

Title: What Has the Cross Done for Us? (Part I)

Text: Ephesians 2:11-13

Ephesians chapter 2 verse 11, please....

We are looking at the ^(3B) POSITION OF THE CHRISTIAN. WHAT IS OUR POSITION?

(1C) Well, first of all, Paul talks about our individual position before we were saved. He says we were dead in our trespasses and sin. But, because of God's wonderful grace we now have a new position. Those who trust Jesus for salvation are saved by God's ~~wonderful~~ grace.

(2C) Then Paul goes on to discuss our POSITION WITHIN THE CORPORATE BODY OF BELIEVERS -- namely the church. *And that is where we are today*

Ephesians chapter 2 beginning with verse 11..(READ Vs 11-13)

Prayer

Now, I want to look at our POSITION WITHIN THE CHURCH BY ASKING THE QUESTION: ^(1D) WHAT HAS THE CROSS DONE FOR US? WHAT HAS THE CROSS DONE FOR US?

(1E) First of all, it brought the Gentiles to God. And by way of ^(1A) INTRODUCTION there is a ^{three} couple of things that I want you to notice.

(1G) In Vs 11 it starts out "THEREFORE"....Literally, "ON ACCOUNT OF THIS." It goes back to remind us that we were dead in our trespasses and sins. But, it was God's grace that has made salvation possible for us. On account of this grace we are to remember. Dear friends, it is so easy to forget. THEREFORE, ON ACCOUNT OF THIS....."REMEMBER!"

(2G) Another thing that hit me was the word "FORMERLY" in Vs 11. In fact, it also appears in Vs 13. And if you will remember back to Vs 2, it is there also. Where Paul mentions "our former" condition.

So, through this text in Vs 11 and Vs 13, Paul is reminding us of something which formerly was true. NOW, FRIENDS, I LIKE THAT! God can make the change in your life. Whatever is going on, the Lord Jesus can make the difference. And I like the way that reads: "YOU WERE FORMERLY SOMETHING, BUT NOW, PRAISE GOD, THINGS HAVE CHANGED.

I also like in Vs 12 that phrase "AT THAT TIME"..And that is in contrast to Vs 13 which says.."BUT NOW"...."You see, "at that time" you were something... But now, you are different,

And I am sure that all of us who know Christ as Saviior, could stand up and say..AMEN..to that. "at that time" "formerly" I was in my sin, but now things are diffeent and Praise God the Lord has made the difference.

(36) *Now The Third thing that hit me was that*
~~But in looking at this whole problem of bringing the Gentiles to God, it was really their condition that keep them at a distance. And God explains the ~~condition~~ distance by the little phrase "FAR OFF" in Vs 13. They were far off.~~

In fact you will find that usage often in the Bible. It refers to people who are far away from God. *Mem 1st No. Century or longer it is* And usually referring to Gentiles. *But all people*

For example, in the Gospel of Mark Chapter 12. *verse 34* ~~Mark chapter 12 verse 34.~~
Here Jesus is talking to a very brillent scribe who had ask Him what is the most important commandment. And it is interesting what Jesus said to him.. Mark chapter 12 verse 34..."And when Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.'

However close you may have thought the Gentiles were to the blessings that God had promised to the people of Israel, God discribes them as being far off. In this case, this gentlement was not far from the kingdom of God/.

Another example is over ~~Ampting~~ in Luke chapter 15, verse 20. The story of the Prodigal son who left home and went and spent all of his inheritance on loss living. And eventually ended up in a pigs pen. When he came to himself and realized his condition, he decided to go back to his Father and confess his sins and get right with him. It is an illustration of our going back home to God,

It is interesting what Vs 20 of chapter 15 says.."And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him."

And that little phrase
~~I remind you of this because that little statement "a long way off" is~~ the same word that appears in Ephesians 2 "they were far off".

And the interesting thing to me is that even though we were far away from God, it is just like the Father of the Prodigal son when he saw his son a long way off, he ran to met him. And he had compassion and went after him.

