

Title: What the Cross has done(Part 2)

Text: Ephesians 2:14-18

Let's turn in our Bibles to Ephesians chapter 2....Ephesians chapter 2 beginning with Vs 14.....

(Read Vs 14-18)

PRAYER

Now, we are looking at this wonderful portion of Scripture relating to *our Position Within The Corporate Body - The church, and we are asking the question* the topic: ~~WHAT THE CROSS HAS DONE FOR US?~~ *It is*

(1E) And we noticed, first of all, that the cross brought the Gentiles to God. Vs 13 says that we(Gentiles) who were formerly far off from the promises of God have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

Salvation for all people is now possible because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

~~Now, why is this so important?~~

(2E) *But also* ~~In answering that question we need to look at~~ the cross broke down the barriers between the Jew and the Gentile. This is kind off fascinating ~~because~~ because if you had lived back during the time of Christ you would be very aware of this barrier. This wall between Jew and Gentile. ~~And~~ And I hope you realize, tonight, that that wall, psychologically and emotionally, still exist today. There is a wall between Jew and Gentile. And a lot of people whether they are Jew or Gentile do not accept the fact that Jesus Christ has broken down the wall. Now, let's take a look at this.

Vs 14 says.."For He himself is our peace." The word "peace" literally means "to bring something together." It comes from a root word meaning "to bind." And as a result there is harmony and unity. The peace that was needed to bring Jew and Gentile together..then and today...is Jesus Christ.

Now, I believe that what Jesus did ^{on the cross} brings peace. But, don't you like the way Vs 14 puts it? "HE HIMSELF IS OUR PEACE."

Oh, my friends, listen to ~~the fact that we talk about~~ ~~Jesus. Jesus is essentially a person. He is a person~~ ~~relationship with God, himself, through Jesus. It isn't~~

Oh, dear friends, please listen to me. A lot of times we talk in circles...We talk all around and about Jesus. BUT CHRISTIANITY IS ESSENTIALLY A PERSON. It is a personally relationship with God, himself, through Jesus. It isn't what you know about ~~him~~^{you} that saves you. JESUS SAVES YOU....HE... HIMSELF...IS...OUR...PEACE.

You see! No one else.....Only Jesus.....

* And dear friends, there was a great problem being solved that Paul describes as a barrier. ~~And~~ And I want you to look at that barrier for a moment.

According to Vs 14 ^{Paul} said, "For He himself is our peace, who made both (that is Jew and Gentile) both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances."

~~Now, let's take a look at the meaning of this barrier.~~ What is Paul talking about? There are two things that you must understand about this "barrier" between Jew and Gentile.

(1st) One, deals with the Temple, itself. Let's suppose, right now, that I could take you into the Temple area in Jerusalem. We are going to walk up, now, to the main Temple structure. There is a court of the Gentiles. And inside closer to the Holy Place is the court of Israel. And there is a wall in between. Actually a stone fence...And on this stone fence was placed a sign: And it was for the Gentiles. It read: If anyone who was not a Jew climbed over this stone fence he faced death.

Now, let's suppose you are a Gentile. And you are visiting from Rome. And you are confident because the Romans are in power. So, you come to this Temple area. And you enter the court of the Gentiles. And boy ^{you} ~~we~~ are amazed at the beauty of this area. And you are excited and you want to see the Holy Place. And so you start over, but you come to this stone fence. And there is the sign telling you that you are a Gentile and if you cross over this fence you face death.

Now, be honest. If that happened to you, wouldn't there be just a little bit of enmity in your heart? Sure you would...

In fact that happens whenever you come to a sign that says you can't go into a place because of your age....YOU KNOW!!!!....

You see, a sign like that and boy...It makes you want to go in....Right? I have often thought we ought to put a sign like that up in front of the ~~church~~ church, maybe it would cause folks to die to get inside...YOU KNOW..

I mean, it is just human nature. Right? The Gentiles all of a sudden get this bitterness in their heart. You understand. The sign is there all the time. They see it, every time they come into the Temple area.

So, as it relates to the Temple itself, that barrier was a literal wall,

And it had a sign telling me that if I crossed it I would die. You can imagine the hatred and the enmity that developed.

(2 ~~But~~ ^{But} there was something else behind that enmity. And that deals with the commandments of the law. You see, the Jews not only kept them out by a literal fence, but they also kept them out by all their traditions and laws. The Talmen added many, many laws and restrictions. And the Gentiles found it over bearing. They couldn't keep up with it.

By the way, ~~my~~ Jews couldn't either.

And it was those commandments and ordinances...those expansions of God's moral laws that became barriers. Jesus rebuked the religious leaders constantly on this. He said that the burdens they were laying on people ~~are~~ are keeping them out off the kingdom of God.

