

**“Remembering the Riches of God’s Redemptive Work” Part 5: Sermon Notes, Ephesians 2:11-22**

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**December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,<sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*,<sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,<sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:19-22 NAU)

\*\* We now move to the conclusion of this chapter of the letter to the Ephesian Church. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> and final truth we are to remember about God’s glorious work of salvation. Each truth makes us aware of the greatness of God’s work in redeeming us.

**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
4. We need to remember Christ came preaching a message of Peace
  - Peace Lost – at the Fall and further lost as the Law revealed our sinful condition
  - Peace Desired – a peace which brings reconciliation, restoration, and security
  - Peace Found/Peace Proclaimed – Christ came bringing peace

Finally we see here in verses 11-22

5. We need to remember we have been made part of God's household.

I was thinking this week that come February, I will have been a Christian for 20 years. As I was thinking through my Christian life and experience, I have been thrilled by God's kindness to save me and immediately place me in a church where the Word of God was faithfully preached and where godly men led according to the Word of God.

God by His grace protected me from so much and gave me the opportunity to grow and mature in a safe environment. That kind of environment is very much what I hope the Lord builds here at Saving Grace Bible Church. We can be a place where God's Word is proclaimed and where God's people can come under the truth to practice and proclaim the truth. As a result, this church can be a place where Christians are transformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

\*\* Yet even in a great Church environment, I was not sheltered from the Christian lingo

- Christians start to have their own language
- If you have been around the Church for any amount of time, you may have noticed this
- Even while I was studying, I heard a song play on the Christian radio station which says you need to

- o "Gather at the River"

*We can wade into the middle  
Where the healing waters flow  
It only takes a little  
To heal on its own  
It will only bring us closer  
Than we've ever been before  
This is just what Jesus was praying for*

- o They continued to sing...

*Shall we gather at the river of forgiveness?  
Come together at the waters of love*

- What is that? Where is that? How do I know what that means and where to go to find it? Where do we learn about this?
- Maybe they mean the rivers of life that flow out of a person when they believe as John 7:38 teaches
- We as Christians develop our own language to communicate what is going on in our lives

- Now I am not talking about theological terms which have a clear and definable meaning which reflect the meaning and teaching of Scripture.
- Christology, Ecclesiology, Soteriology ect
- I am talking about Christian slang or Christian jargon. Terms like:
  - o **Baby Jesus** – Don't make Baby Jesus cry. Or don't do anything that would harm Baby Jesus.
  - o **Arrow prayer**- fast quick prayer directly to God
  - o **Bachelor till the rapture** –
  - o **Bedside Baptist**
  - o **You are the only Bible some people may ever read**
  - o **Cafeteria Christian** – those who pick and choose their theology like they are moving through a cafeteria
  - o **Chreaster** – Christmas and Easter Christian
  - o **Evangelastic** – stretched the truth to make a gospel like message
  - o **Fleshalonians** – 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleshalonians, taught or said something from the flesh or for the benefit of the flesh
  - o **Frozen Chosen** – those who are Christians living in cold regions
  - o **Gastro-Evangelism** – Evangelism around food
  - o **Hedge of protection** – prayer for God's protection
  - o **Jesus Junk** – testaments and other Junk labeled Christian. IE most of the stuff you find in "Christian Book Stores." If you own a Christian book store I am sorry about that. Come see me after this sermon and I will accept your repentance.
  - o **Unclaimed Blessings**

\*\* These are just a few terms we have come up with over the years which illustrate the way we Christianize our daily behavior by giving it a supposed theological and spiritual meaning.

The point I am trying to make is that we Christians start to use these words to describe behavior and pursuits, and before we know it we are no longer speaking spiritual principles taught from the Word of God, but instead we are speaking and using every word we find in the Bible as an adjective to describe our daily lives. The Bible is no longer a source of principles to conduct our lives by, but instead it is a source of adjectival phrases to be used to dress up our communication.

