

(Ephesians) Citizens of the Household of God

by Brian Brodersen

Through Christ, God has reconciled both Jew and Gentile to Himself, creating a new humanity in which all people can come together as one body.

Duration: 47:03

Scripture: Psalm 27:10, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 2:8-20

Topics: "Salvation By Faith", "Gods Mercy"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a powerful story of a young man who was abandoned as a child and grew up to become involved in a gang. One day, he attended an evangelistic tent meeting with the intention of causing harm, but as he heard the gospel, he felt convicted and gave his life to Jesus Christ. The preacher emphasizes the importance of faith in God's mercy and the shedding of Christ's blood for salvation, contrasting it with the belief that good works alone can grant entrance into heaven. The sermon also highlights God's special care for orphans and the underprivileged.

Transcript

So as we pick up in verse 11 of the second chapter of Ephesians, we're coming off of Paul's discussion of our salvation being by grace alone through faith alone. Then he went on to talk about how we are God's masterpiece and God is working out his plan and purpose through our lives once we come to him by faith. And so now Paul proceeds on and he says, 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, 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.

Now, this epistle was written to a predominantly Gentile congregation. And so Paul is going to give them some instruction that would pertain to the Gentiles who did not really have a background in the things of God. The majority of people in this church would have come out of the paganistic systems of the time.

And so Paul is going to be educating them on some of the past history of Israel and really showing them that they've now become partakers with Israel in these glorious things that they had previously not had any experience with at all. Now, he says to him here, he refers to them as the uncircumcision, or that's how they were viewed by what he calls the circumcision. Now, the circumcision is a reference to the Jew.

The sign of the Abrahamic covenant was circumcision. Every male was to be circumcised, and that was the seal of the covenant. That was the sign of the covenant.

Now, the Jews, after a long period of time, they became a bit prideful and they forgot that God loved everyone. And they sort of began to think of themselves as an exclusive group that God favored above everyone else. And they began to speak in derogatory terms concerning the other nations.

And so they referred to them as the uncircumcision. That was a term of derision. That was a term that expressed their disgust with the Gentiles.

Oh, these uncircumcised. And so that was the mentality that existed in New Testament times. There was a tremendous division between the Jew and the rest of the world.

And of course, it worked both ways. The Greeks of the day saw everyone who was not a Greek as a barbarian. And so nationalism and racism and ethnocentricity and all those kinds of things have been around for a long, long, long, long time.

It's not anything new. And it was going on back in biblical times. So there was this tremendous division between these two groups.

And Paul reminds his Gentile readers that at one time in their past, they were in a very desperate situation. They were not part of God's chosen people, really. They weren't.

Heirs of those great covenants that God had made, and they were basically on their own adrift without God and without any hope. But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. So God has done something to remedy the Gentiles problem, the problem of separation, the problem of alienation.

He has brought us near to himself, and he's done so through the blood of Christ to see the thing that was keeping us from a relationship with God was sin. And sin can only be dealt with through the shedding of blood. That is a clear biblical principle.

Sin cannot be dealt with in any other way. And this is the problem with the other religious systems. They tend to overlook the issue of sin, and if they even acknowledge it, they feel that they can do something to remedy the problem.

I read an interesting article this past week or so in Reader's Digest, an interview, actually, with the great boxer Muhammad Ali. And I've always been sort of an Ali fan. So, you know, I wanted to hear what he had to say.

And it was very interesting. The article was much different than I thought it would be. Didn't talk so much about his boxing history.

It talked a lot more about his faith as a Muslim. And it was interesting to hear from him just how he believes a person is going to take care of the sin issue or how a person is going to be admitted into heaven. He said what multitudes of people feel and believe.

He said, basically, it comes down to this. In the end, if your good works outweigh your bad works, you'll get in. If your bad works outweigh your good works, you'll be left out.

And I thought how interesting. A work salvation based upon human goodness, but completely oblivious to the necessity of blood being shed to make atonement for sin. And this is where the Bible stands in stark contrast to all of the other systems of religion.

The Bible tells us that it's not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but it's according to his mercy that he saved us and he saved us by the shedding of the blood of Christ. And it's been through his blood that we have been brought near. And then he says in verse 14, for he himself, speaking of Christ, is our peace.