No matter how far away you are from God, ~~There is~~ or how far you seem to be from God, I want you to know that God loves you and has compassion for you.

And the Father doesn't wait for you to come to Him/. He runs to you. PRAISE GOD..., God want to come to you. And often he does that through people who lovingly care about you and share with you the Good news of Christ.

out You can be religious and be a long way off from God. The Gentiles were far away.

Another example in Acts chapter 2

Turn over to Acts, please. Here we find a definite reference in the first message on the day of Pentecost by Peter to those who were far away and those who were near.

In Acts chapter 2, Peter had preached and explained what had happened on the cross when Jesus died. And then three days later the resurrection. And the fact that Jesus was alive. And people had seen him and witnessed about him. And he proclaimed to them that they needed to repent and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Vs 39 in concluding his sermon, Peter said this: "For the promise"... (the promise of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit) "the promise is for you and your children, (He is speaking to Jews. That is clear from Vs 22). "The promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off."

Salvation is for the Gentiles also. The Jews were discribed as being near to God. The Gentiles were discribed as being "far off".

But, Peter said on the day of Pentecost: I have good news for you. The promise is not only for you and your children, you Jewish people, But I want you to know it is also going to go to those who are far off. In fact, "to as many as the Lord ^{and} God shall call to himself."

(2F) Now, ~~lets come back to Ephesians 2.~~ ~~Now, lets come back to Ephesians 2.~~ ^{Now, Lets Come To The Condition of The Gentiles - This is the Condition of all people who are not saved} In discribing this condition,

"they were formerly something" "at that time they were something"...."they were far off"...He goes on to discribe several things that were characteristic of their condition that keep them at a distance. That is at a distance from the promises of God through His people Israel.

Now, whether or not you like this, it is true. Salvation is off the Jews, said Jesus. He said it to a Samaritan woman. He said, "Slavation is of the Jew." That is the way it comes. And the Gentiles are far off.

So, today, we are talking how Gentiltes are brought into the Messianic hope

The hope of a coming messiah. One who would bring salvation to the Jewish people. It is also a hope for the Gentiles.

Circumcision of the *So Let's look at these*
From Circumcision

(16) Now, The first thing he says about the Gentiles is that they were UNCIRCUMCISED. Vs 11. He says "remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by the so-called Circumcision,"

Now, the Jews circumcise their children on the 8th day of the month. And many people ask the question, WHY? *What is the purpose*

Well, I am sure you understand that there are some medical reasons why you should circumcise your children. Medical advantages. Many people believe that the medical advantages of circumcise are ignored by Gentiles. Now, I don't want to labor the point. But I just want to say that the health factors related to that are very evident to the medical profession today.

But this is not the only reason. Some say that it was their to preserve the Messianic line. That is...circumcision *became* the means of identification in the Messianic hope. You would expression your belief in the promise of God given to Abraham. When God said to Abraham, "Out of your seed will come a line that will eventually lead to the Messiah. So, when the Jew circumcised the baby boy they were saying that they believed that *promise*. They were going to see a baby boy one day who would save his people. The messiah would come. So it is this faith on the part of parants expressing confidence in the promise of God to Abraham, which caused them to circumscise their child,

Baptism as a sign

Unfortunately, many of the Jews by the time of Jesus, had a traditional loyalty of circumcision, but now believed that circumstion gave them thier privilege.. NO! Abraham, BELIEVED GOD BEFORE HE WAS CIRACUMCIZED.

He was circumcised as an old man. He had already come to believe *in God* some 25 years before he was circumscided.

SO ~~But~~, obviously, Abrah;am was not circumcised when he believed. You know, I find that a lot of people are confused on that. If I ask you the question, WHEN WAS IT THAT ABRAHAM BECAME A BELIEVER? Was he a Gentile or a Jew? A lot of people think he was a Jew. NOT TRUE...He was a Gentile.

Abraham was a Gentile when he became a believer. He had faith in God,

Circumcision which happened many years later. And of course circumcision was the start of the Jewish nation. And Abraham was the father of it. Circumcision was the sign and the seal. If you want to read about this, study Romans chapter 4. And it is very interesting.

