

INTRODUCE AUBRI PORTER Administrative Assistant

INTRODUCE

Well, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to Ephesians chapter 2.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to Ephesians 2,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
 - under every single chair.
 - You'll find Ephesians 2 on page **976**.

INTRODUCTION: RECAP

So, Ephesians, week 4. Paul, now, takes a turn in Ephesians chapter 2 verse 11 look at the first word. **Therefore...** That means Paul is connecting what he has just said to what he's about to say.

And here's what he's just said...

- He started with a theology lesson about how God saves,
 - And the main idea was **SLIDE PREDESTINED**
 - God loved us first...
 - God chose us first...
 - God called us first...
 - God saved us!
- Then he prays that the Ephesian Christians
 - wouldn't merely know this with their minds,
 - but that the eyes of their hearts would be opened,

- And the idea there was **SLIDE ENLIGHTENED**
 - that we would experientially KNOW God.
- and then he reminded them of the bad news AND the good news of the Gospel...
 - The idea there was **SLIDE DEPRAVED**
 - They were once dead
 - and now they've been made alive.
 - They were once in league with the enemy,
 - and now they're seated with Christ.
 - They were once deserving of God's wrath,
 - but now they receive his mercy and grace!

So, in light of all of that...**THEREFORE**...

- And he's going to move from the individual to the corporate.
- He's going to move from the person to the people.
- He's going to move from what you were saved from...
 - to what you are saved into...

And the main idea of this text is **SLIDE RECONCILED**

We have been RECONCILED...

And this text shows three ways we've been RECONCILED.

TRANSITION

And just fair warning: this is a complicated text,

- so, what I'd like to do is walk through it,
 - explaining it as we go,

- and then I'll give some the application
 - at the end of the sermon.

Does that sound ok?

- Well, it doesn't matter if you don't think so,
- cause I've got a face mic.

Let's do this: Ephesians chapter 2, starting in verse 11:

EPHESIANS 2:11-12

[11] Therefore 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—[12] remember 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.

EXPLAIN: REMEMBER

So, Paul is going to ask Christians to remember some things that might be very painful to actually remember.

- Cause once again,
 - just like he did last week,
- he starts with the bad news.
- He doesn't simply call them to remember the good!

Paul says:

- You better remember!
- You remember that you were Gentiles.
- You were called the uncircumcision.

This was true for most of the Ephesian church.

They were not Jewish.

They were Gentiles.

- And the uncircumcised Gentiles were seen by the Jews,
- to have no favor with God
- because they were not a part of his covenant people.

To be a part of God's people,
you had to become Jewish,
which mean you had to be circumcised.

And I just always say, gentlemen, we don't require any surgery to become a member at Fathom Church. Glory to his name!

TRANSITION

So, Paul doesn't want them to forget this!

They were outsiders! Outside of the people, and outside of the promise.

Verse 13...

EPHESIANS 2:13

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

POINT 1: TO GOD

So, here's the first way we've been reconciled. We've been:

SLIDE RECONCILED TO GOD

This is the good news!

- The separation,
- the alienation,
- the hopelessness facing the Gentiles...
- has been reversed.

You were outside...far off...

- but now, in Christ, you are brought near...
- you are made an insider by the blood of Christ...
- you are RECONCILED TO GOD!

TRANSITION

So, this is all review from last week. This is the bad and good news. But now, Paul is going to go deeper in this reconciliation theme.

Verse 14:

EPHESIANS 2:14a

[14] For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

POINT 2: ONE ANOTHER

Now, stop there for just a second.

- So, we were outsiders, and Christ brought us near...
- but now, in verse 14 Jesus **has made us both one**.

So, Paul is now saying that the Jew and the Gentile are made one.

And it's the second way we've been reconciled. We've been:

SLIDE RECONCILED TO ONE ANOTHER

Now, this is incredibly radical when you consider what the Jews thought of the Gentiles. Jews despised the Gentiles!

There was a common prayer that the Jewish men would pray that went something like this:

- *"God, I thank you that I am not a gentile,*
- *a woman,*
- *or a Samaritan."*

Sorry, you got thrown in there, ladies...but those were the times.

And Paul is saying,

- **not only does salvation make us right with God;**
- **it enables reconciliation...**
- **among even the worst of human enemies.**

EXPLAIN: WALL

Now, what is Paul talking about when he mentions, **the dividing wall of hostility?**

Well, in the Temple Mount in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus.

