

Paul, Steward of the Mystery of Christ.

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Date: 22 August 2021

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[0:00] Good morning.

Good morning. This morning we'll be finishing the sermons through Ephesians chapter 2. We've had I think about four sermons through chapter 2. Maybe five actually. I'm not sure. But I think it's good that we've taken our time to get through this chapter. Because in this chapter especially Paul unfolded for us the manner in which we are saved. What we're saved from and what we're saved to. And what God has instituted in that plan of salvation. The new humanity that he has created. So it's a really worthwhile time we've gone through.

[1:08] And this morning we'll be going through verse 19 to 22. Before we do that let us pray. Heavenly Father we thank you Lord for.

As Paul has revealed to us before the foundation of the world. You had planned to save a people. To call a people to yourself. You send your son into the world. To deliver us from. Our hopeless estate. To bring us from death to life. Not only that Lord. You've called. People from all tongues and tribes. From ethnic groups. Into your kingdom. Into your family. Thank you Lord that you've. In your mercy you've called us. In this church. You've established us. As living members. Of your son. You've built us up.

[2:11] And you are building us up. Into. A holy temple. Help us Lord. Now as we enter into these. As we go into these verses.

By the power of the Holy Spirit. Open. Our minds. Eyes. To hear. What you have to say to us. To grasp it. And give us the will.

To obey it. We pray all this. In the name of our Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ. Amen. Remember where we left off last week.

Paul. As just told us. In verse 18 of chapter 2. That. Through him. That is Jesus. We both have access. In one spirit.

To the father. That is Jew and Gentile. That's the both groups. He's referring to there. But it extends beyond. Those just two groups. It is through Jesus Christ. That. All people.

[3:12] Whatever. Nation groups. You come from. Whatever. Demographics. You fit in. Whatever. What. Are you. Characterize yourself. It is through.

Jesus. That you have access. To God the father. It is only through him. That you can have access. To God the father. And so. We left off. With Paul. Speaking of this.

Access that we have. Through Christ. So much so that. We can now say. We. Who were alienated. Without hope in the world. Without the promise of Messiah. Without the covenant.

We can now. Call God our father. God has brought us near. Into one new humanity. Paul tells us. The access that has been denied.

All of us. Really. Even the Jews. Because of our sins. Has now been secured. By Jesus Christ. By his shed blood. On the cross.

[4:06] For our sins. So that we. Who were formerly alienated. Can now approach God. With all the boldness. Of a child. Going to a beloved father.

So. It is in this. Now that Paul goes on. In the. Remaining three. Verses here. That he. He kind of expounds. And shows us the implications. Of all that.

That we have. In terms of that. Access to God. And he says. So then. He begins in verse 19. So then. You are no longer strangers.

And aliens. For you are fellow citizens. With the sins. And members of the household of God. The so then. That. Of course. Builds on what.

Paul had just previously said. Yet. What he has in mind. Is to show us. The implications. Of this new work. That God has begun in Christ.

[5:06] His intent. Paul's intent. Is to show the Gentiles. Specifically. His Gentile readers. The implications. Of the new privileges. That. They now have.

As people of God. Imagine that these people. As he has characterized them. In verse 11 and 12. They were alienated. They were outside. On the outside. Looking in. And now. They have been ushered in.

They might. You might not. They might have. What we call. The imposter syndrome. Have you heard of that before? Imposter syndrome. Imposter syndrome. As is explained. Is when you. Even though you might be qualified. You've earned it. But you still feel. Like you know. You feel like. People have made a mistake. In putting you there.

I felt that. In these past weeks. A few times. In my new role as director. Imposter syndrome. Is something. It's not so much. Something that happens to people.

[6:07] Who are not qualified. You might have been. You're well qualified. But you feel. For whatever reason. In fact. I was reading about this. This week. It often happens. To people who are. Sort of. Well qualified.

Well. You know. So the syndrome. Is something that the Gentiles. Might be having here. You know. They've been on the outside. All of their lives. Now they've been ushered in. To.

To the presence of God. Now they're family members. Can you imagine. What it is like. To go to. To another person's. Family.

Visit them. You recognize. This is not your home. You're a visitor here. They might be friendly. They might even. In fact. Sometimes you go to people. That you know very well.

You still go to their homes. And you go in. And you know. This is not my home. So you. Ask differently. You comport yourself differently. Because why? This is not my home.

[7:03] These people are not my family. So I need to act. You know. Not the same way you act. When you're home. You all know how you act. In your own living rooms. With your own family.