With our advanced Christian vocabulary we have moved away from meaning, not towards it. We have become more confused about the work of God, not less confused.

This happens as we move away from living by biblical principles and communicating what the bible actually teaches.

\*\* Not only do we Christianize our language but we do the same with the Church. What the Church does and how it functions has taken on a shape that does not reflect what God has taught in the Word of God.

- The Church in cases is made a place where people gather together
- A place where Christian-like songs are sung
- A place where moral stories are told
- In many cases mega churches function as Christian Media power houses and they fail to represent what God has called the Church to be here in Ephesians 2

\*\* Here in our text this morning, Paul gives us a refreshing look at what the Church is. Here Paul gives us insight into the great work of God. This work is going to be further explained in Chapter 3. Because of our salvation, God has made us apart of something special.

- Something we had no right to be a part of before Christ.
- Something we currently possess because we are in Jesus Christ
- Something that resulted when Christ abolished those things which divided Jew and Gentile
- Something that comes as a result of Christ's message of peace

God has made us part of something special. **He has made us a part of His Church.** He has made us part of His household. In this text he calls the Church His household, a holy Temple, a dwelling place of God. This is an incredible grace for a people who before Christ had no place to worship God.

In this text this morning, we learn of 5 characteristics of the Church which teach us about the beauty of the Church. If these things are true about the Church, then we should be doing our part to make sure these things are true about us.

1. The Church is a place of restoration for exiled sinners
2. The Church is the house of God
3. The Church is designed by God
4. The Church is where God is worshipped
5. The Church is where God Dwells

## 1. The Church is a place of Restoration for Exiled Sinners vs 19 a

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints,” (Ephesians 2:19 NAU)

They are saints “fellow citizens of the saints”

Again this theme of unity and reconciliation is brought up once again by the Apostle Paul.

- This would be important for a people who have been treated as outcasts for so many generations
- The transition between the OT to the NT was not as easily detected as it is today.
- There were still Jews holding on to the former practices and they needed further convincing from the Scriptures and Apostles
- Here Paul reminds His Gentile readers you\we are part of the saints.
- We who are in Christ are now grouped with Noah, We are grouped with Abraham, We are grouped with Moses, we are grouped with David. We have been made part of God’s family
- The text says here we are “Fellow Citizens with the Saints”

Everyone who is a believer in Jesus Christ, everyone who has been converted and brought into the Church as part of their union with Jesus Christ has been made a fellow citizen of Heaven with the rest of God’s chosen people.

The Church then is a place where God’s redeemed people come together to worship God.

Those who were on the outside, those who were outcast, those who were foreigners, those who were aliens, those who were separated from God have now experienced in Jesus Christ an emancipation. We are set free from the bonds of sin and the slavery to Satan’s kingdom (ie the domain of Darkness in Col 1) and have been made citizens of God’s Kingdom.

Therefore the 1<sup>st</sup> truth we learn here is that the Church is a place for the redeemed people of God to dwell with other saints.

- Which means we should conduct the Church in such a way that will build up believers
- Only those who have been redeemed by Christ, those who are saints, can and are part of the citizenship of Heaven.
- Which means simply we hold to believers membership
- Recently I heard of a minor split amongst leadership in a church over this issue. A church elder believed that the Church could not have unregenerate people in it.
- To this I would agree. The Church is not made up of any unregenerate people.

- To be regenerate is to be born again. Having believed, died to your old self, now living a new life in Jesus Christ, this is regeneration
- I believe the Church has no unregenerate people in it.

Now of course this means that we need to define the Church, and for our text here it is important we understand what the Church is. The Church is not the building we are in, but rather the Church is each redeemed person brought together in Jesus Christ.

