and our Lord Jesus Christ.

I pray you have heard the message of God's peace and have truly found God's gift of peace this Christmas season.

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