

**Intro:** Turn with me to:

EPHESIANS 2:1-10

pg 827 When I read that passage...

PICTURE came to mind

Paul says as Gentiles BEFORE we met Christ... This was the reality of our situation: We were separated from God  
That separation started in the Garden: Sin separated us from God and we were sent far away

That is where Paul Begins in our Passage this morning:

**1. Remember Where You Were Without Jesus.**

Ch 2:11-12

*5 Specific Problems We Had To Overcome!*

- Separate from Christ: Lit=*at a distance, apart from*
- Excluded from Citizenship in Israel Lit=*estranged, alienated, from a different place, off at a distance*
- Foreigners to the Covenants Lit=*stranger to the Covenants and Promises of God; Abraham, David*
- Without Hope Lit=*no anticipation or expectation of anything better: Israel YES, Gentile NO*
- Without God in the World Lit=*Godless; word for NO and word for GOD, put them together Atheos*  
You are familiar with it, right...Having NO GOD in your life

Paul paints this awful, yet accurate picture FOR us and OF us without Jesus in our lives.

TEMPLE DIAGRAM: A diagram of the Temple provides a GREAT illustration (*Gentiles, Women, Men, Priests, High Priest*)

The KEY is that we are FAR from God...and FAR from the Promises of God made to Israel

Then, If you drop down to Vs 19-22 Paul gives us a very different picture.

He describes for us the reality of life when we have Jesus.

**2. Remember Who You Are In Christ.**

Ch 2:19-23

- No longer foreigners and aliens: Lit=*the alienation is ended. You are now at home!*
- Fellow citizens with God's people Lit=*You have become one with the people of God, Accepted on equal terms*
- Members of God's household Lit=*Adopted into the family of God, with every right and privilege*
- Built on the foundation of apostles/prophets Lit=*Being built up spiritually by apostles (Paul) spiritual leaders*
- Standing on Jesus the Cornerstone Lit=*Having Jesus as the immovable foundation of your spiritual life*
- At peace with God and with Israelites Lit=*Enmity, anger and hostility is removed*
- We have access to God through Jesus Lit=*Ushered into presence of the King! (described act and person in Persia)*

Here is the key. There has been this AMAZING transformation!

We who were far away (Gentiles) AND those who were nearer (Jews) all are now able to be in the presence of the God  
That distance...that hostility...that judgment...that division...that gulf of sin and shame has been crossed!!!

Not only are we reconciled to God...we are reconciled to one another! No more Jew nor Greek, Male nor Female, Slave Free  
We are now WELCOME to come into His presence, all on the same footing and all free before Him.

For Centuries...Mankind had heard the message. Don't Get too Close! Don't come near...Keep your distance

- Garden: *Banished: You have lost the privilege of walking with God (Fellowship/intimacy broken)*
- Jacob: *Running for his life, lays down to sleep, wakes terrified because he knew he was in presence*
- Moses: *In wilderness, sees burning bush: Do not come any closer!*
- Israel/Law: *Moses on Mountain receiving 10 Commandments, God tells him, Tell people...don't touch mountain!*
- Tabernacle: *Every detail of worship was outlined in Lev, you could ONLY approach God on HIS terms NADAB*
- Temple: *Gentiles; Women; Israelites; Priests; High Priest (Holy of Holies, once a year...with Blood!)*

Now, with ALL of that background...When we come to know Jesus...Listen

Heb 4:14-16

HOW DID THAT HAPPEN? What Took Place? JESUS!!!

**3. Remember All That Jesus Did For You.**

Ch 2:13-18

According to Paul God has made this amazing TRANSFORMATION possible through the person and work of Jesus

As you start to unpack what Jesus has done for us you discover that there are two reconciliations taking place!

They are intertwined, and intimately connected. The first, reconciliation with God...informs and insures the second.

- Reconciled to God
- Reconciled to our Brother in Christ

When we are reconciled to God...it drives us to reconciliation with our brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of

~Color ~Race ~Previous Religion ~Social/Economic Status: All goes out the window!