You can do the same thing today. You know, give people a little lists of things ~~that~~ they can and cannot do. Little standards they have to follow in order to be in your group and therefore, hope to get to heaven.

Oh, listen, Jesus crused all of that. He broke down the wall.

Long before the Roman hords destroyed Jereselm in 70 A.D. 40 years, at least before that, Jesus Christ literally broke down the wall and barrier between Jew and Gentile.

What a glorious day that was. And the means used, according to this text, was his own flesh. Vs 15..."by abolishing in His flesh the enmity which is the law of commandments."

You see, Jesus fulfilled the law. ~~No one could accuse him of anything.~~ But more then that, the penalty of the law was death. When Jesus died on that cross, he paid that penalty for everybody's breaking of the law.

So, every though you couldn't keep all 621 laws of the Talmen, Jesus, himself at the moment he died fulfilled all the ~~pr~~righteous demands of a Holy Law against sin. Every single pentality that was to be found in the law was laid on Jesus Christ. And the ~~moment~~ moment he died it was done and finished.

He "abolished" which means "to make useless". It ~~know~~ ^{no} longer could do what the Jews thought it could do. Jesus settled it. And ~~it~~ paid the pentality for it.

So, We are looking at our Position & the Church. And We are asking What has The Cross Done?

~~So, we have said the Cross. What has it done?~~ It brought the Gentiles to God. And it also broke down the barrier between Jew and Gentile. *Today - Between People*

(3E) Now, one final and amazing thing. It began a new and wonderful relationship with God. With both Jew and Gentile together in that.

Look at the end of Vs 15..."that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity,"...the hatred, the wall, the law, the commandments, all of this.

So, He did two things, according to Vs 15 and 16.

(1F) He made the two into one new *Person*; (2F) and he reconciled them both unto God. *Now* ~~one~~. *am 2* what ~~are~~ we saying?

I am We are saying that a new relationship was begun through the work that Jesus Christ accomplished at the cross. And it is described in two ways.

(1F) One, he made two into one. It takes the creative power of God to change the hearts of Jew and Gentile to make them one in Jesus Christ.

You know, we are still having trouble with that today. Even though we all might be Gentiles. We still think people ought to adopt to our way of thinking. Do you know what I mean?

Paul taught in the Word that we ought to receive one another without doubts and questioning. If we really love a brother or sister in Christ, we will ~~not~~ keep from saying things that offend them. Even if it is in a cultural life style.

WHAT MAKES US ONE? That we all have the same likes and dislikes? Are you ~~out~~ out of your mind. I mean if that is what you think, you are going to be upset the rest of your christian life.

If you think that everybody even on the same row where you are sitting is going to be just like you, forget it. I have found that even marriage does not make my wife like me. And you know, I am thankful for that...PRAISE GOD...I don't know if I could live with her...

and DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I AM SAYING? You see, we all compliment each other. We all have a ministry to perform. We are not all the same.

WHAT MAKES US ONE? JESUS CHRIST, DEAR FRIENDS. HE MAKES US ON

And in that commitment to the Lord Jesus there is a lot of flexibility and adaptability to people.

If you have this hard line ~~the~~ idea that everyone must agree with you, you are going to have very little fellowship with God's people. In fact you will probably become a hinderance to God's work, and loving people like you should. Our fellowship is around the person of Jesus Christ and what he has done on the cross. He brought two hostile groups together and made them one new person. And that newness doesn't mean a new person. But a new relationship. It is new in quality. What a wonderful thing.

(25) It also says that he reconciled them. Vs 15. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

It means to "restore" back to a former condition. What is he talking about. He is talking about before the Jews came into existence. He is talking about before the time of Abraham. He is talking about when Jews and Gentiles were not divided ~~into~~ into two camps.

He is saying that he is going to restore it back to former existence ^{but} when it will be new in quality. Not like the old human race where we still had the sin problem,, dividing people. He is going to make it new in quality because we are going to be forgiven in the Lord Jesus. And we have a new relationship one with another. THAT IS REALLY A SUPPER PRINCIPLE IN THESE VERSES.

ONE NEW PERSON. WE ARE NEW IN QUALITY, WHEN WE COME TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Our relationship to people are all of a sudden on a new bases and a new foundation.

I found this to be so no matter where you go . Have you ever run into a Christian in another part of the country? You don't know them personally. And yet there is something that brings you together. It doesn't matter how different you are. It is just fantastic how you are drawn together.

I tell you all over the world, the Lord Jesus has made ^{people} people one. There is something new in that relationship.

And if you are at odds with people.....then come to know Jesus. He will make that relationship right.....

Let's close in prayer