He himself is our peace now in the context, as we'll see in just a moment. He's talking about the fact that Christ is the one who has brought peace between two formerly opposing groups. But just for a moment, let's just stop on the first part of this verse, for he himself is our peace in another sense.

He is our peace, not only in bringing us together with those that we were formerly separated from, but he is our peace in the sense that he's the one that gives us peace. He's the one that brings comfort to us. He's the one who consoles us.

And there are times in our lives when nothing else can bring us peace. We've got to look to the Lord. We look around us and we see turmoil.

We look around us and we see nothing but strife and contention and there's difficulty and problems and we can easily be robbed of our peace. But we must remember that he himself is our peace, and we've got to go back and we've got to get our eyes back on him. That's something that I'm sure some of you know something about.

Issues come in our lives and we have to really make an effort to keep our eyes on the Lord because we've got him off the Lord. We've got him on men. We've got him on circumstances and we're in turmoil.

We have no peace. But he himself is our peace, not our circumstances, not the people around us, not the people we're looking to for security. Those things are always going to let us down to some degree or another, but he'll never let us down for he himself is our peace.

And so we keep our focus upon Jesus Christ. But again, going back to the context for he himself is our peace, who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of separation. So it's because of Christ that groups and people that were formerly in opposition to one another can live at peace with one another and not only at peace in the sense of an absence of strife, but live at peace with one another and love one another.

Now, remember, Paul, the man who's writing this epistle, he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was the ultimate Jew, and he would have shared the same prejudices that all of the other Jews shared. He was a Pharisee.

And if there was one group that was probably the most prejudiced, it was the Pharisees, because they were an extremely self-righteous group of people. And they had problems with everyone who wasn't as devout or committed or devoted to the keeping of the traditions as they were. And of course, their animosity toward the Gentiles would be even greater than the average person's animosity.

So that's Paul's background. But now we find that Paul is writing and he's embracing. The Gentiles, he's telling them things that other Jews, even though they've become believers, are reluctant to embrace, he's

telling them things like, you know what now you've been brought into the family, you've been made part of this, you've become now recipients of the covenant.

Paul saying to the Gentiles, look, you're on the same ground as we are. We're all just one big, happy family. And some of the Jews at the time, even though they were believers, they were reluctant to embrace and to proclaim that message.

They had been so indoctrinated culturally to see themselves as separate and to some degree superior to the Gentiles. But when a person comes and is genuinely touched by Jesus Christ, all of those former prejudices and things, they just vanish. And that's what Paul was talking about here, and that's what he was going in.

And that was the beauty of what was going on through Paul's ministry. There was no hypocrisy. There was no respecter of persons going on.

There was no preferential treatment for certain groups or classes of people. There was an equality all the way across. You know, one of the greatest tragedies in the history of the church has been the tendency for Christians to divide up into cliques.

To be segregated. Based upon either race or based upon perhaps social standing, economic standing. Those kinds of things have been a plague upon the church of Jesus Christ.

You know. In parts of Africa, back in the. Eighteen hundreds, some of the great missionaries, David Livingston.

Moffat's CT stud men like this, they went all through Africa proclaiming the gospel, preaching salvation in Jesus Christ. They saw many Africans come to faith. They set up wonderful churches.

And yet, as time went on, people came into places of leadership and pretty soon there were divisions that began to develop. And there was a mentality that the missionaries or the Europeans were superior. And so the Africans needed to, you know, sort of fall under their authority.

And there was basically a prejudice that began to develop. And in many of the churches in South Africa and in Rhodesia, Zimbabwe is what it's called now, and some of those countries in the southern part of Africa where the European missionaries and churches had established works, they through a process of time began to develop a very much of a racial. Bias and racist mentality, and it was a horrible, horrible thing.

Apartheid was a horrible, horrible thing. And it's interesting to see when the communists came in to the various parts of Africa and started to seek to stir up difficulties in order basically to overthrow the existing governments. They were able to point to the racial bias of the church and to discourage the blacks from being part of those churches and to encourage them to rebel and to embrace Marxist philosophy.

And it's a tragic thing that the church so often has set itself up for a fall because it has compromised the word of God and has been racist, a horrible thing. But thank God there were always those true faithful servants of God that held fast to the scriptures and they treated all men equally and they brought in the African brothers and treated them on the same level and raised them up and gave them authority and leadership and those kinds of things. But this whole thing of division based on race or class or any of that is also horribly wrong.