The ease of comfort. That you have. You don't have to think about anything. You just come. You know. You just. You yourself. Fully at home. Rested. At peace. Now.

You go to someone else's home. You don't act that way. You act differently. The Gentiles might be feeling this way. The Jews have always been in. They've always been part of God's people. Now. Of course. God has brought them.

Even them there as well. But. Those who are on the outside looking in. Especially. Might have these sense of imposterism. But. Paul is trying to tell them. That.

That. All of them. Both Jew and Gentiles. Christians. Who are now believers in Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ. They've been ushered in. And Christians are those who have their lives.

[7:59] And. And those Christians are not those who have their lives put together. Right. Especially. Being Gentiles. Already being immersed in a pagan culture. Now. Coming into the family of God.

They have to. They're now learning what it is to be. In obedience to God's will. To live according to God's ways. These are the things that they have to learn to do.

Can you imagine. Maybe. Maybe it's not a family. Maybe. Maybe you can. Have a feeling of that. When you first became. Came. Into. Into. The family of God.

When you were saved. And you came. You came into the church. Some of you. Might have grown up in the church. So. It's always been home for you. But.

Some of you. Might. Might have. Might know what that feels like. Having been in the world. And now. Coming. Into Christ. And being part of God's family. You might feel.

[8:58] In some ways. Well. I've got to act differently here. I've got to do this differently. You might feel a little bit. Unease. But this is what Paul is trying to say.

Christians are. Those. Are those. Not necessarily. Who have their lives put together. Christians are those.

Who. None of them. None of us. In the household of God. Qualify. In and of ourselves. To be in the household of God. The point that Paul is trying to make. Is that. It is.

In Christ. That we qualify. Right. Our qualification. Our access. Is. In Christ. All of us.

Those who have lived. In the household of God. All their lives. And those who are just being. Ushered in. All of us have access. In Christ. So.

[9:53] This idea of. Imposter syndrome. Although it might be there. Paul is trying to affirm. And. And. And tell these. Gentile believers. And all of us. That.

You might feel that way. But that's not who you are. You're not a stranger anymore. You're not aliens anymore. You are fellow citizens. With the saints.

And members of the household of God. The progression of those. Characterizations. Is. Is. Is. Is. Is. Even. Important. Strangers. In a. In a city like Ephesus. Ephesians. Will probably also.

Be considered Romans. Because. It's a. It's a Roman. It's a Roman city. And so. Just like Paul himself. Paul of Tarsus.

Was. He was able to claim Roman. Citizenship. Because Tarsus. Where he was born. Was a Roman. Roman city. Right. So. The Ephesians. Might. Might be Romans. They're also Ephesians.

[10:49] You might. You know what it means. To be a stranger. In a different land. Some of you might know. I know a little bit. Of what it means. To be. A stranger. In a different land. And.

And. What it means then. To feel like a stranger. Or even. The rights that are accorded to you. I wasn't born in this country. I later became a citizen. Um. And the rights that are accorded to you. When you're a resident alien. You have rights. Right. But you don't have. The same rights of a citizen. You don't. We live in a. In a country where you are protected. All of us.

Whether a citizen or not. Under the law. But you don't have. The full privileges. Of a citizen. Um. Here. Paul is saying. Gentiles. You're not just resident aliens.

They have been welcoming to live. Right. In the household of God. You're not just. Welcome. Favored. You know. Strangers. You are. No. You.

[11:44] You. Are. Also. Fellow. Citizens. Right. You might be new. But you have the full rights of citizenship. But not only that. You are members.

He goes even deeper than just a. A legal citizenship. Nation. Thing. You're members of the household of God. Now. He. He. He. Puts it in familiar terms.

Members of the household of God. You are. One. Together. One new humanity. There is no separation. There is no distinction. With God.

In. In God's eyes. Between. Any of you. There is no walls. There are no walls. So then Jews and Gentiles alike.

Make up this new humanity. All the deep seated hatred. That existed. Between these two Jews. The hostility. Between them. Has all been reconciled in Christ.

[12:42] They now. All of you. All of us in Christ. Now possess a peace. That Paul talks about last week. Uh. In. We talked about last week. In. In chapters.

14. In verse 14 to 18. We now all possess a peace. That is true Christ. God himself. Jesus Christ. Being our peace. This is a peace that the world cannot explain.

Or justify. There is no other place. There is no other place. That in the household of God. In the church. That you can have peace.

With people from different. Groups. Think of the church. In the New Testament. Think of the people. What makes up these different people. Jew.