If we do not define the Church properly, we are going to be in big trouble. Saving Grace Bible Church is not the cafeteria here at Garden's Elementary School. Saving Grace Bible Church is all those confessing believers in Jesus Christ who have united themselves together in the Local Church whereby we go by the name Saving Grace Bible Church. Anyone who is a believer in Jesus Christ is welcomed and considered part of the kingdom of heaven and is treated as such. Anyone who does not conduct themselves as Christ commands is, by Christ's Authority not our own, removed on the testimony of two or three witnesses if they remain unrepentant.

The Church universal is every believer in Jesus Christ and the local church is the collection of believers meeting together for the worship and service of God. Here Paul makes it clear those who were formerly outcasts are now part of the citizenship of heaven along with the rest of the saints.

## 2. The Church is the house of God vs 19b

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, **and are of God's household**,” (Ephesians 2:19 NAU)

Paul makes it clear in the second half of this verse that we are part of God's household.

This word is used 2 other times in the NT

**οἰκεῖος** oi/kei/os

“But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his **household**, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Timothy 5:8 NAU)

“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the **household** of the faith.” (Galatians 6:10 NAU)

In each and every case it has the idea of being part of the family or household. We are part of the family of God. Every believer in Jesus Christ is welcome to be a part of the local church as they are part of God's household.

\*\* Not only are we of the same family, but we are God's family. We are of God's household. Which means God is the head of the family. He is the one directing and leading. He is providing, protecting and instructing.

The beauty of being part of the Church is that we are placed under the direct protection and guidance of God.

\*\* In this household, members of God's family are responsible for behavior towards each other. We are responsible for our conduct because this is God's house.

- You understand this naturally, or at least you should. When you take your kids to someone's house or when you yourself go, you conduct yourself in such a way as to respect your hosts
- If you don't, you won't be staying long or you will not be invited back
- We are called to conduct ourselves in a proper way in God's house:

"but in case I am delayed, ***I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God***, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:15 NAU)

- Paul makes it clear as he is writing to Timothy the household of God is to be honored because it is God's house.
- He has just taught about teaching and leadership in the Church and how it should function.

"Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these *things*, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." (2 Timothy 2:20-21 NAU)

- Those who are going to be useful in God's household are going to be cleansed from evil and ready to be useful to the Master

\*\* There is one more idea which is important to grasp by this idea of being part of a household. In Rome, you gained your legal rights by your household. If your family was Roman you gained all the rights of the Romans.

"in Paul's day a member of a household meant refuge and protection, at least as much as the master was able to provide. It also meant identity and gave the security that comes with a sense of belonging." Peter O'brien pg 212

As being part of God's household, we receive the protection and provision God gives to His people.

### 3. **The Church is designed by God**

"having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*," (Ephesians 2:20 NAU)

This group of believers which is part of the household of God is designed by God Himself.

Paul is going to make this point clear in the next chapter when Paul explains that he was given a stewardship of the mystery.

*"to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel," (Ephesians 3:6 NAU)

This is God's grand design.

Verses 20-22 expand upon God's description of what His new temple looks like.

- Designed as a place where Jew and Gentile resided.
- Designed as a place where people who have been redeemed by Christ will reside
- Designed as a place where those who have been united to God through Christ will abide
- The Church is for believers in Jesus Christ

\*\* Paul goes further and says the Church is a place which has the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets

- Now this phrase, "the foundation of the apostles and prophets" can be kind of confusing as people have offered various interpretations
1. The Apostles and Prophets refer to NT and OT ministers who taught the truth to God's people. Many who see Israel as the first Church would see the Prophets in Eph 2 as referring to the OT prophets and their message in the OT is what is given to the Church. They would say the reverse order gives the preference to the NT Apostles and their message.
  2. The Apostles and Prophets refer to two NT offices or functions in the Church. I believe this is the best understanding of this text.
    - a. The Order of Apostles then Prophets show priority and importance
    - b. These prophets were said have laid a foundation for the Church. The OT prophet was not ministering to the foundation of the Church. They were ministering to Israel
    - c. There is one article here pointing to the collective and cooperative work of these two groups. Which means the emphasis is on the work of these two groups together and not on their individual conduct.
    - d. I believe we can make a solid case that NT prophets as well as the Apostles were given to the Church in order to communicate to the Church the very Word of God

\*\* So the meaning of this passage is that God has designed the Church to be built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets who have given to us the New Testament Scriptures.