And this is the kind of stuff that Jesus came to destroy. And it existed very predominantly in the first century. And Jesus came to break it down, and it never should have been able to be rebuilt in the history of the church.

But sadly, it has been repeated too many times to even mention. So he says in verse 15, 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, making one new man from the two, thus making peace.

So that thing which brought the separation was the law, but it was a misunderstanding of the law that really brought the kind of separation that developed at the time. There was to be a natural separation between the Jews and the rest of the world, not to put them in an exclusive place and for them to alone enjoy salvation. But there was to be a separation that would be attractive to the world and draw people into God's family.

But as we've been saying, the Jews distorted that and they took the very law that God had given and they twisted it to some degree. And the law itself became the great divider between the Jew and the Gentile. Perhaps you remember when Peter was summoned to go to the house of Cornelius.

And actually, it was the Lord who told him to go. He was on the roof of the house of Simon, the Tanner, and he fell into a trance. And you remember the sheep came down with various animals and there were many unclean beast and a boy spoke and said, Peter, rise, kill and eat.

And he said, Lord, I've never eaten anything unclean, common or unclean. And the Lord said, do not call that unclean, which I have cleansed. And that happened three times.

And then Peter kind of came out of it. There was a knock on the door and there were some men that had come and they had come to look for Simon. Peter, who was abiding with Simon, the Tanner, and they wanted him to go with him to Cornelius his home.

And it's interesting when Peter gets to the house of Cornelius. He says, you know, it's against the law for me to come into your house. Now, you can't find anywhere in the Mosaic law that a Jew was forbidden to go into the house of a Gentile, but.

What had happened is the rabbis, they had added to the law, they had distorted it, they had twisted it to some degree, and they had brought it to such a place as there was almost an obligation to have hostility toward the Gentile. If you had any sort of a favorable attitude toward the Gentile, your true faith as an Israelite was in question. That's how distorted it has it had become.

And so it was this misinterpretation of the law that brought this radical separation between the Jew and the Gentile. And as we mentioned in a previous study in Jerusalem itself, where the temple was, that place of worship that God had declared in the beginning that it was to be a house of prayer for all nations, it had become pretty much exclusively Jewish. There was the court of the priest where only the priest could go.

Then there was the court of Israel where the men of Israel could go. Then there was the court of the women where the Jewish women could go. And then there was finally the court of the Gentiles.

And notice here, Paul talks about. This. Middle wall of separation, and for anyone who had ever been to the temple in Jerusalem, they would have had a visual when Paul used this terminology, they would have known exactly what he was talking about, because they're dividing the court of the Gentiles from the rest

of the temple precinct was a wall and the wall had a warning inscribed upon it that a foreigner.

Passing this wall would do so at the risk of his own life. And so although the Gentiles were allowed to mill around in the outer court area. They were forbidden to go any further, and so you can see how there was this hostility that existed.

But now Paul says that Jesus, he 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. So Jesus just wiped the whole thing out completely. You know, it was too far gone to go back and say, oh, well, no, this look, you distorted this here, you misinterpreted that here.

He just said, let's just do away with the whole thing. And we'll make a fresh new way by which everyone can come, and that's what he did so as to create in himself one new man from the two, thus making peace. And, you know, that's what the church is.

The church is one new man. Not just from the two from Jew and Gentile, but from every facet of the Gentile world as well. But the church is to be one family.

And one of the beauties of the church is the diversity. The cultural diversity, the ethnic diversity, the racial diversity, that's one of the beauties of the church and this whole idea of segregation that even had a tremendously negative effect in our own country, especially in the South. The setting up of churches for whites only or the setting up of churches for blacks only, and the blacks, of course, were forced to set up their own churches because they weren't welcomed in the white churches.

What a horrible thing. How contrary to everything that the scripture teaches and everything that Jesus came to undo and to establish. And one of the beautiful things about the church and one of the things that God is wanting to demonstrate to the world through the church is how he is able through his grace to give people love for each other, even though naturally they shouldn't have it.

And that's such a beautiful thing. And I love to see a church full of people from different backgrounds and different cultures and ethnic groups in every walk of life. That's what it's all about.

We do have even here at our fellowship, we do have a number of ethnic churches that meet. We have a Korean church. We have an Arabic fellowship.

We have a Chinese fellowship and we have a number of other fellowships that meet. And the only reason why that sort of thing does exist is because of the language barrier. That's the only reason that does or should exist.

