

Eph 2:11-22 - The Household of God (Esther 4:9- 5:2; Ps 133)

I'm sure your all know Jarred Foal is the man who lost 245 lbs on a Subway sandwich diet. In many of his commercials he holds up two things, a pair of his old 60 inch waist paints and a Subway sandwich. He wants to you know who he was, who he is, and how he got there..

Do you have that picture of yourself? Do you remember who you were? Do you know who you are now? And, do you know, how you got there? God wants you to know and remember. If some of what I say this morning sounds similar to what David said last week it is because the scripture passages are similar. It is as if God knows this news is so amazing that He wants to make sure you hear it correctly. So He says it to us twice.

I. Remember who you were vs 11,12

A. Paul starts v 11 “Therefore remember” Whenever you see a “therefore” in scripture, ask yourself, what is the “therefore” there for? It there to link this section with all he has said in chp 1 and 2:1-10. And when He says “**remember**” you have to ask yourself, remember what? Remember, who you were - dead in sin. Remember who you are now, a new creation, And remember how you got there, by grace through faith, a gift of God.

“**Houston we’ve had a problem.**” with those few simple words NASA and the Astronauts of Apollo 13 faced one of the greatest challenges of the Am. space program. There was an explosion in an oxygen tank that caused Apollo 13 to lose electrical power as it was on it’s way to orbit the moon. But today you and I face an even greater problem. I call it “The Before and After problem”.

I’m sure you’ve all seen those before and after commercials on TV? They have some for diets, exercise machines, cleaning products, or even new hair. Each commercial wants you to see some big change and how this same thing can happen to you just by buying their product.

Chester, a farmer from down south, came up to NYC and went into the Empire State building. He had never been in a building with more then one floor so he had never seen an elevator before. While he was standing in the lobby he saw a rather large lady get in the elevator and the doors close behind her. A minute later the doors opened an a very attractive young lady came out. Immediately he said, “Gaalee, I should have brought Mary Lou with me.”

In vs 11 and 12 Paul reminds us of the before, who we were before God’s grace saved us. Paul is writing to Gentiles in Eph, people like us. People, who were considered unclean and far off. People he calls foreigners and aliens. They were outsiders, heathen, and they knew it. Everything they saw everyday reminded them they were nothing. They didn’t have the mark of the covenant. They were not part of the people of God. They were without the word of God. They were in the worst condition imaginable. And so were you when you were without X. You were without hope and without God in the world. Under the curse of God and man.

B. But I bet that’s not how you felt. You probably felt pretty good and thought you were pretty good. That’s how our culture teaches us to think. I’m Ok and Your Ok. When you die you will go to heaven just for being a good person. And there is always some one worse then you, thieves, cheats, murders there’s always some worse who you can compare yourself too. **But that is not what the Bible teaches.** When you die, and God asks you, “Why should I allow you into my heaven?” what are you going to say? Because I was a good person? I was better then him. Good according to what standard? Better according to who? God’s standard is absolute perfection. The Bible says, “There is none that is good.” That, “All our works are as filthy rags.” The Bible teaches that if you are not trusting in JC alone then you are cut off, separated from God.. You are not part of His family and you are still a stranger and an alien. Paul said in **1Cor 15**, if we have hope in this life only we are to be pitied more than all men.

C. Remember who you were. You were dead in sin, lost, strangers, aliens, outcasts, separate from X. You were hopeless and helpless and without God.

II. Remember who you are vs 13, 19-22

A. Then remember who you are now. “But now in XJ you who were far off have been brought near by the blood of X” Those two beautiful words, “But now”. You are no longer a stranger. You are no longer cut off, no longer an outsider. You are now a citizen of His kingdom. You are now of the household of God. You are now part of God’s family and all other Xians are your brothers and sisters. You are now part of the largest, greatest, richest family ever. We are now all one in X. **The problem is** often want to be an only child and act like we were God’s only child.

B. Those who are united by faith in X are all united to one another in the ch, the body of X. But the manifestation of that unity is not always apparent and all of ch hist testifies to this. **In Jn 17**, what is truly the Lord’s Prayer, one of the main things Js prays for, of all the things He could pray and ask the Father for, is our unity, knowing that on it rests our own blessing and the credibility of the church's witness for Him (Jn 17:20-23).

C. But now, if you are a believer in JC, you are adopted in God’s family so that now you cry, “Abba Father” In Eph 1 Paul said, God predestined us to be adopted as His sons. This is one of the great teaching of the NT. There are over 200 references to adoption in the NT. Ji Packer says adoption is what makes a Xian, a Xian. Jn Murray says this is the highest point of Xian teaching. Adoption is the greatest thing God has ever done for us. The doctrine of the Fatherhood of God does not exist in Isl, Buddhism or Hinduism. Isl - Allah - Master - slave; Xianity - God - Father - child. Remember you’re a child of a loving Father.

D. In adoption we learn the Judge does not just forgive us and send us on our way. He takes us home to be His child and live with Him forever, as part of His family, as His very own son or daughter. Adoption here is not the picture of a couple going to an orphanage and picking out a beautiful little baby. It is the picture of a wealth man with no children who chooses to bring someone into his family and be his child an heir to all he has. God has given you all things in heaven and on earth as an inheritance in XJ. You were an outcast and an orphan and now you are a prince or a princess. If you are in X all that all that is X’s is yours. How often do you praise and thank God for adopting you to be His child?

Several years ago, there was a great song by **Bill Gaither**, “I’m so Glad I’m a Part of the Family of God.”

I’m so glad I’m a part of the Family of God, I’ve been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His Blood!

Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod, For I’m part of the family, the Family of God.