Now let me prove my work:

Prophecy was a NT gift:

**Rom 12:6** “Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;” (Romans 12:6 NAU)

**1 Cor 12:10, 28, 29**

“and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.” (1 Corinthians 12:10 NAU)

“**And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets**, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup> All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of miracles*, are they?” (1 Corinthians 12:28-29 NAU)

- Noticed how Paul orders the chain of command here. Apostles 1<sup>st</sup>, Prophets 2<sup>nd</sup>

The gift of prophecy was to be desired **1 Cor 14:1**

“Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy.” (1 Corinthians 14:1 NAU)

The prophecy and prophets in this case refers to those who communicate already revealed truth. “Prophets in this sense rank with teachers, evangelist and pastors.”

The prophets are NT prophets given to communicate the Word of God. These prophets come after the Apostles not to show that the OT Prophets are inferior to the Apostles, but rather to show that this gift of prophecy here was the NT gift of prophecy meant to communicate the Word of God. Also this gift was given to give the Word of God to the Church.

In fact we have at least 4 books (possibly 5) which are included in the NT and have been written by Prophets.

- James – Jesus Half-brother,
- Luke – Paul’s travel companion, physician and friend
- Mark – Commonly associated with Peter
- Hebrews – Author unknown but most likely a NT prophet as well
- Jude – Brother of James and half-brother of Jesus Christ

These men were examples of NT Prophets who have brought to us the Word of God. Other NT prophets included Apollos (some say he wrote Hebrews).

These men, the Apostles and Prophets, gave to us the NT, the Word of God and therefore helped lay the foundation of the Church.

\*\* Now what does it mean to be the foundation?

- It does not mean that the foundation is the Apostles and Prophets.
- The wording of this text is a little strange because it seems like the foundation is the Apostles and Prophets but actually the emphasis is the foundation they laid, which is the foundation of the message of Christ.

Some view the foundation still being built today

1. Foundation which the Apostles lay- anytime the gospel is proclaimed in any place. These will say anytime we do a new work in an area and share the gospel the foundation is being laid. SO the foundation is continually being laid.
  - a. Problem is that the foundation being laid is in past tense. The building is still growing is in the present tense. Not the foundation still growing
2. Foundation is that foundation laid by God. One time act never to be referred to again. The foundation of the Church is the faith once for all given to the saints delivered in the revealed Word of God. This work was given to the Apostles and Prophets to build the Church and it is uniquely God's work

### 1 Cor 3:11

“For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:11 NAU)

Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Church.

“He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’<sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.<sup>18</sup> I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.’” (Matthew 16:15-18 NAU)

- The rock is Peter's confession about Christ
- He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God
- The rock is not Peter
- The rock will not be overthrown

Col 3:17 says the Word of God is the Word of Christ. He is the whole foundation

\*\* Now one more idea in this text, what is the cornerstone?

The Cornerstone is Christ Jesus

Some have made a big point that Jesus is the Cornerstone and

- Not the whole foundation
- Not the support for the whole foundation
- But the central focus point and foundation by which the rest of the building designed from and built around. It is prominent, provides foundation

There is a new idea being taught that says Jesus was not necessarily the foundation corner stone but rather what is known as the crowning stone. He was the center focal point of the whole Church.

- You can see how that would preach.
- The whole church is building up Christ supporting Him and directing all attention to Him
- Nice, but not what this text teaches

Christ is the foundation and is completely different than the messengers. The Apostles and Prophets laid the foundation which is Christ.