There is, of course, that issue of language and somebody who doesn't understand English needs to have the scriptures taught to them in their own language. So we recognize that. And we do have those fellowships to meet the need of those who are not fluent in English and not able to really get all they can out of the teaching through English services.

But apart from the language issue, we really have to be on our guard that we don't divide up over other kinds of issues, other kinds of things. You know, you got the young people here and you get the old people over there and then you've got this social class here and this social class here and then. Well, here's this ethnic group and this ethnic group.

No, we've got to all come together. It's to be a big melting pot. That's what the church is.

The United States of America is known as the melting pot of the world. People from everywhere have come here. There's, you know, really no true Americans in one sense.

We've all come from somewhere else. And that even goes back to the ones who were here before us. They came from somewhere else.

We know that man's history began over in somewhere in the Middle East. But that's what the church is. The church is just a big conglomeration of people from all nations, from all backgrounds, from all cultures.

And that's a beautiful thing. It's a wonderful thing. And that's what the Lord came to establish.

Verse 16, and that he might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. So here now he's speaking once again about the law, but he's speaking about it in a different sense. It was the misinterpretation of the law that alienated the Jew and the Gentile.

It was the actual truth of the law that alienated man from God. Jesus did away with both. He did away with the alienation that existed between the different people groups.

But of course, the most important thing is that he did away with the alienation that existed between man and God and that he might reconcile them both, both Jew and Gentile to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. So it was upon the cross that Jesus was bearing the penalty for our violations of the law. And in doing so, he was wiping out the law's claim upon us.

That's what he did upon the cross. He took the law and he wiped out its claim upon us by having lived a perfect life and then dying for the transgressions of those who had failed to keep the law. And in doing so, he's reconciled us to God.

And he came and he preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near for through him. We both have access by one spirit to the father. And so, Jesus.

He preached peace to the Jew first, the gospel came, but then also to the Gentile, to those who were near the Jews and to those who were far off the Gentiles. And it's through him that we both have access by one spirit to the father. We both have access.

Every man has equal access to God. This is another beautiful thing about the true gospel. Even within the realm of the Christian church, men have set up hierarchical systems.

And the idea is that there are certain people that are more worthy of approaching God, and therefore they approach God on the behalf of others. Some of it is very clear. It's seen in the whole structure of certain denominations.

Some of it is not as clear, but definitely it is there. If you look at the Catholic model, we have there a priesthood and the priesthood basically is in a position of mediating between God and the common people. And among the Catholic church, you find quite often the terminology use the clergy and the laity.

The clergy speak of those men who are the priest and the laity speak of the common people. And the idea is that these people go to God on your behalf. But, you know, you don't have to be a Catholic to have that kind of thing going.

You find it in a lot of churches. You find it in a lot of ministries. And sometimes it's just solely out of ignorance on the part of people.

They just assume that, you know, the man in the pulpit must be closer to God than I am. That's why he's there and I'm not. So they come and say, Pastor, I know you're really close to God and I've got a big problem.

Can you go to God for me? Well, you know what? Yes, we can. But guess what? You can go to God for yourself as well. You can go straight to God.

You can get to him just as quick as I can. You have the exact same access to him that I have. You see, we all have equal access to God through one spirit because of what Jesus did.

This whole thing of a hierarchy is something that God is very much opposed to. That was a part of the Old Testament system, and it was necessary under the Old Testament system because the sin issue had not yet been dealt with. And there was a definite separation between God and the people.

And that's probably the main message that God was sending throughout the entire Old Testament and the whole ritualistic system. It was a message of separation. And you remember that.

In the temple, there was also we talked about some of those other divisions earlier, but there was also the holy place where the priest could minister daily. And then there was the most holy place where only the high priest could go alone and only once a year and only with the blood of the lamb. And separating the holy place from the most holy place was a massive veil.

And yet we read, interestingly, when Jesus Christ died upon the cross, when he bowed his head and he gave up his spirit and he said, Father, it is finished. We're told specifically by the gospel writers that in the temple, the veil was ripped from the top to the bottom. And there God was signifying by that act that the separation that existed from the time that man sinned back in the garden to that very moment was now ended.

And that man could come now freely into the presence of God. So for men to come along later on in history and to set up this system where men must go through other men once again is to completely undo everything that God did. And that's why Jesus said when he wrote to the seven churches, he said, I hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans and the term Nicolaitan means simply to rule over the laity.