The bible is very clear. The ground is LEVEL at the foot of the cross, and there is NO room in the church for anything less

**Illus:** My Family and I had that discussion a number of years ago

Went home on vacation...showing pictures of girls, maybe 4 or 5, AA neighbor, little boy same age, pics of them playing

Comment that I will not repeat

1 John 2:9; 1 John 4:20

5 Results of Jesus Work In Our Life

- *The Blood of Jesus Brought Us Close To God: And Close to One Another!* Vs 13  
All of the OT sacrificial system was designed to point us to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross  
Most of the OT sacrifices included an element of blood being offered for the sin of the one coming to worship  
The most important sacrifice, made on the Day of Atonement for the sins of the nation is described in Heb 9:1-14  
Applic: The distance was closed. We were far off...and we have been brought near! Just as the OT sacrifice of blood made the way for the people to be close to God...both the Priest and the worshipper, that is what Jesus did for us!
- *The Sacrificial Work of Jesus Broke Down the Hostility and Enmity Between God and Man:* Vs 14  
Broken Down: *Dissolve or Melt, Pull down*  
There is a wall that exists between God and man...the wall of sin that we built  
Every act of disobedience, Every word spoken in anger and hate, Every failure we have, Every Omission we leave out  
Added another brick to the wall! We had built it so high we could never pull it down, Yet God did it through His Son  
  
Not only were we at war with God, we were at war with one another. Race, Color, Language, Found every excuse  
We hated, and mistreated and marginalized and hurt one another.  
The Jew/Gentile division...is just like many we have today  
**ILLUS:** Good Jew had a morning prayer: *"Thank you God that you did not create me a gentile, a slave, or a woman!"*  
Jews referred to the rest of the human race, the non-Jews, as dogs...or even worse! The lowest of the low  
There was a plaque mounted in multiple places on wall between Gentiles and others  
One was actually discovered in 1871 that Paul is probably referencing.  
PLAQUE
- *His Broken Body Rendered The Law, Commandments and Regulations Powerless to Condemn Us!* Vs 15  
The law condemned us! It told us what God expected, how we should live, what was right/wrong, moral/immoral  
Yet, the law was condemning us every single day, since we could never keep it! God set the standard, we failed  
So when Jesus died, the PERFECT sacrifice, having kept the law perfectly, yet paying the price as if He did not  
His righteousness is charged to the account (Romans) says of all who put their faith and trust in Him  
Rom 5:18 *"Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men."*  
Col 2:14 *"(Jesus) canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. (Erased)"*
- *His Cross Reconciled Us To God...And One Another!* Vs 16-17  
Reconcile: *to restore our initial unity! (What we lost in the Garden was Restored on the Cross!)*  
Remember that picture...Being banished from the Garden... Replaced with Picture of Prodigal Son!  
What the Cross of Jesus did for us is "Kill the hostility!"  
Imagine...NOW we can walk with God in the Garden again! The angel is gone...God welcomes us to Himself  
Our sin, our failures, our trespasses, our disobedience...All taken care of on the cross of Jesus Christ!  
Col 1:22 *But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation--*
- *We Have Access To The Father.* Vs 17-18  
There is no longer judgment, shame, condemnation...The Old Things are passed away!  
Those of us who were far off...Out in the Gentile section of the Temple...behind the Plaque...Pain of Death  
Are now WELCOME into the presence of God!  
Heb 4:14-16 *Let us come to the throne of grace BOLDLY! (Not held at outer court...afraid...unsure, unwelcome!)*  
We can cross EVERY barrier...Gentile, Jew, Priest, High Priest...We walk to the very throne room of God!

**CONCL:**

Here is my question to you today:

Are You Near To God...or Far away?

Listen, if you feel like you are far away...It is your choice

God has done EVERYTHING necessary...For you to be in relationship

He has paid an unimaginable price...Blood, Body, Cross of His Son for YOU!

If you have never yet accepted Jesus as your Savior...Come Home...Door open, Angel Gone, Arms Open

Are you Living in the Fullness of His Forgiveness?

Are there some "leftovers" with others that you need to get straight? Can't say love God hate brother

Have you Thanked Him Lately?

Have you paused to tell Him how grateful you are that you are His child?