

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for August 12, 2018**

**World Peace**  
**Ephesians 2:14-18**

Background:

- If we could go back to the first century, we would find a massive division between the Jewish people and the rest of the world of Gentiles
- The Jewish people certainly had their unique history of God calling them, blessing them and giving them the promised land of Canaan
- However, the Jewish people also had their prejudices against the Gentiles
  - The privileged position of the Jewish people got to their heads and they became self-oriented, self-centered, and self-righteous
  - Instead of allowing the Temple to draw the nations to worship God, the Jews fixated on the Temple as their own building and property for their private use and business
  - Instead of allowing the Law to produce the loving conduct that would attract the Gentiles, the Jews obsessed over their own external displays and abilities to compete with one another in upholding every letter of the Law
  - Instead of being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation like God intended in Exodus 19:6, they became a hostile nation and a kingdom segregated from the world
  - Instead of being a blessing to the nations of the earth, they had become a stench to the Gentiles
- This social dynamic between the Jews and the Gentiles made the formation of the early church a very interesting process
- The good news about Jesus was preached in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth
- As both Jews and Gentiles were responding in faith and repentance to the good news of Jesus, they now found themselves on the same team
  - They needed to work together in unity in the church
  - And this was no small task
- In fact, we acknowledged the obvious differences between Jews and Gentiles in verses 11-13, the last time we studied Ephesians 2
- Today, we look to elaborate upon the solution of peace between these Jews and Gentiles that can be found in Christ alone

I. The person of peace (2:14a)

*14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one*

- First, in our text we see that Paul identifies the source of our peace
  - Our peace comes directly from an individual and that individual is Jesus
- Paul states, “For he himself is our peace”
  - Who is Paul referring to when he states, “For he himself is our peace”?
    - Jesus, simply based upon the context
    - Verse 13 ended with an emphasis upon Christ and His blood that He poured out both for Jews and Gentiles alike
  - This is Scripture’s solution for world peace—an individual
    - World peace does not come from a policy
    - World peace does not come from a nation
    - World peace does not come from financial resources
    - World peace does not come from military domination
  - World peace comes from an individual and that individual is Jesus Christ
    - Isaiah 9:6 “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”
    - Micah 5:4-5a “And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. 5 And he shall be their peace.”
  - The Old Testament anticipated what Paul boldly states here in Ephesians
    - We do have legitimate peace
    - And *that* peace is found in Jesus Christ, our Savior
  - Here, in Ephesians 2, Paul is emphasizing the peace that all men and women can have
  - This is seen in how He describes and summarizes the work of Christ
- Paul says that Jesus is our peace, “Who has made us both one”
  - Paul emphasizes that Jesus has brought two people groups together into one
  - These two people groups are the subjects of this passage in Ephesians 2—Jews and Gentiles
  - After centuries of failed relationships between the Jewish people and the nations of the world, Jesus came down to earth
  - A major and necessary effect of Jesus’ mission on this earth was to bring peace among men, women, and children of all nationalities and backgrounds
  - There is no discrimination with God
  - The work of Christ was and is still available to all!

## II. The process of peace (2:14b-15a)

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*and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances,*

- Paul states that Christ brought peace by breaking down the wall dividing the Jews from the Gentiles
- Paul says, “And has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility”
- What exactly was this “wall” that was dividing Jews and Gentiles?
  - Some think it was the literal wall and partition that separated the Gentiles from entering any closer in the Temple precincts under the pain of death
    - This sounds nice but Paul is referring to a metaphorical wall since Jesus did break down the literal wall and divider between the Jews and Gentiles on the Temple Mount
  - The real dividing wall between the Jews and the Gentiles was the Mosaic Law
    - The Jewish Law was intended for the nation to obey in order to be holy
    - Their holiness would draw the Gentiles to Yahweh in order to worship Him
      - Diet, attire, marriage, work week, temple worship, circumcision, all were examples of their distinct difference from the nations
    - However, these practices led to a feeling of superiority that Jews expressed and felt that they had over the Gentiles
    - Of course the Gentiles did not understand this as a positive way of being treated or viewed by the Jewish people
    - Thus, the animosity and hostility only festered and formulated between the two groups of Jews and Gentiles
- How did Christ break down the dividing wall of the Mosaic Law?
  - Paul explains that Jesus broke down the dividing wall of the Mosaic Law “in His flesh... By abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances”
  - To be clear, Jesus’ work on the cross completely changed man’s relationship to the Mosaic Law
    - Colossians 1:22 “he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death,”
  - Christ’s physical death upon the cross fulfilled the Law of Moses in every way that man could never fulfill for himself
    - Galatians 3:23-25 “Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,”
    - Romans 7:6 “But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.”