But, you know, the Jewish ^{people} began to look at those who were not circumcised as people for whom God could care less. In fact, in the book of Philippians they are called dogs.

And Paul even wrote that a lot of Jewish teachers who were supposed to be in the Christian camp, were requiring Gentiles to be circumcised in order to guarantee everlasting life. And Paul was saying that that is absolutely false.

But you must understand that the ^{Jews} ~~Jew~~ at the time of Jesus believed that if you were not circumcised you had no part in God's promise.

Now, before you run away from that there is some truth there. And that is that circumcision was a sign and a seal, by the parents, when they did it to the baby boy that they did believe in the promise of God to Abraham.

(26) The second thing that Paul said about the condition of the Gentiles is that they were separate from Christ. They were apart from the Messianic line.

Yes, there were some noted exceptions.

For example..Rahab, the harlot. She was a Gentile who married into the Messianic line. Tamar, another Gentile, who had a sinful relationship with Judah was brought into the line leading to Christ.

Ruth, a Moabitess, came into the line through Boaz.

There are some notable examples as exception. But, the Gentiles as a whole were outside of the Messianic line all the way up to Christ.

In Gen 12 God said to Abraham "in thee shall all families be blessed." But, during the time of Abraham and all the way down to Christ it was not realized. Except a few exceptions.

And thus the Jews came to believe that the Gentiles could not possibly be a part of God's promise and love. A few Gentile women who married Jewish men. But Gentile men- No..Unless they become circumcised and become a Gentile proselyte. And then follow ~~the~~ the rituals that were laid out for them. So, the Gentiles are without the Messianic line.

(3) A third thing that is said about the condition of the Gentiles that keep them at a distance was that they were excluded from the common wealth of Israel. That is in Vs 12. "EXCLUDED FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL."

The word "commonwealth" is our English word "politics." It can either refer to the state, or, the rights of the individual within that state.

And Paul is saying that the Gentiles were totally excluded...They never did have a part in that which is the state and the rights of Israel..... That is, until the time of Jesus Christ.

(4) A fourth thing he says about the Gentiles which are keep at a distance is that they are "strangers to the covenants of promise."

Now, I want you to look at that closely in Vs 12. In the Greek text in front of the word "promise" is the definite articule "THE." He is not talking about a promise in general. He is talking about one well known promise to the Jews. That promise is the promise to Abraham.

Now, out off that promise comes several covenants.

Let me give you an example. we speak of the promise to Abraham as "THE ABRAMAMIC COVENANT."

We speak, also, of what is called "A PALESTINE COVENANT." This refers to the land. It is an unconditional covenant. God said "I will give you that land." He made a contract, a covenant with his people. That they would have the land. He even gave the deminstions to Abraham. From the Euphrates river all the way down to the river of Egypt. They don't have all that land, today, by the way. ~~And~~ God said, "I will give you all that land."

~~They don't have all that land today.~~ But, by divine right the land is theirs. I don't care who has wone or loss wars or what you think about the present situation between Jew and Araba. God said, a long time ago, that land is yours--ISRAEL.

By the way, he also said when he brought them back into that land to made them a nation in the end time, "no one" says Amos 9, "will ever uproot them from that land again." inspite of the persecution they will receive and the hatred from the entire world. Jesus said that they would be hated by all nations of the world. But it will not change one iota of God's promise....

You will never chase them out of that land. It is a covenant based on ;the promise of God. ~~And~~ it started with Abraham. And Gentiles were strangers to the covenant of promise.

There is another covenant. God said in the framework of the Abrahamic covenant that a son of Abrham, a son of David will be seating on the throne in Jersualem and will be ruling over my people forever. We call that the ~~Davidic covenant.~~ ~~The~~ covenant of David.

Again the Bible says that the Gentiles, until Jesus, were strangers, were aliens. They had no right, no privilages, no citizenship rights until Jesus Christ, They were aliens to the covenants of promise.

