

God is building

"(v.11) But don't take any of this for granted. It was only yesterday that you outsiders to God's ways had no idea of any of this, didn't know the first thing about the way God works, hadn't the faintest idea of Christ.

(v.12) You knew nothing of that rich history of God's covenants and promises in Israel, hadn't a clue about what God was doing in the world at large. (v.13) Now because of Christ—dying that death, shedding that blood—you who were once out of it altogether are in on everything.

(v.14) The Messiah has made things up between us so that we're now together on this, both non-Jewish outsiders and Jewish insiders. (v.15) He tore down the wall we used to keep each other at a distance. He repealed the law code that had become so clogged with fine print and footnotes that it hindered more than it helped. Then he started over. Instead of continuing with two groups of people separated by centuries of animosity and suspicion, he created a new kind of human being, a fresh start for everybody.

(v.16) Christ brought us together through his death on the Cross. The Cross got us to embrace, and that was the end of the hostility. (v.17) Christ came and preached peace to you outsiders and peace to us insiders. He treated us as equals, and so made us equals. (v.18) Through him we both share the same Spirit and have equal access to the Father.

(v.19) That's plain enough, isn't it? You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsider. You *belong* here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. (v.20) God is building a home. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. (v.21) Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day—a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home."

Ephesians 2:11-22

The Message

We have a section of scripture, this morning, which does not specifically ask anything of us. No imperative is given regarding any act or attitude (other than remembering). All the focus is on the change Christ accomplished and the privilege of new life in him. At the same time, however, the relevance of this passage for Christian living and for the church is enormous.

1 Remember your identity. (v.11-13)

We make the choice to remember the life-determining change Christ has brought in us.

It is that radical movement from being dead in sins to life in Christ.

Remembering is therefore the key to loving and worshiping God.

2 We belong ! (v.19)

Throughout life most of us have some sense of not belonging, and we feel unaccepted and inferior.

Therefore the drive to identify with someone, some group, some cause is enormous.

This text says—we belong—to Jesus!

From here all else in the Christian life flows.

3 The barriers are down; Christians live with God. (v. 13)

Consciously or unconsciously people—even those who believe in Christ—can think of God as being distant and unapproachable. In fact, this lack of a sense of nearness to God lies at the root of much human failure. We must keep in mind Psalm 139.

4 The barriers are down; Christians are united not uniform. (v.14-18)

These verses are so clear, but there are many more. God has intentionally made each person different from all others, yet all are united in Christ's love and grace.

I Corinthians 12:14-26 makes this clear.

5 God is building a home. (v.20)

It is a place for all of us. . . .everyone!

No exceptions. He designed each of us to fit perfectly into his building.

It is "a people" He is building.

It is not a building or a program.

It's people like you and me.