

God's Care Received  
God's Caring Way: Incarnation  
Ephesians 2:11-22

Intro: Next week we begin the second section of this series: God's Care Expressed.

The extent to which God cares is best illustrated in all that he has done through his One and Only Son, Jesus. God sent his Son to live among us and die for our sins. God brings us near to himself and near to one another through the death of his Son. God chose to accomplish this reconciliation between Jew and Gentile by becoming human, thereby to "create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace" (Eph. 2:15).

**I. The STRANGER WHO JOINED US: Formerly**

- A. Two categories of people: the world divided between uncircumcised and circumcision.
  - 1. It is a religious partition, of course, just as most of the strongest barriers are.
  - 2. "Uncircumcised" is a label that the Gentiles were given by the Jews. It describes them in terms of what they have not received. Of course, circumcision is usually administered when the child is an infant, so neither the Jew nor the Gentile has made a conscious choice about his religious affiliation.
  
- B. Remember where you came from. The spiritual condition of the Gentile: Ephesians 2:12:
  - 1. Separate from Christ
  - 2. Excluded from citizenship in Israel
  - 3. Foreigners to the covenants of promise
  - 4. Without hope
  - 5. Without God in the world
  
- C. YOU WERE IN A PLACE FAR, FAR AWAY.
  - 1. Paul describes the startling spiritual TRANSPORTATION of the Gentiles who were once alienated and left out.
  - 2. Someone came to get us. He was the STRANGER FROM GALILEE, as the songwriter described him.
  - 3. He came to live among us as one of us. We knew that he was special, different.
  - 4. He died on a cross far away from the thrones of power, the halls of justice in this world.
  - 5. He died on a cross far away from peace and security.
  - 6. He died saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He died feeling far away from the arms of God, as far away as any sinner ever felt. For he carried on sin to the cross.

\*\*\*On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame  
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best, for a world of lost sinners was slain

- D. BUT NOW: Just as there was a "but" in the first part of this chapter, so there is a "but" in this second section.
  - 1. "But God" is followed by "but now."
  - 2. Our transportation was "in Christ Jesus."
  - 3. We who were "far away" have been "brought near."
  - 4. Through the blood of Christ—God has brought about this

**II. THE CAPTAIN WHO FREED US:** He himself is our peace V 14

- A. Christ is one of us, but he rose above us to become the "captain of our salvation." "Captain" is archegos—"pioneer," "the first leader" (Hebrews 2:10).
  
- B. It was through his death on the cross, on a hill far away, it seemed, from the blessing and activity of God, that Jesus accomplished our RECONCILIATION.
  - 1. The word "reconcile" assumes that at one time we were in harmony. That was in the original creation of God before our first ancestors sin and sin invaded the world as a pervasive presence in the human family.
  - 2. "Reconcile" means to bring back together. That is what Christ did for us.
  
- C. Jesus created a NEW MAN out of Jew and Gentile. He made a CHRISTIAN. The Christian cares not where you came from. Your ancestry does not determine your destiny. You do not become a Christian through biology or genealogy. You can only become a Christian through the cross of Christ, trusting in Christ alone and what he did for you on the cross.

This is an amazing PEACE that Jesus became between Jew and Gentile. It is sinful that Christians continue to have hostilities toward Jews and vice versa. Jesus died to put to death that hostility.

- D. Jesus reconciled us to God by blasting away the barrier between us and God.

1. The law with its commandments and regulations was the barrier that stood between us and God. Every time we looked toward God, felt a movement of our heart to come to him, we sense the presence of the LAW. It stands guard against us.
2. Jesus destroyed that barrier, the "dividing wall of hostility." He did so with his death upon the cross.

\*\*\*The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom when Jesus died. That veil had hidden away the Holy of Holies for more than a thousand years. I saw in the Holy Land the ruins of two temples dating from the time at or before Moses. I saw the sacred place where the priest went in to meet God. It was always partitioned off from the rest of the building and the rest of the world. It was walled in, and we were walled out.

Jesus body was the veil, the partition, that was torn. Through Christ the barrier was eliminated between us and God. The way is open to the Holy of Holies. "Whosoever will may come," just as Jesus said.

E. We who were strangers to the covenants of promise now have access through Christ to God.

### III. THE HERO WHO WELCOMES US: with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone (Eph 2:20).

A. Christ is one of us, but he is the leader who completed the work of our transportation and transformation and became the presence that permeates his church.

\*\*\*At the old church on St. Charles there was a cornerstone with the information about the construction of the church carved into it. It had a time capsule buried in it, which we exhumed. But we could not remove the cornerstone. It was so anchored into the building that we gave up the idea of bringing it with us in the move. Other building plaques were moved from Delachaise in 1954 when the church made that move. But this cornerstone was immovable.

B. We are members of God's household, citizens with all rights and privileges.

C. Christ is building something now in this world. A "holy temple" is rising from the ruins at the cross. It is a temple where Jesus is the chief cornerstone, the apostles and prophets are the foundation, and we are part of the superstructure.

D. God lives in this building that has risen brand new through the work of Christ. By his Spirit he dwells in his church.

E. This is the new INCARNATION of Christ—his body, the church. He is no longer a stranger. He calls us friends. We are one with him. He is accomplishing his work in the world through this building, the church, in which the Spirit dwells.