- There was a literal,
- five-foot tall wall,
- in the Jerusalem temple precincts
 - that separated the court of the Gentiles
 - from the court of the Jews
- with an inscription in Greek and Latin
 - prohibiting the entrance of a gentile
 - under the threat of the death penalty.

This wall separated, in the Jewish mind,

- the good from the bad,
- the clean from the unclean,
- the safe from the unsafe.

APPLICATION

These verses acknowledge something that we all know,

- and that is that our world is divided,
- and there's real hostility between various peoples.

And even though we may be politically correct enough not to post signs like that anymore,

- we still have “walls” in our minds that separate...
 - the right kinds of people from the wrong ones.
 - The good from the bad;
 - the safe from the unsafe.

This is a completely natural thing.

ILLUSTRATION

So, I was raised in the suburbs of Colorado Springs.

Because of that, I am naturally more comfortable with...

- middle-class,
- college educated,
- socially conservative,
- predominately white context.

And I have to be really intentional to work to make sure I don't view people who don't match those categories

- with suspicion,
- or fear,
- or even with disdain.

APPLICATION

Who is that you feel a natural kinship or bond with?

- Maybe it is racial: White, black, Hispanic, Asian.

But they could also exist because of...

- Education levels:
 - maybe you only feel comfortable
 - being around people
 - who have a similar education level to you...
 - or maybe you don't like people
 - who are more educated
 - because you think they are untrustworthy.

- There could be a wall in your mind around success:
 - separating the successful from the unsuccessful
 - those who have what it takes and those who don't,
 - and you spend your time only with the successful.
- There are political walls:
 - you think people with one political philosophy are good,
 - while others can't help but be bad.
- Maybe it's those from good families
 - versus those with messed up ones.

Whatever! There's nothing wrong with these natural affinities, of course.

- We don't need to feel guilty about these...
- because trust me, we aren't unique:
 - I've traveled to many places in this world,
 - and seen many different cultures,
 - and I think it is safe to say,
 - this is true of everyone...

We are naturally at ease with people like us.

BUT that can end up erecting walls that put divisions within the church.

- But what the text just said
- is that Christ has broken down that wall of hostility!
- We've been RECONCILED TO ONE ANOTHER

Christ tore down all those dividing walls, Paul said.

When it came to God, we were all on the outside.

- There were no
 - “good people” or “bad people”
 - “winners or losers”
 - “people who have it together” or “dysfunctional people”

SLIDE GALATIANS 3:28

[28] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Jesus' blood has cleansed us all alike.

That wall has been torn down!

This shows us that we are not ULTIMATELY defined by our culture.

- Trusting in Jesus does not REMOVE our cultural distinctives.
- It just shows us that we are not
 - ULTIMATELY DEFINED by our cultures.
- We are defined FIRST by who we are in Christ!

So, I want to be careful here.

- God created the rich, beauties of culture
- and God is not on a mission to erase them.

It's just that God gives you an identity that goes beyond and deeper than any of your culture.

BLANK SLIDE

TRANSITION

And just think of how revolutionary this was!

- At the time Paul wrote these words,
- that wall in the Temple was still there.
- And Paul is saying, *“That wall no longer exists.”*

In Christ, the wall was gone, even if it remained physically.

- So too, in Christ, all of our distinctions are gone, too,
- even if they still exist in society.

Let's keep going: verse 15:

EPHESIANS 2:15-18

[15] by 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, [16] and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. [17] And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. [18] For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

EXPLAIN

So, additionally,

- God is creating one new man in the place of two.
- That he might reconcile us both to God!

This is the reconciliation we're talking about.

- It wasn't taking the Gentiles and making them Jews.
- It wasn't about taking the Jews and making them Gentiles.
- It was about taking them all and making a new man...
- a whole new race of people...
- **thereby killing the hostility.**

Ok, verse 19:

EPHESIANS 2:19-22

[19] So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, [21] in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22] In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

POINT 3: CHURCH

So, what is Paul talking about here?

- The members of the household of God...
- Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets...
 - That's the Bible.
- Where Christ is the cornerstone...
- Where the Spirit dwells as we are being built together...

What's he talking about?

This is the church! Yes, the church.

And it's the third way we've been reconciled. We've been:

SLIDE RECONCILED FOR THE CHURCH

- You Gentiles...
 - you are no longer strangers...
- but now you're fellow saints
- AND members of the household of God.

This is the church, y'all!

You've been RECONCILED TO GOD.