You will notice we say "brother and sister" 'round here, It's because we're a family and these are so near,
When one has a heartache, we all shed a tears, And rejoice in each victory in this family so dear.

From the door of an orphanage to the house of the King, No longer an outcast, a new song I sing;

From rags unto riches, from the weak to the strong, I'm not worthy to be here, but PRAISE GOD! I belong!

E. One in X. That says it all. God has not just forgiven us and returned us to our former condition to start all over again on our own. He has completely changed us. You are a new creation in XJ. He has given you a new birth, and new name, a new home, a new family, and a new life. You are here now, at GFC, with part of your new family and everyday your family is growing all around the world. I am from NJ but now I have family in NYC, MS, Canada, Tr. Kaz., Ug, and every country in the world. - Pastor Horvat.

F. Ask yourself, what kind of person would adopt me? Do you understand what God has done? Do you understand what a beautiful family you have? Do you praise God for it? You are a child of God. God is your Father. Everyday is a day for you to grow closer to every other Xian brother and sister. You are part of a family of faith. You are part of God’s family - the greatest family! Say it to yourself, now, I am part of God’s family! Say it to yourself everyday. I am a child of God. I am part of God’s family!

G. Remember who you are.

III. What happened and what does it mean? vs 14-18, 20-22

A. **What happened** to change us from strangers to the sons and from foreigners to a family? The answer is that Js died for our sins. You can see it in the word "blood" in v13; in the word "flesh" in v15; and again in the word "cross" in v16.

B. **What does this mean?** It means instead of being cut off, **we now have access to the Father** in heaven. This word "access" is only used 3 times in the NT. It shows permission. It implies that someone has to bring you in or allow you to come in. It implies acceptance by a higher authority. Remember the story of Esther in the OT. Esther had to have permission to have access to king Xerxes. If the King did not grant her permission and accept her into his presence she would be killed. Compare this with the words of the NT in **Heb. 4:16** "Let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find **grace** to help us in our time of need."

C. **Second this means we have been reconciled to God. The great dividing wall** of hostility between God and man has been torn down and we are no longer outsiders, strangers and aliens. This picture of a great wall is taken from the layout of the Temple. This is more than just the separation of the Temple veil in the Holy of Holies. Our situation was much worse. We are talking of Gentiles who were forbidden from coming into the Temple. There was a 12 ft wall 14 steps below the Temple beyond which they could not go. They were far off. And on the wall was posted a notice in several languages saying that if you attempted to go beyond this wall you would be killed and no one would be responsible for your death but you. The message was, "Don't enter or we'll kill you!" But now, Paul says X has destroyed that wall

"Tear down this wall." Those were the words of Ronald Reagan to Mikhail Gorbachev on June 12th 1987, in a speech at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany. Soon after that speech Germans on both sides of the wall began destroying the wall until it was completely torn down.

But that wall was nothing compared with the wall that Paul is speaking about. This barrier was greater than any earthly wall. It was a wall that separated us from God, and you from me and me from you, and you from you. It separated us all. But now X has torn down that wall and there is no long Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, young or old, rich or poor. We are all one in X. The text says, "For through X we all have access in one Spirit to the Father."

C. **Third, this means that when you pray and go into the presence of God your Father** you are not alone. When you look around you see your family there with for you. We pray "Our Father who art in heaven..." not "my Father..." because we are a family. You pray for other Xians and they pray for you. When you pray for your children others are praying for your children. When you pray for your job, your neighbor, the church other are praying with you and for you. X is praying for you, and the HS is praying for you. You don't need to pray to a saintly person, or to someone you think it closer to God than you are. You can pray directly to the Father!

During the Civil War a Union soldier was shot and knew he was going to die. He was alone behind the enemy lines. He cried out for someone to pray with him. Finally, a Confederate officer came by and got off his horse and placed his hand on the man's shoulder. The man put his hand in the officer's hand and they began to pray. There in the last moments of his life he realized they had more in common, more that united them in death and in X than ever separated them in life. The point is why don't we learn to live like that now? Not just die like that?

D. **This means, because the wall is torn down we are citizen of the greatest kingdom on earth**, the Kingdom of God. Remember Peter words, "you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God." God is our Father and the Father is the King and we are His children. **I'm a child of the King!**

I once was an outcast stranger on earth, A sinner by choice and an alien by birth;

But I've been adopted my name's written down, An heir to a mansion, a robe, and a crown.

I'm a child of the King, a child of the King. With Js my savior, I'm a child of the King.

E. **Finally, Look carefully at vs 20, 21** Paul tells us that this house that we are part of is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and that Js Himself is the chief cornerstone. This is very important for us at GFC right now as we search for a new pastor. We must find some one who will continue to build GFC upon the foundation of the Word of God. Js said you can't build a house upon the sand. You must continue to build this church and your life on the only sure foundation, the word of God and JC, the chief cornerstone, the solid Rock.

Con:

Let me give you some very **practical examples** of oneness in X.

A. **Welcome newcomers every week.** Make it a weekly aim to welcome someone you don't know. Talk to the people you don't know. Now I'm talking to myself. I'm not naturally an outgoing person and I don't remember names well at all. - James' name

B. **Invite people** to come to church with you. 80% of newcomers come to church because someone invited them and brought them. Have you checked the ch website for folks from your street who came to the movie night this summer? Have you thought about inviting them to church?

C. **Be glad** for the different ethnic groups we have in our church and community and learn from them.

Remember who you were, hopeless and helpless. This will guard you from boasting.

Remember who you are, a forgiven, an adopted child of God. This gives you reason to praise God.

Remembering how you got there, XJ died for your sins. This gives you a message to tell others.