And it seems that early on, before the end of the first century, even there was that mentality that began to develop. That there was a spiritual hierarchy and that the common person didn't have the same kind of access to God that those gifted, anointed, more spiritual or seemingly spiritual people had. But that's completely contrary to scripture for through him, we both have access by one spirit to the father.

Now, therefore, here's how he sums it up. Great news for the Gentiles. You are no longer strangers and foreigners being a stranger and a foreigner.

You know, there's something about that that isn't. All that comfortable, if you know what I mean. If you spend any time in a foreign country, you know, after a while you get the feeling I'm not part of this, I'm outside of this.

And you might even have longings and feel like, boy, I wish I was part of this. It's not a good feeling. And how much worse to be a foreigner when it comes to God's kingdom, when it comes to God's nation, to feel like a foreigner, to feel like, oh, I don't have any place here.

That's a terrible thing, but God has remedied that problem. And so we are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. Oh, how the Gentiles hearts must have just leapt for joy as they read this from the Apostle Paul.

We're no longer strangers and foreigners. You mean we're fellow citizens? Many people have come to this country and have perhaps fled persecution or difficult circumstances or whatever, and they've come and they've sought citizenship, ultimately. And for some, obtaining their citizenship in this country has just been the thrill of their lives, the highlight of their whole lives.

And they go through the process of, you know, becoming an American citizen. And some have just been so filled with joy. You know, they go and have a celebration afterwards.

And oh, I'm I'm a citizen. I've got my citizenship. What a great thing.

But how much greater a thing it is to be citizens of the kingdom of God, to be part of that great heavenly city, to have citizenship there. In Paul's day, citizenship was the privilege of very few people. Of course, the Roman Empire was made up predominantly of slaves who had no citizenship.

They had no rights or privileges, really. But there were those people who were citizens and they shared in all the rights and the privileges of Rome. And Paul himself was a citizen of Rome.

And so he had rights and privileges and things that he exercised. Citizenship in a great kingdom would be something that would be greatly coveted by people. And Paul's writing to these Gentiles who had a hopeless past, they were completely cut off from the promises of God.

They were in a place of no future. Nothing good to look forward to. And Paul says, now you become citizen.

You're no longer foreigners and strangers, but your fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. Here it is again, the household of God, the family of God. If you don't have a family.

Well, God wants to welcome you into his family. There are people who have lost their earthly families. There are people that have been disconnected from their earthly families.

But the Lord takes up those. He has a special care for the orphans, for the underprivileged. I read a great story this past week of a young African boy who was abandoned by his parents at the age of seven.

And he basically lived on the streets for many years and he became a hoodlum. He became somewhat of a gangster. And he joined a nationalistic party to overthrow the present government of this country and so forth.

And on a particular evening, he and his friends planned to cause a ruckus. And they went to an evangelistic tent meeting that was going on where hundreds of people had gathered. And they took guns and they took petrol bombs, Molotov cocktails.

And they went in with the intention of just blowing the place up. And as he sat there with the intention of giving the signal to go ahead and start hurling the bombs, he heard the gospel and he came under conviction. And he stood up and began to walk toward the front and the gang, his gang members didn't understand quite what he was doing.

Then he got to the front and he fell on his knees and he gave his life to Jesus Christ. And he told the evangelist who was preaching, he told him in the course of their conversation, he told him his story about how he was abandoned as a child. They shared with him this Bible verse that changed his life.

When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord shall take me up. And he realized at that moment that God welcomed him. And he came into that place of being a member of God's family.

Fantastic story, great book called Out of the Shadows of Darkness, and good book that will be available in our bookstore. So saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. So being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, this is a permanent building.

We've become members of God's family and we've entered into a residence that is permanent. It's got the ultimate foundation. You know, every structure is only as strong as its foundation.

And if you've got a weak foundation, it doesn't matter what you've got above it. You don't have much. And here's the ultimate foundation, the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

We have inherited something that is going to endure forever. That's what Paul is saying to us. In whom the whole building being fitted together grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the spirit.

And so we who formerly were cut off outside of the promises of God, outside of the blessings, we have been brought in and made members of the family. We're family members. We can come in with all the freedom of a family member now, with all the familiarity of a child relating to his or her brothers and sisters and relating to their parents.