Gentile. That's one distinction. Paul later talks about the distinctions. In the New Testament church. Slave. And master. Right.

[13:37] Romans. Greeks. Barbarians. Think of all that in. The walls of hostility. Outside of the church. That has been built up.

That exists. Between all these different groups. Male. And female. Now Paul says. That all of those things. All of those differences.

Now. In God's family. Have been done away with. We all have equal access to God. You're not strangers. You're not resident aliens.

You're fellow citizens. With all the rights. The citizenship accords. You have full protection. You have the backing of the king. Himself. Not only. Even the citizens.

But even as members. Of the king's family. There's a deeper sense there. You're royalty. You're members of the king's family.

[14:33] So. When you are in the household of faith. You're a family member. Think of the ease. With which you operate. In your own family. Well.

Paul is saying. This is the reality. Whether you feel it or not. This is who you are. In God's house. Your family member. And he goes on in verse 20.

It says. This. Thing that God has instituted. This new one humanity. Is built. On the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself.

Being the cornerstone. The foundation of the church. According to Paul. Paul. Is built. Is built. On the foundation. Of the apostles and prophets. What he means by that.

Is not so much that. The apostles and prophets themselves. Are the foundation. But it's built. On that which. They have done. What they've proclaimed. The foundation of the church.

[15 : 30] Is the word of God. Revealed to the church. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Through the apostles. And the prophets. Now. Think of the idea of foundations.

You build a house. You're attempting to build a house. That's probably the most important thing. In determining the longevity. The life.

The well. Being of that house. Is the foundation. Foundation. And. It's something that you must do well. When you do it. Because it's not the kind of thing.

That you can always tinker with. Right. If you're tinkering with your foundation. Then there's a lot of. You have a lot of problems. With your house. So the foundation is laid once.

And does not need to be laid again. That's what Paul is. Is. Is. Is. Emphasizing it. We are being built. On a foundation. That's already been laid. The apostles and prophets.

[16 : 29] Why. Those two. Names. Apostles. And prophets. Are offices of the church. And those offices. Are. Offices that were instituted by God.

For a time. For a special. Thing. The idea that the apostles. Now. You know. The Roman Catholic Church. Believes that. The Pope. Is. A continuation of the apostles.

They wouldn't really say. They. They. They wouldn't say. The Pope is an apostle. But he sits. In the office of. Of the apostle. And so. He. Institutes.

Or he can. Correct. Or amend. Or tinker with the foundation. Right. Paul is actually saying the opposite here. It's been laid.

It's been laid. Once and for all. By. In the office of the apostles. Jesus promised us that he would call that he would give the apostles insight and knowledge to make known his word to the church the apostles instituted it was through them that the church was planted it is especially not only that the church was planted through them it is through the apostles that the new testimony was given to us and so this foundation that Paul is talking about is the word of God that is being given that has been revealed through the apostles and the prophets in the New Testament church you have to appreciate the fact that they didn't have the scriptures as we have it in the New Testament church we have the Bible already finished and available to us in the church in the later generations in the early generations of the church they didn't have the prophets when Paul is writing this he's writing it in time the Ephesians didn't have Colossians and 1 Corinthians and even any of the gospels so the office of the prophets is to proclaim God's word to the God's people this is New Testament prophets that he's talking about here often times people might think that this is referring to the Old Testament prophets but it isn't because later on he says even in chapter 3 verse 5 and in chapter 4 verse 11 he again talks about these two offices together right and so these are the foundations of the church that has been laid once do you recognize that it will be problematic if there are multiple foundations to a building so this is what Paul is saying this foundation is laid once

[19 : 06] God is appointed according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 2 or 2 God is appointed in the church 1st apostles 2nd prophets and Paul goes on in 1 Corinthians 3 11 he says no one can lay a foundation other than which is laid which is Jesus Christ right so essentially really Jesus is the foundation that has been laid it is what is the proclamation of the apostles what is there revealed in the New Testament in the proclamation of the gospel it is that Jesus is the foundation for the church right so that is the foundation that has been laid and Paul actually goes on and says that Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone so you have this metaphor of a building right foundation has been laid once right so that the implication of that also is that there are no new apostles now that can come around and say well I have a new revelation that I can build I can build on to what has already been revealed right no it's been revealed it's been sealed it's been given to the church this is the foundation upon which the church stands it is the word of God we'll come back to that the significance of that later but then it talks about Jesus being the cornerstone

