

# NO MORE STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS!

## EPHESIANS 2:11-22

January 31, 2016

### Introduction

Today we will celebrate the Lord's Supper. We have it scheduled for every Fifth Sunday. There is no regulation in the Scriptures about how often we celebrate it, only that when we do, we are to "Worship" Jesus in remembering what He has done for you.

What are we to remembering Him for, you might ask? I think we all have our own ideas, but the Apostle Paul set the record straight. Ephesians 2:11-22

*Ephesians 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye 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: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

*14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*

*18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

*19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

### Keep Out

Imagine if you will that you were barred from this facility because of your skin type or hair color. What if you had to be 6'2" tall in order to enter. Or what if you had to be born and raised in Canada. So only brunets, who can trace their lineage to Scandinavia and are at least 6'2" tall can stay all other's will be arrested and taken to Bell County Court House for arraignment.

What if, upon entering the sanctuary this morning, we found a wall had been built, stretching all the way to the roof, dividing the pews from the Lord's Table? What if you found that there was only one door and it was guarded? Only the Pastor could go through that door. No one else could enter. No one could see the Lord's Supper bread and cup. No one could take part in the ceremony. You were excluded.

### Wall Between Jews and Gentiles

During the first century, the Jewish rights and traditions lay only with the Children of God...His chosen people. All others were Gentiles or referred to as the "uncircumcision" after the commandment of God to Moses concerning all male children were to be circumcised. Anyone else was seen as "dogs", a most negative name calling.

Herod's Temple was completed in AD 62-64. And there were places where Jews and Gentiles could walk within the Temple complex. But then there were dividing walls. Gentiles could only go so far. Women could only go so far. Non-priest males could only go so far. Priests could only go so far. Restrictions, restrictions and more restrictions.

Archeologists have uncovered an inscription from the outer wall of Herod's Temple in Jerusalem, the Temple which was destroyed by the Roman army in 70 AD. It carries a stern warning from the High Priest: "No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death."

There were plenty of partitions on the Temple Mount. We have looked at them while studying the Revelation of Jesus Christ and the Letter to the Hebrews: the inner Court of the Priests and the Temple Proper containing the Holy Place and the "Holy of Holies" where the Ark of the Covenant stood. Access was limited to these sacred places to select Jewish priests, and only the High Priest was allowed, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, to enter the Holy of Holies. There were other divisions: The Women's Court, and the outer Court of the Gentiles, granting limited access to the sacred places within.

Everywhere, there were "Do Not Enter" signs with harsh punishments if broken.

## Wall Between God and Man

In this passage, Paul reminds believers that once there was a wall keeping them from the presence of God. That wall was there because God is holy. Sin separates us from God; sin always leads to separation.

We take so much for granted.

May I say that we take for granted the gift of mercy from God.

May I say that we take for granted the Holy Spirit and His work within us?

May I say that we take for granted the sacrificial offering that Jesus procured for all mankind?

His Love – even the worst of the worst can share in His Love.

Eternal Life – While that is on the horizon, do we take that for granted?

Forgiveness of Sins - Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Spiritual Gifts –

Joint Heir's with Jesus Christ

God's Word

## No Longer Strangers and Aliens

So today, before I ask the deacons to come forward, I want you to make a mental list of all the things that you should Remember this morning concerning the work of Salvation.

Instead of Paul's reminder to the church at Corinth on how the Lord's Supper is to be taken, I want to look at Jesus' words found in Luke 22:17-20.

*Luke 22:17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:*

*18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.*

*19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

*20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*