THE WORLD GOD IS MAKING | WHERE DO WE BELONG? (8)

November 1, 2026
Ephesians 2:17-22

PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships
To participate in God's mission to the world

WORSHIP

PLEASE OPEN IN PRAYER

RESPONSIVE PRAYER — Revelation 7

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number,
From every nation, tribe, people, and language,
Standing before the throne and before the Lamb,
Clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,
And crying out with a loud voice,
"Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"
And they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying,
"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving
and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 2:17-22

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. 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.

BIBLE STUDY

Commentary

We are continuing our sermon series through Ephesians called *The World God Is Making*, and this week we will wrap up chapter 2. Last week we discussed how Christ has reconciled Jew and Gentile to God and to one another in one body through the cross. That does not mean all of humanity is now at peace; we all know from observation that is not the case. This week's passage shows us that there is a further stage in Christ's work. Christ came and preached peace (verse 17; cf. Isaiah 57:19). He first made peace (Ephesians 2:15), and then he announced it. As the entire story of the Bible shows, God never leaves his saving deeds to speak for themselves; he always accompanies them with his word, interpreting what he has done. So the risen Christ's first words to his gathered disciples were "Peace be with you" (John 20:19-21), and he has gone on preaching that peace through the apostles and through every generation of his people ever since (2 Corinthians 5:20). From the start this

message was addressed to the far and near equally, and its effect is that "through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father" (verse 18). So while reconciliation is a single event, the access it gives us is an ongoing relationship. As John Stott once put it, "the highest and fullest achievement of the peacemaking Christ is this trinitarian access of the people of God."

In verse 19, Paul begins summing up the changed position of the Gentiles with three pictures of the Church: first as God's kingdom, then as God's family, and finally as God's temple. First, they are "fellow citizens with the saints" (verse 19). Where they were once stateless outsiders (Ephesians 2:12), they now belong to the kingdom of God, which is not a territory but is God himself ruling his people and giving them every privilege his rule implies (cf. Philippians 3:20). Amazingly this passage was written at the height of the Roman Empire, when there was no sign of its coming fall. Still Paul sees another kingdom, neither Jewish nor Roman, drawn from every nation, and more enduring than any earthly empire. Secondly, the picture becomes more intimate: Jew and Gentile are not only fellow citizens, but now they are brothers and sisters in one family, "members of the household of God" (verse 19) — one family with a common belonging that cuts across every social barrier (cf. 1 Timothy 3:15).

The third picture is the longest. The Church is a temple "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone" (verse 20). The foundation is their teaching, laid once for all, and Christ is the stone on which the whole building rests and by which it is aligned (Isaiah 28:16; 1 Peter 2:4-7). In him "the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord" (verse 21). God's dwelling place is no longer a building on Mount Zion, but it is his people. Jesus himself spoke of the temple of his body, which would be destroyed and raised in three days (John 2:19-21), and now those united to him are built together into the dwelling place of God (verse 22). This is true of the universal Church, of each particular church, and of every believer, and God's dwelling with his people now is the pledge of their dwelling with him forever. That is the world God is making — the day when the dwelling place of God is with man (Revelation 21:3) — and the Church is where that future has already begun.

1. Looking at the Bible

- What three pictures of the Church does Paul use in verses 19-22?
- According to verse 20, what is the building's foundation, and what is its cornerstone? Why might these images have been used?

2. Looking at Jesus

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Not only does every passage point to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- Verse 17 says Christ "came and preached peace." When did he do that, and how does he do it today?
- Jesus spoke of his body as a temple (John 2:19-21). How does that help explain what Paul says about the Church in verses 21-22?

3. Looking at our Hearts

- Paul calls the Church a kingdom, a family, and a temple. Where have you seen the Church fall short of that picture?
- What role can you play in helping the Church to not fall short in the future?
- Verse 19 says we are "no longer strangers and aliens." Do you ever still feel like one? Have you ever taken this fact for granted?

4. Looking at our World

- Christ is still preaching peace through his people. Who in your life may need to hear it from you?

PRAYER

- Share prayer requests with one another.