

Eph 2:11-22  
“In Christ Jesus”

I remember as a child hearing older adults tell young adults who were entering the next phase of life, whether that was moving away from home, going off to college, or joining the military, “Don’t forget where you come from. Remember who you are and to whom you belong.” At a young age I wondered how one could forget where he came from or who she was. Well, at 50 years of age I now completely understand. How easy it is to forget. How possible it is for one to allow the world to make one something different and to believe things completely foreign to what one may have been taught growing up. This was the case for me, up until my senior year in college. It was at this point that God used my younger brother to remind me of my upbringing, to remind me of what we had been taught regarding God and Christ Jesus. To help me remember. To remember it was God who had brought us thus far not we ourselves. Remembering is sobering. It is humbling. It can be convicting. It can lead us to thanksgiving. It will make us compassionate and assist us in our faithfulness to Christ. This morning, our text calls the original audience to remember. To remember what life was like when they weren’t in Christ by contrasting what life was like now that they were in Christ. I certainly believe these contrasts are for us, as well. I want to share three I see in the text.

**First, before Christ Jesus we had no hope. Now, In Christ Jesus we have hope.** V11-13 “<sup>11</sup>Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup>that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel

and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” I believe one of the most challenging things for disciples is to remember their condition before faith in Christ Jesus and the hopelessness of that condition. Some face a significant hurdle in accepting and acknowledging that we all were once spiritually blind and destitute. That is, as Paul writes, “having no hope and without God in the world”. Moreover, some struggle with the truth that it is solely through the blood of Jesus that we have been reconciled. We had nothing to offer God that could rescue us from our desperate and hopeless state. Only through the sacrificial blood of Jesus have we become recipients of God’s saving grace and now possess hope (joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation). Church, it is imperative that we do not forget how far God has carried us, lest we forget who it was that changed our lives. Lest we forget we are children of God only by the grace of God and, in forgetting, fail to extend this grace to and share this hope with others.

**Eph 2:1-5** “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup> among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. <sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

**Romans 5:1-2** “**5** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces <sup>4</sup>perseverance; <sup>4</sup>and perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup>Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

**Second, before Christ Jesus enmity reign. Now in Christ Jesus we are at peace with the Father and with one another. V14-18** “<sup>14</sup>For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, <sup>15</sup>having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, <sup>16</sup>and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. <sup>17</sup>And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. <sup>18</sup>For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” To be reconciled to the Father is to experience peace with Him. This peace extends to our relationships with one another, a direct outcome of Jesus’s sacrificial death on the cross. Given this truth, why do conflicts persist within the church? This question demands our reflection. If Christ has demolished the barriers of hostility between Gentiles and Jews, uniting us as one, then surely there should be no divisions among Jesus's followers. In Christ Jesus, we are united with Him, with the Father, and with each other through the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit. It is imperative that we live out this unity. Unity in Christ is not merely symbolic; it profoundly impacts our

role as ambassadors of His reconciling love. If peace is to reign among Christ's followers, we must hold at the center our lives together that which binds us to one another; our common faith in him. Our common belief that In Christ Jesus we are at peace with God and with one another.

**Rom 5:6-10** “<sup>6</sup>For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. <sup>10</sup>For if when 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.”

**Col 1:19-22** “<sup>19</sup>For it pleased *the Father that* in Him all the fullness should dwell, <sup>20</sup>and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. <sup>21</sup>And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled <sup>22</sup>in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.”

**Eph 4:1-6** “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup>with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup>eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

**Finally, before Christ Jesus we were strangers, now in Christ Jesus we are citizens of God's kingdom. V19-22** <sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

To be a citizen of God's kingdom is to be a dwelling place of God. Given some of the things we do, among other things I am sure, we would prefer that this was not true, maybe. In Christ Jesus I become a dwelling place of God. How weighty, how unsettling this truth is. But also, how transformative it is, as well. Maybe, more so. Imagine if before we spoke or acted, we said to ourselves, "Remember, you are citizens of God's kingdom and God dwells in you", how different would our speech and actions be? How different our decisions. How different we would treat one another. How willing we would be to give of ourselves for the benefit of others. How different life would be. Holiness would reign. Brothers and sisters, we are citizens of God's kingdom and God dwells in us! Knowing this what will you do differently today? Knowing this what will we you say to that person you have been planning to talk to? Knowing this what will your decision be regarding that situation you've been mulling over?

**1 Cor 3:16-17** <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? <sup>17</sup> If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are."

In Christ Jesus everything has changed for the good. Believe that, Church, and live it out. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**