I'm not a builder not an architect I know very literal actually about what it means to build a house but I did some reading this week and think of this especially it's not this is not our modern houses this is a stone house right living stones brick by this is the metaphor that Paul is using this is building a house of stones and Paul says that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone what's the significance of the

cornerstone in a building it holds the house up it is every other stone that is laid is in asked to be in conformity to the cornerstone that has already been laid asked to fit into the structure and the way in which the cornerstone has been laid so the significance of Jesus is the cornerstone Jesus is the one who anchors and guides every other stone that is being laid everyone who comes to Christ by faith then is part of this building that is being laid it's part of the living stones being anchored anchored in and being fitted together and Paul goes on and says in him that is in Jesus Christ this old structure is being joined together and it grows into a holy temple in the Lord there is a present tense implication of this all these verses this is being done this structure that is being built is still presently being constructed right there is a past tense note the past tense the foundation has been laid it has been laid already once and for all

Jesus is the cornerstone that is fixed now the living stones are being added you and I each one of us individually the church of God is our living stones being brought in into this building that is being constructed by God himself Paul gives us even a further insight into this building it's not just any building it is the holy temple of the Lord Jesus being built together this is God himself fitting us together in Christ we see that all along this building this temple that is being built it makes sense for Paul to use to refer to this building as a temple isn't it because what is the significance of a temple with God's covenant people it is the place where God's presence resides among God's people God promised Moses that his glory his Shekinah glory that is his presence will be in this temple among his people when Solomon erected the temple God's glory if you remember that in first in chronicles God's glory came visibly so that people can see God's the ark that is in the holy of holy signifies God's presence among his people God's very presence and glory presence situated among his people in the temple now Paul is saying something here the church is the new temple the church has superseded!

the Jerusalem temple as God's dwelling place and in it in this new temple there are no walls of division as in the old temple all have been welcomed in and all have the same access to the father through Jesus Christ so as we know welcome into this temple and all have access to God the father through Jesus Christ this holy temple as it's being built up as the foundation has been laid Jesus is the cornerstone we're being ushered in we're being fitted together what is the matter if stones if you're building a stone edifice and if those stones can talk imagine for a second do you imagine that it's going to be something that is easy the idea of being fitted together into a holy temple it's not an easy thing now Paul says we're living stones we are living stones and we're being fitted in together imagine then as you're being fitted together into this body that is the holy temple the church is it an easy thing to be fitted in you might be a jagged stone fitted in against a smooth edged stone and you need and

[25 : 47] God himself being the architect is fitting you in together it's not an easy process and we're sinners right saved undoubtedly by grace but we are sinners and we're being fitted into this group it's not an easy process it takes pruning it takes it takes it takes God actually you know by his Holy Spirit putting us together and there might be tension that is that is natural right if you follow the matter it is going to be a natural occurrence this tension as we're being built together but this is the promise of God that it is God doing the fitting together it is God doing the building right bringing us to himself and constructing this holy temple and so as we're being fitted in together it should allow us to have a sense of patience forbearance with one another when you feel the tension of being part of the living stone that has been fitted into God's holy temple it isn't then that you say well I don't want to be part of this living stone anymore if you're in Christ you have to be part of the edifice that God is building there is no sense in the

New Testament of a believer that is not part of the church it's a natural thing now in the modern times for us to go from one church to the other you might feel oh well that that other stone is too it's too pointy and it's nudged me too hard I need to find another building there is no other building that's the point Paul is making there are different local churches but the point Paul is making is you are being fitted together you go to that other local church there's going to be another stone that's going to hit you in a way that is not there is no place the church of God is actually a place where none of us can be adhered because it isn't a place where we come together out of a common affinity of well we all have the same interests we all have the same hobbies we all have the same background that might be true to some extent but what

God is doing and what God is building is not based on the similarities that we in the world see among each other the only similarity that God sees and that he honors in this building of his church

is that you are in Christ Jesus this is why also as people of God's church we welcome all people to come into it as long as they proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior or as long as they are willing to hear the gospel proclaim so that they might then be given the offer of salvation all are welcome so we're being built together and we're growing God grows us into a holy temple in the Lord Jesus Christ Paul goes on in the last verse in him also you are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the spirit this built together this idea of a temple is a fulfillment of Old

Testament prophecy in Isaiah 28 16 Paul says behold I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion a stone a tested stone a precious cornerstone of a sure foundation whoever believes will not be in haste right Christ is the foundation is the cornerstone that has been laid and it is in this foundation that has been laid now that God has called into his new temple people from every nation and tongue to be part of it we are being built together again notice the present tense sort of active ongoing aspect of Paul's language we are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Holy Spirit what is it then to meet what does it mean to us then that God dwells among us in the church God's presence is no longer in the

