

Ephesians 2:19-22

Intro:

Church, you are the New Humanity, the creation of the Almighty God for the praise of the glory of His grace. We move forward by His grace, centered upon Jesus Christ and His glorious gospel. With joy we expect to be convicted of our sins together and to find the beautiful grace of Jesus as superabundant to us to forgive us, change us, and draw us ever closer to Him as we, by degrees, are made much more heart conscious of His grace toward us leading us to love Him more deeply every day.

We move *together*, knowing the greatness of His kindness toward failures like us and seeing the glory of His grace which He revealed upon the cross. Here we are not merely young or old, richer or poorer, black or white, male or female, but we are the Redeemed Ones, made pure by His blood and reconciled by His life. Jesus binds us together, my siblings, making us into a new nation which supersedes race and cultural identity. He brings us into a new family, where our Father is God whose love is completely secure and our home is a place of rest where we are held accountable in this family to obey our loving Father together. He brings us into a new calling, where His very Spirit lives among us, calling us to repentance and humility, to faith and joy as He hones us and shapes us to glorify Him, the giver of life and the gracious Savior of each one who trusts Him alone. And all of these blessings He has given to us out of the kindness of His will and the grace of His heart. None of us, no matter your past successes, deserve these places of honor within His Kingdom, family, or dwelling. None of us has any room to boast over another person for what God has done on our behalf. For, it is all by His grace that we are what He is making us to be.

I want to look today at what God has called you into, fellow believers in Jesus Christ. Our hope of becoming the people that God desires us to be in our relationships begins with understanding who we are, together, as the New Humanity of God.

God has given us three intense images of who you are as the New Humanity and what He is making you to be as His holy habitation. Let us listen with humility to the Word of God and resolve to humbly surrender in obedience to the gospel of grace and boldly depend upon the God who accomplished our redemption and every spiritual blessing in His Son.

God uses three images to show us that He has created a new community built upon His Son and unified in worship through Him.

1. Fellow citizens with God's people — verse 19a

- a) Here we are called a new nation.
- b) While we were formerly “foreigners” and separate from the citizenship of Israel, we are now brought near to God by the blood of Christ to be fellow citizens with believers from all ages
 - i. Our relationship to each other in Christ is to be stronger than our relationship to other members of our racial and national groups.
- c) When you become a Christian, you are not primarily from Ohio or Germany or Asia; you are not primarily Anglo, African-American, Asian, Hispanic; you are not primarily white collar or blue collar.
- d) You are primarily a co-citizen of God's nation.

2. Members of God's household — verse 19b

- a) Formerly without God, without hope, without promises
- b) This means, moreover, that we are adopted into God's family; we are brought into his home.

- c) We are not only citizens, but sons and daughters, brothers and sisters.
 - i. Not secondary citizens, or merely immigrants, we have been made family
 - ii. Family in the household of God
3. In him... a holy temple... built together, a dwelling of God the Spirit – verses 21, 22
- a) We are a building, in which the glory of God's Spirit dwells.
 - i. Founded on the cornerstone of Jesus Christ
 - 1. The cornerstone was the first stone set in the foundation from which all other stones found their bearings and alignment
 - 2. Jesus sets the form and lays out the standard which every other stone fits
 - ii. Built on the apostles and prophets
 - 1. The ones whom God used to write the Scriptures and reveal Himself
 - 2. Both the OT and the NT are the words of God (2 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 1:20-21)
 - b) His royal presence enters our lives and takes up residence in us based upon the person of Jesus.
 - i. He dwells among the *community* of the Redeemed, not only within us individually
 - ii. We are being built *together* into the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (v22, emphasis on together)
4. *Each of the three images increases in intensity.*
- a) Each image exhibits a closer and more intimate relationship to God.
 - i. A king lives *in the region* with his people; a father lives *in the same house* with his children. But the Spirit actually lives *inside* the very temple.
 - b) Each image exhibits a closer and more intimate relationship between the community members.
 - a) Citizens are tied by social contract, siblings by genetic code and upbringing, but stones of a temple are literally cemented to one another.

If we are a nation, a family and a temple, how should that effect the way we live?

In general, the intensity of these images cannot be squared with merely attending church on Sunday — even regularly. These images imply a far deeper involvement in the church.