\*\* The Idea of a cornerstone comes from OT construction terminology:

"They will not take from you *even* a stone for a corner Nor a stone for foundations, But you will be desolate forever," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 51:26 NAU)

"On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone," (Job 38:6 NAU)

The Cornerstone was the first stone laid and by it every other stone was laid in reference to this stone. No other stone could overshadow it or fall out of line of it.

The cornerstone was used to determine the buildings lie or line.

"He is the one from which the rest of the foundation is built outwards along the line of the proposed walls."

SO we can say this, God has designed the Church to be built on the foundation, laid by the Apostles and Prophets, the foundation which is the message of Christ, which has at the corner of the foundation Christ on display. Christ is the cornerstone and foundation of the Church. The Church is shaped on and around Jesus Christ

- Whatever we do should reflect Jesus Christ
- Whatever we say should reflect His message
- Whatever we teach should be His message

#### 4. **The Church is where God is Worshipped vs 21**

"in whom the whole building, **being fitted together**, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord," (Ephesians 2:21 NAU)

1<sup>st</sup> **you need to see the current work.** The building is “being fitted together” and “is growing.” This is the present work in the Church. God is fitting the Church together and is growing the Church.

- We never have to worry about the Church because God is at work building it
- He is also gifting the Church with the necessary parts to grow the Church
- He is presently doing this work and will continue to do this work

2<sup>nd</sup> The whole building is attached to the Cornerstone and takes its shape and direction and finds its support and security from the Cornerstone.

- “in whom the whole building” refers back to Jesus Christ who is the Cornerstone.
- The Church which is being built is being shaped by its direct relationship to Jesus Christ

3<sup>rd</sup> The whole building which is being built is being built into a holy temple. The temple was the center of religious life for Israel. It was the center of worship.

The temple was a place where God was worshipped.

The Word “Naus” here refers to the sanctuary, not just the temple. The central structure containing the Holy of Holies. Here Paul is not referring to the whole place of worship but to the most holy of places, the Holy of Holies. Which is that place where God Himself resided when He was with Man on Earth. This where the law of God was kept.

The whole building is a place where God is to be worshipped

- The whole building is still in progress and is still being built for the worship of God
- The fitting together and the growing are the Lord’s continual doing
- This is a spiritual building not a physical one, and is still in the process of being built. Therefore it cannot refer to a physical building
- It is fitted together which means that God is at work putting this building together for His work

“Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? <sup>17</sup> If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 NAU)

“Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.” (2 Corinthians 6:16 NAU)

So God is building Christians together to be a dwelling where He resides. We are temples of the Holy Spirit individually, and collectively we are the Temple of God.

## 5. The Church is where God Dwells vs 22

“in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:22 NAU)

Because the Church is being built by God continually

Because the Church is the place where His holy people reside

Because the Church is a place where He is worshipped

And because the Church is God’s house

Then the Church is the place where God continually dwells

The text says the temple we are being built into is a “dwelling of God in the Spirit.”

The Holy Spirit is dwelling in us individually as Christians. Here Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit is dwelling with the temple of God as it is being fitted together.

To say it another way, God dwells with the Church.

- This again is proof that the Church is like no other institution.
- The Church is the place where God promises to dwell
- He does not dwell in your Christian donut shop
- Or your non-profit group
- God dwells in the Church and is the place where

A place where God’s Word is taught, God’s leaders are teaching and shepherding according to the Word, where God’s people are responding to the teaching of the Word of God, is a place where God is actively dwelling and as a result God is actively being praised by the people who attend.

### **Conclusion**

5 great 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.
  - b. We saw this as Paul gave three contrasts
    - iv. Contrast of Time – Formerly vs Now
    - v. Contrast of Condition – Far off vs Near
    - vi. Contrast of Status – Without Christ vs With Christ

1. We need to remember that Christ has abolished the Law in order to bring peace between the Jew and Gentile and between God and Men
2. We need to remember Christ came preaching a message of Peace
3. We need to remember we have been made part of God's household.

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