Old Testament temple God's presence is in his church God's presence is glory even is Shekinah glory dwells here among us we are the temple of God you it's not just individual here when Paul talks about it in 1 Corinthians you are the temple oftentimes we read that we think well I personally am the temple of God there's a fact in which you are your body is the temple of God because the Holy Spirit resides in you but Paul has in view the community actually of God it's a you plural language you the people of God are the temple of God you are God's temple and he's being built what does it also mean then as God dwells among us to know that we are still being constructed how does it help us then to see that we are as part of this body as we're being presently constructed we ought to be recognizing that God is still working in us

[31 : 32] God hasn't finished yet with us there's a picture of that in revelations 21 Paul talks about the temple of God John sees this vision and he says it I'm reading verse 1-6 here then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more and I saw the holy city new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for a husband and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying behold this is the dwelling place of God the dwelling place of God is with men he will dwell with them they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God he will wipe every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more!

neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away and he who was seated on the throne said behold I am making all things new also he said write this down for these words are trustworthy and true and he said to me it is done I am the alpha and the omega the beginning and the end a time is coming when this holy temple will be finally constructed what would it look like when it is finally constructed all these stones living stones that are being brought together in whatever shape they are in whatever condition they're brought in are going to be as we see here in revelations a beautiful edifice adorned by God himself Christ himself will proclaim it is done in the meantime we are being built up in the meantime!

we remain steadfast allowing God to work in us and through us and on us in the meantime we remain steadfast built on the foundation that has been laid we have talked about what it means to be part of the people of God to welcome all people into the family of God really what God has done really in welcoming all people into his family but there is a line that defines what it is to be part of this building it is the foundation that has been laid by the apostles and prophets there are churches now that proclaim to be part of the body of Christ who have rejected the foundation that has been laid once laid this is the line this is the measuring line by which all are welcome there is into this building that

God is building there is only one way right it is Jesus Christ he's the cornerstone but in fact he's not only just the cornerstone he's also the door Jesus himself proclaimed I am the door anyone that comes it is only through him that we can come into the house of God unless we are willing to go through Jesus Christ as has been revealed by the apostles and prophets in holy scripture!

God God has to God! God has promised that he will build this church God is building this is important for us as the church of God as the local church of God to always make sure that we are being built on the foundation of God God has promised He will build this church that's the universal church but God also gives warning to local churches that they must remain on the foundation otherwise He will destroy them look at revelations the warnings to the churches where are any of

those churches now the implication is that they didn't heed their Lord's warning the warning goes to us as a church it also goes to us individually if we're members of this body then it isn't incumbent on our way or the

[36:16] I way it isn't incumbent on our will but the Lord's will in order to remain part of it it means then we submit to one another as we submit unto the Lord it means then that we allow God to shape and mold us as he's doing it will be uncomfortable it is uncomfortable but God is building us up it also means then that we are patient with one another as God is doing the work that he's doing we are all if we admit it patient with ourselves we give ourselves allowances because we know at the end of the day we're not perfect even those of us that are hard on ourselves in truth we are patient we are we give ourselves allowances but it's very hard it's the human nature to expect of the other person perfection but what God is calling us to hear is that we are part of the body of

Christ he's building us up he's fashioning us and we ought to be patient with one another as God does that work let us pray Lord we thank you for this new humanity that you've created in your son Jesus Christ we thank you Lord that you've brought us together as living stones you've brought us together upon the sure foundation that has been laid which is just Christ Jesus himself which is the truth of God in the word of God proclaimed by the apostles and prophets which is the new testament and the old testament that has been given to us as the foundation upon which the church is built on help us Lord as the church of Christ help us especially as the church of the trinity to have no other foundation other than that which you've received help us also

Lord to know that this church as you build it it is your building you're the one doing the building so help us Lord to surrender ourselves to your hand as the master builder to allow you to fashion and mold us give us by the power of the!

Holy Spirit patience with one another as you do the work among us give us Lord by the power of the Holy Spirit humility to submit to one another as unto the Lord help us Lord to love one another!

and to know to that you Lord are sanctifying us and pruning us and fashioning us and one day you will declare about all of us that it is done you will have adorned us and glorified us will be presented to our bridegroom perfect holy and blameless this is our hope Lord and we pray Lord that you will sustain us and help us to stand firm as you do the work in us and through us we pray all of this in Jesus name Amen