You've been RECONCILED TO ONE ANOTHER.

And you've been RECONCILED FOR THE CHURCH.

APPLICATION: TOGETHER

Now, in terms of application, one word here is TOGETHER.

Together shows up a couple of times in those verses.

- I think, from this text,
- we learn that we need to be
- very active in the church.

The church, Paul tells us, is what God is building on earth.

I mean, notice what he said in verses 21 and 22:

- we are being joined together...
- we are being built together into a dwelling place,
- a holy place for God!

This means you are RECONCILED FOR something!

- And that something is THE CHURCH!

There are lots of people who say they're Christians without a church.

ILLUSTRATION: BASEBALL

But Biblically, that category just doesn't exist.
Being a Christian without a church...
is kinda like being a baseball player without a team.

You're like,

- *"I'm a baseball player."*
 - *"Oh cool, what team do you play for?"*
- *"Oh, I don't have a team."*

Listen, if you are a baseball player without a team...
you're just a weird guy in tight pants.

- Throwing the ball to yourself?
- Pitching to yourself?
- Fielding your own hits?

No! it just doesn't work!

EXPLAIN: BODY

1 Corinthians 12 uses the illustration of the body,

- Jesus is the head...
- and each one of us is a member, or part of the body...

And we need every part of the body.

- We might think we're doing fine without you...
- You might think you're doing fine without us...

I know a lot of people today who think that you can be a Christian...
and not be connected to a church...

- but that is simply not how the Bible talks about the church!

ILLUSTRATION: FOOT

It'd be kinda like this:

if you were walking out to your car today after service...

and there was a foot...just a foot by your car.

Nothing else, just a foot.

You would not walk up to that foot and just be like,

- *“Well, that’s fine, foot.”*
- *You’re a very nice foot.*
- *Who am I to tell you that you should be a part of a body.*
- *If you just wanna be a foot all by yourself...*
 - *well, then you do you.*
 - *Or...foot do foot.”*

No! If you walked up on a disconnected foot in the parking lot,
you would think,

- *“something has gone horribly wrong here.*
- *I don’t know what it is,*
- *but this is not the plan.”*

And not only is this bad for the foot.

- *But there’s a body somewhere around here gimping around!*
- It’s bad for the body.

Listen,

- there are some of you
- who are supposed to be connected
 - to us here at this body,
 - at this church,

- and you're not...
- and it's not awesome for you or for us!

And the future of that foot,

- listen I'm not a doctor,
- but the future of that foot is not good.
- What is the foot gonna do?
 - Well, that foot is gonna start to stink,
 - I mean an attached foot
 - doesn't smell all that awesome,
 - but it's gonna get ripe,
 - it's gonna rot,
 - it's gonna shrivel up.
 - It's dead.

APPLICATION

So, I will be very bold and say this:

- If you want God to work in your life,
- you have to be meaningfully connected to a church.
 - Why?
- Well, the text said that's a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.
- God dwells in his church!

You need to be TOGETHER.

APPLICATION: DIVERSITY

Another word of application is DIVERSITY.

Listen, if you join the church there WILL be people who ARE like you...

- They'll enjoy the same things as you.
- They'll be in the same life-stage as you.
- They'll look and talk and act a lot like you.

But that shouldn't be the ENTIRE community at Fathom.

We want to be a place that is diverse.

- In race.
- In background.
- In interests.

The church is described as a place of real diversity.

So, if we are doing this church thing right,

- we will always be a place where we look,
 - and think,
 - and act differently from each other,
- but ALSO where we love,
 - and walk alongside,
 - and learn from one another.

And listen, we do have some of this happening already here...

and we have a TON of room to grow as well.

We have a pretty diverse political spectrum here at Fathom,

- so, you might be in a discipleship group
 - with a Bernie loving progressive...
 - AND a Trump supporting conservative...
- And listen, that's a good thing!

The wall of hostility has been broken!

- We have younger people and older people.
- We have doctorate degrees and GEDs.
- We have people raised in the church,
 - and we have those who are brand new to this.

But we are also lacking in diversity in some areas:

We are pretty mono-chromatic.

- And I just need you to know,
- your elders are praying for more
- racial diversity at your church.

We are socio-economically...

- mostly middle...
- to upper-middle class.

And church, we want to become more diverse!

Why? Because we've been RECONCILED!

God is not glorified by a big audience of middle-class white people.

You know why?

Cause that's not what the Kingdom of Heaven looks like!