We can now live our lives with that kind of confidence within the kingdom of God. What a glorious thing. You know, there's nothing so beautiful as Christian fellowship.

And I mentioned in the previous study how just recently when we had our friends visiting from overseas as they came into our home, it was so great to see them, you know, in the midst of conversation, just get up and go into the kitchen and open the refrigerator or in their case, go put on the kettle because it was tea time. And just to see them move about with complete liberty and freedom. This.

Hey, this is our house. And that's the way it is, that's the way it should be. That's the beautiful thing that we have come into this.

Holy Temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God. Isn't that amazing? We are the dwelling place of God. God doesn't dwell with temples in temples made with hands.

Remember, the prophet said that heaven is your throne. Earth is your footstool. Where is the house that we can build for you? And man has made the mistake over the.

Centuries of thinking that God dwells in buildings made of stone or buildings made of whatever material, but God dwells among his people. He dwells within our hearts. And so we should never make the mistake of referring to this building as the church.

This is just a building. This is just a place where the church meets together. We are the church and wherever we meet together, we are the church.

If we congregate in our living rooms, we are the church and God is there with us. He's present. He's abiding with us.

He's dwelling among us. But as we gather together, there is that collective. Sense of God's spirit and as we come together.

There is that sense, that greater sense of God's presence. And sometimes we really feel that and other times we might not feel it. But one thing that I've discovered is that quite often.

Those who come among us who don't know the Lord. Although many different things will factor into their receiving Christ, quite often it's the sense of God's presence that they experience that they've never experienced before when they come into our midst that really impresses them. What a wonderful thing to be gathered together and have the spirit of God just present in a special way among us.

And I've heard story after story of people who have come and said, you know, when I walked in, I just there was something different. I just I felt something. Or sometimes it's in the course of singing.

God touches people in a variety of ways. But I've seen occasions where people will come in. They're reluctant to even come, and yet they come and they you know, there's something special they feel.

And then the singing starts and pretty soon they're sitting there and tears are welling up in their eyes. And there's there's just something happening. It's the presence of the spirit of the Lord in his temple, his people.

And that's who we are. And that's a great privilege that we have. And as we go back and we just kind of reflect on this entire second chapter in this second chapter, Paul really shows us.

How God has taken us from the lowest possible state and exalted us to the highest place, God has taken us from the most hopeless situation and he's made us his family members and he's established us on the most permanent foundation possible, the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. And all of this is declared, I think, really to provoke us to rejoicing. To provoke us to thanks, to get us to just well up inside with praise and say, Lord, you are so good.

Thank you for what you've done for me. And as we pointed out in a previous study as well, we'll close with this. What was true of the Gentiles and their separation from Israel and their hopeless condition was true of every one of us who spent any time outside of the kingdom of God and is true today of everyone who is outside of the kingdom.

But the wonderful thing is that he is our peace and he's brought us near by his blood. And we have been brought near and there are more still that he wants to draw near and he wants to use us, those who have experienced his grace ourselves and been delivered from that hopeless state and brought into this glorious relationship as members of his household. He wants to use us to bring others in as well.

There's plenty of room in the temple and the Lord wants to bring others in. And as we move into a new year, may that be one of our goals this year to see God use us in a way to bring hope to those who don't have hope, to bring those who are alienated to a place of reconciliation, to see people come to know the Lord. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you for these great truths, the great things that you've done for us. And Lord, we look at our world and we see all of the confusion. We see all of the fighting, the hatred.

We see the senseless divisions. And Lord, how sad it is because you came to do away with all this stuff. And Lord, we pray.

That in this year to come. That we would see many more come and become part of your family. And Lord, we pray for ourselves that even amongst us, we would share that love and that fellowship.

Lord, that those things that formerly divided us from each other would all be put away. And we would walk hand in hand, Lord, with one another and with you. In harmony, in communion.

And so, Lord, just work in us that work. Lord, remind us that we are members of the household of God. We're saints and we're in this together.

Increase our appreciation and understanding of fellowship in this new year to come. And Lord, if there's any with us tonight that are still outside, they're foreigners and strangers. Lord, you want to bring them in and make them fellow citizens.

We pray that their hearts would be open to receive Christ. And to receive that new life that you have for them in Jesus name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11659.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/brian-brodersen/ephesians-citizens-of-the-household-of-god/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net