- 1. A New Nation — Cross-cultural
 - a. We have a KING together that rules us and unites us

- b. This image implies that:
 - i. We are making close friends with people from groupings, classes or races who, apart from the gospel, we'd never know or care to know.
 - ii. We are Christian *first* and white or black or Asian, second. We are Christian first and rich or poor or middle class, second.
 - iii. We do not let our old class divisions divide us.
- c. There is a King-first mentality to all that we do in this Kingdom and through this Kingdom.
 - i. The Kingdom is about the King. It is not a democracy that we have been transferred to (Col 1:13), but to a theocratic Kingdom.
 - ii. Our very presence, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic, proclaims the glory of the King
 - iii. Our humble submission to His Word and desires proclaim the glory of the gracious King (Lev 11:45; 1 Pet 1:15-16)

2. A Family — Personal Accountability

- a. We have a Father who loves us all and we serve Him together
- b. This image implies that:
 - i. We do not simply “have meetings” but we share many of the basic activities of life with other believers
 - 1) eating together
 - 2) recreation
 - 3) prayer
 - 4) spending time
 - 5) sharing homes and possessions.
 - ii. We are letting our whole lives be in contact with whole lives of some other Christians.
 - iii. You are accountable personally to some others. You have shared enough about your sins, and you spend enough time with others so that people really see whether you are growing in Christ.
- c. We wrestle together, seeking together to please our Father who loves us
 - i. There is a God-first humility among the children, for the Father is glorious One who bears the family name.
 - ii. We passionately seek purity in life for we were saved by the blood of Jesus to be pure (Titus 2:14)
 - 1) Because we are children, we are to imitate our Father in holiness (1 Peter 1:13-19; Eph 5:1)
 - 2) The proof of our pardon is in our passion for purity (Piper)

3. A Spiritual Temple of the Spirit — Corporate Spirituality

- a. The Almighty Holy Creator is in our midst
 - i. Humbled and Fearful
 - 1) Humbled by the fact that God has graciously indwelt us
 - a. We are broken, weak, finite,
 - b. Our sins humble us to repentance
 - 2) Fearful by the fact that GOD has graciously indwelt us

- a. Holy, Awesome, Eternal, Righteous, King, Master
 - b. His holiness humbles us in awe
 - ii. Emboldened and at Rest
 - 1) Emboldened by the fact that He is with us
 - a. We can trust His promises and take risks for He is utterly powerful to effect change and accomplish good
 - b. His gracious power emboldens us because His very Spirit is among us to build us into His dwelling place
 - 2) At rest in His work
 - a. He has pardoned us by the blood of Christ, and lives to secure our salvation
 - b. His powerfully effective work leaves us at rest of striving to accomplish our salvation
- b. This image implies that:
 - i. We are praying with others and letting them see how you really feel about God. It is *together* that we are inhabited. Your spirituality is no longer private.
 - ii. We experience God *with* other people with some consistency.
 - 1) *Corporate* prayer, study, worship, and work, etc.
 - 2) De-emphasis of the individual spirituality that has pervaded our society and our churches
- c. The presence of the Spirit implies a deep, humble, God-first repentance among the stones... *we are the stones meant for the glory of the Resident.*
 - i. Jesus is the cornerstone of this Temple, the One holding it together
 - ii. Indwelled by the Spirit, we are to set ourselves against the flesh *together* and see His purposes are ours

Conclusion:

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, based upon the grace of God alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone, is the unifying presence between all people groups. It breaks down racial and social barriers because we are all equally in need of God's grace, being equal in guilt before Him. We endow others, all others in the church with honor, because we are all called to the same purpose: to glorify God, to build His reputation as the Gracious King, the Gentle Father, and the Glorious God. We work together, with one heart and in one mind, to proclaim the goodness of God shown in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the One who has redeemed us from the power of sin and guilt and has set us free and set us high in the heavenlies in Himself. This is the Gospel.

We have hope for every person in this world, no matter how far away from Jesus they may seem, for we are saved by grace, not because we are better, wiser, or more knowledgeable than they are. We do not coerce anyone into the Kingdom, for we are saved by grace, not by a mere choice or words spoken from the mouth. We were born again due to His kindness and His mercy and His grace, so must they be. We embrace every culture while being critical of every culture, including our own. We live lives of complete openness with our deepest struggles and call each other to repentance of sin

together and we rejoice in the greatness of His grace in Jesus Christ together. We all need Jesus, from the “least of this world to the greatest.” May we relate to each other as those who have been saved by grace: fellow immigrants made citizens by His kindness, fellow orphans made children by His love, and fellow stones being made into a glorious temple of His glory by His grace.

Sola Deo Gloria: To God Alone be the Glory.

Keep your eyes focused upon your SAVIOR, your REDEEMER. Let the grievous repentance of our hearts due to the greatness of our sin become the joyous praise to the One who has forgiven us and called us into His family and blessed us with every spiritual blessing in His Son by pure and radical grace...together.