When the Kingdom is envisioned in John's Revelation here's how it's described:

SLIDE REVELATION 7:9

[9] After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

If you're hoping heaven...

- looks like you...
- and sounds like you...
- and thinks like you...
- and votes like you...
- you're gonna be sorely disappointed!

Because we've been RECONCILED, we need to embrace DIVERSITY.

APPLICATION: INVEST & INVITE

And one more point of application.

2 Corinthians 5 gives an excellent charge here:

SLIDE 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17–20

[17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. [18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for

Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

So, because we've been

- RECONCILED TO GOD,
- TO ONE ANOTHER,
- and FOR THE CHURCH...

We now have the **SLIDE** **MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION**

- Our reconciliation should fuel our zeal
- to reach out to others who are far from God.

So, I think the best way to simplify this is **SLIDE** **INVEST & INVITE**

We must intentionally...

- INVEST in those outside of Christ
- and INVITE them in.

This is the ministry of reconciliation!

And it works!

- The stats say that 80% of people who come to a church...
- come because someone invited them to it!

ILLUSTRATION

That's my story!

Listen, I remember...I remember before I was saved.

- I remember what it was like...
- when people NOT LIKE ME AT ALL...
- started inviting and investing in me.

INVITED TO LAME YOUTH GROUP

So, it all started when, in 8th grade, a kid at school invited me to attend his youth group with him.

- Now listen, this was no masterful evangelistic strategy.
- It was one 8th grader inviting his friend to church.
 - It was small.
 - It was simple.
 - But it was an investment.

And listen, that youth group was lame!

- It was like a dozen kids...
- They gave us snacks...
- We played red rover...
- I'm guessing they talked about God.
 - I honestly don't remember.

And they asked about me,

- and I told them I played guitar,
- and I was in a band,
- and I loved Metallica.

And, I kid you not, they told me,

- the first time I went,
- that I should break all my Metallica CDs
- because that was "Satan's music."

This was terrible evangelistic strategy!

I mean,

- the leaders weren't cool, young, hipsters.
- I had nothing in common with them.

The whole night was, on-a-whole, lame.

- Like, not the youth group
- you would really want to invite friends to.

I mocked it the whole way home to my friend. Red rover?!?

- But as they dropped me off...my friend said,
- *"Hey Chris, you wanna come again next week?"*
 - Invite and invest...
- And I was like, *"Yeah! Ok!"*

And I didn't know it at the time,

- but this was the effectual call of Christ.
- God was calling to me...

And I got there because of the MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION!

RICH

And then, 3 years later...

It took that long!

But right before my junior year of high school...

I came to know Jesus

- because a volunteer leader named Rich...
- decided to invest in me,
 - a 16-year-old punk.

And Rich was nothing like me!

- He was old...
 - Like, he had a big white beard.
 - He moved pretty slow.
- He wore his pants tight.
 - Which wasn't cool back then.

He was literally the worst dodgeball player I've ever seen...

You following me?

- Like when the time came for dodgeball
 - the first ones out were Rich
 - and then Jr. High girls.

There was nothing cool about Rich.

- But he demonstrated who Jesus was in his life,
- And declared who Jesus was with his words...

And I gave my life to Christ because of his investment.

It's the MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.

CONCLUSION **BLANK SLIDE W/PADS**

It was an invitation and some investment...

- and I was brought near...
- I was no longer a stranger...
- I was made a citizen...
- I was made a saint...
- I became a member of the household of God...
 - the church!

- Joined together,
- growing together,
- built together...
- a place for God by the Spirit.

Church, this is our mission! So, here's what I'm asking of you today:

1. I want you to be very active in your church.
 - a. Get in a group...
 - b. Serve on a team...
 - c. Fill out that card on your seat...
 - d. Be the part of this body!
 - e. Join this team!

2. I want you to connect with people who aren't like you.
 - a. Someone who disagrees with you...
 - b. Someone who doesn't look like you...
 - c. Someone in a different life stage...
 - d. Someone who earns different than you.
 - i. This is why our D-Groups are mixed age and stage!

3. And finally, I want you to invest and invite someone far from God.
 - a. This is the ministry of reconciliation.
 - b. Someone in your sphere of influence.
 - c. Invest in them
 - d. And invite them to church

Because listen,

- without my 8th grade friend...
- And without Rich...
- And dozens of others investing and inviting me...

We literally aren't sitting here today.

- You have been reconciled...
- To be agents of reconciliation!

Let's pray about this together.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

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