So, covenants were unconditional. You say, "Wait a minuted. Doesn't the Bible say that in Abrham shall all the families of the world be blessed." YES!!! But the problem is that he was talking about only one person who would come. When he said the seed of Abrham would be the means by which the Gentiles would be blessed, he was not talking about numerous people who would be born in that line, and then have Gentile children, He is not talking about that. According to the book of Galations chapter 3, he is not talking about many seeds, many children, ~~the Bible says~~ he was talking about one seed. That the only way that God could answer the promise to Abraham that the Gentiles would soon be included was through only one seed that would come ~~about~~ out off that line. And according to Galations 3, that seed was Jesus Christ. And that is the only way the Gentiles could be saved. *Jesus - Said I am The Way*

Now, most of us here are Gentiles. And I really believe that we fail to understand the grace of our God. We have had ¹⁹⁸⁹ ~~1900~~ years of the Gentiles having the opportunity to meet Christ. And we forget that savation is of the Jew. It is first to the Jew; and then next to the Gentile. And the only reason that anyone of use could be saved is because one seed in Jewish history made it possible. Which is what this text is all about.

(56) The Bible also says in Vs 12, that they were without hope. And this is an objective hope, not subjective. You see, a lot of folks say, "Well, I hope that is true." That is subjective hope.

This is objective hope based upon the promise. The reason why we have hope is because God promised something to us. There is an objective foundation. So, Paul is saying to the Gentiles that without Jesus there is no hope.

You know, that would be a hard statement to make about a person. A doctor comes to a patient with a terminal disease and says, "There is no hope." Nothing could be so disastrous.

And Yet, many of us walk around doing our own thing, trying to run our own show, believing we have a life time to live, and we fail to realize that we have no hope apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. *Hello! you awake!*
(6G) And then he concludes this description by saying that they were without God. They were without the true God.

I think Galatians chapter 4 really pictures this. In Vs 8 Paul wrote: "However at that time, when you did not know God (meaning the real one), you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods."

You see, we speak with a certain kindness when we say that the people worshipped gods.. We put a small "G" on that word because they aren't really gods at all. They are man made gods in the classic sense of the meaning of God. ~~of~~ God is what man is not. And none of that which man, himself, has designed or created, is god. They were without God in the world in spite of their religion, or their belief in gods. *And that is true of many people today*

WELL, THAT DESCRIBES THEIR CONDITION. Are you discouraged?

(3F) Well, let's come to the cure. Why go on telling us what we don't have. Let's find out how we can get the truth....RIGHT?....THE CURE THAT BOUGHT THEM NEAR. ...EPHESIANS 2 verse 13 And notice the contrast. Vs 13...."BUT NOW"....Vs 12.."at that time separate"....BUT NOW IN CHRIST JESUS...

Do you see that. In Vs 12 "you were separated"...That is outside the sphere. *Jesus*...Vs 13..But now you are in....in the sphere of Jesus... You see, total apart from Jesus. But now I am inside....*IF you are saved!*

Oh, my friends, what assurance....what security...what confidence.... what comfort....what peace....*was there.*

The crue that brought them near. Vs 13 says.. "In Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

Do you understand? That is why the death of Jesus ^{Jesus' death} on the cross is so important. It gives to all ~~Gentiles~~, all of us, the opportunity to be saved.

The seed came--Jesus. The death of Christ occured on the cross...The sin problem solved. And we now have the opportunity to be savaed..PRAISE GOD!

And this brings us right back to Verses 8 and 9...."FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH OR BY MEANS OF FAITH....AND THAT(GRACE) was not of ~~yo~~ yourselves, it is a gift of God , not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

Oh, dear friends, if you have never ask Jesus to come into your life, you have the great opportunity, today, to become a part of God's family. You can have life and life abundantly....You can know what it means to be a child of God....NOW...AND FOR ALL ETERNITY.

^{-ad brought us near}
But Jesus died for your sins....WOULD YOU RECEIVE HIM TODAY AS YOUR PERSONAL LORD AND SAVIOR? Would you trust Him for Salvation?

LET'S CLOSE IN PRAYER

We were far off from - all religions are far off from God -