- Romans 10:4 “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”
  - Paul says that Christ “abolished the law of commandments”
    - “The verb ‘set aside’ (katargeō) can be translated ‘render ineffective’ or ‘nullify.’”<sup>1</sup>
    - Matthew 5:17-18 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”
    - “In Paul’s writings it consistently means ‘to render inoperative, nullify, invalidate’ (cf. Rom 3:3, 31; 4:14; 6:6; 7:2, 6); hence, in this context to translate it ‘to put death’ or ‘to destroy’ is incorrect. The law was not put to death or destroyed but has been rendered inoperative or nullified for the believer.”<sup>2</sup>
  - Thus, the Law of Moses that caused such hostility between the Jews and Gentiles has been nullified since Christ already fulfilled it in His life, death and resurrection
    - Of course this does not mean that there is no morality or standard for right and wrong in the Church
    - We are under the law of Christ and we live to uphold the holiness of God in our own lives according to the teaching of the New Testament

### III. The product of peace (2:15b-16)

*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.*

- “That he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace”
  - “‘New’ translates a Gr. word that refers to something completely unlike what it was before. It refers to being different in kind and quality. Spiritually, a new person in Christ is no longer Jew or Gentile, only Christian (cf. Rom. 10:12, 13; Gal. 3:28).”<sup>3</sup>
    - Romans 10:12 “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.”

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<sup>1</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 66.

<sup>2</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 375.

<sup>3</sup> John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1805.

- Galatians 3:28 “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.”
- “By being killed Christ has killed the differences between us.”<sup>4</sup>
- “It is not that Gentiles become Jews as Gentile proselytes did in pre-NT times nor that Jews become Gentiles, but both become ‘one new person’ or ‘one new humanity,’ a third entity”<sup>5</sup>

16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

- “And might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross”
  - “Christ not only reconciles Jewish and Gentile believers ‘in one body’ (the church), he also reconciles ‘both of them to God.’ The cross destroys not only the ‘hostility’ between Jewish and Gentile believers but also the hostility between humanity and God.”<sup>6</sup>
- “Thereby killing the hostility”
  - “First, the hostility (τὴν ἔχθραν) is not the same as that which is mentioned in verse 14. There it speaks of the hostility between Jews and Gentiles, but here it speaks of hostility between God and human beings. The reason for the change is due to the change of contexts.”<sup>7</sup>
  - Romans 5:10-11 “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”
  - 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 “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. 21 For our sake he made

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<sup>4</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 68.

<sup>5</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 378–379.

<sup>6</sup> Douglas J. Moo, “The Letters and Revelation,” in *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 2403.

<sup>7</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 383–384.

him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

- Colossians 1:19-22 “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,”

#### IV. The proclamation of peace (2:17)

*17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.*

- This peace was proclaimed and hopefully that is why you are here today
- When and how was the peace proclaimed?
  - “It must be after Christ’s crucifixion, for that served as the basis of the peace proclaimed. Also, it cannot be at the time of his earthly ministry, before and after his death and resurrection, because in the present verse it states that he preached this message of peace to both Jews and Gentiles, and there is no record that he preached to Gentiles while on earth.”<sup>8</sup>
  - “The most likely scenario is that it refers to Christ speaking through the apostles by his Spirit. The passage goes on to speak of the church’s being built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, emphasizing the work of the Spirit in its construction (2:19–22). Similarly, Paul speaks of God’s revealing the mystery of the Christ to the apostles and prophets by the Spirit (3:5), which is then proclaimed to the Gentiles (3:8). This also fits with the notion that Christ has given to the church those who proclaim this good news (4:11). In his earthly ministry, Jesus’ itinerant ministry and preaching was focused almost exclusively on the house of Israel. It is only after the Spirit’s coming that the gospel is actively proclaimed among Jews and Gentiles alike.”<sup>9</sup>
- This peace was preached to those who were far off (Gentiles) and those who were near (Jews)

#### V. The passage of peace (2:18)

*18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.*

- We live in a place of constant availability and access to God because of this peace

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<sup>8</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 385.

<sup>9</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 166.

- “Because of Christ’s work, God is approachable. Without Christ’s work sinful humans could not approach God.”<sup>10</sup>
- Hebrews 4:16 “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”
- “There is a trinitarian emphasis here: Christ provides access to the Father via the Spirit.”<sup>11</sup>

## V. The passage of peace (2:18)

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<sup>10</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 389.

<sup>11</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*, *Osborne New Testament Commentaries* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 71.