

# He is Building His Household

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] in Ephesians chapter 2 and our focus this evening is on verse 11 down to the end of the chapter Ephesians chapter 2 verse 11 down to verse 22 and what we see here is Paul reminding all the people of God we see here that there is a division as it were in Ephesus where there's they're speaking of the circumcised and the uncircumcised the Jews and the Gentiles and there's this sense of hostility between them but he is reminding them that in Christ Jesus they are all one and that together they are being built into this dwelling place for God by the spirit as verse 22 says so we're thinking of this passage under that heading the house of the Lord being built and this is in light of coming away from a time of communion in our congregation last Wednesday we were looking at chapter one of this letter of Paul to the church at Ephesus as we were approaching the communion weekend we were looking at it and the sense of praise as we were approaching the communion season a sense of expectation as we were approaching it in a sense of joy in the Lord and seeking that we would know him better over the course of the weekend and we were reminded of all that we have in Christ Jesus over the weekend so now as we are as we're coming away from the weekend how do we feel coming away from it do we come away still with that sense of praise to God that sense of expectation of what God is and can do in our midst and a sense of joy that the Lord is with us and that the Lord is on our side well this passage reminds us that that is how we should come away we never come away from the Lord he is always with us and he is always building his house bringing his people in

Paul was writing here to the church at Ephesus and in many ways when you think of what Ephesus was like in that time during the days of Paul we think of our own place today our own world today our own setting where we live today very different they would be different in so many ways and yet with many similarities to different in the ways of life different in the ways of employment different in the ways of language and culture but similar too in that there were many barriers and boundaries many needs in their midst that we see with ourselves today as well when you think of barriers and boundaries in our world today we see just how similar it is to the setting of Paul's day whether it was in Ephesus or Corinth or Galatia wherever he was going with the gospel there were all kinds of differences among people all kinds of hostilities among people you think of the way Paul was writing here to masters and slaves as they're called you see that in our day and age we think of the employers and the employee and you look at the way many were unfairly treated by their masters in Paul's day and you think of the day we live in today how people are exploited in the workplace and you think of barriers financially Paul was very aware of people in his day as almost in every day where there are the rich and the poor there are boundaries and barriers and families and different needs in families you see it in families you see it in Paul's day you see it in our day broken down families families with different needs and especially as you think of families where there are those who are saved and those who are unsaved as yet but what we see as we look at Paul's day and his writing this letter to the church at Ephesus and what we see for our own day as well is that something came into Ephesus here something unexpectedly in many ways in the world's eyes that brought people together then and something that in our own day and age we long to see breaking down barriers breaking down hostility and bringing people together in our day and it is the gospel it was the gospel that came to Ephesus that was breaking down hostilities and barriers and bringing people together and bringing people as it is being built together into a dwelling place for God by the spirit as verse 22 says that is what we need today as well

I was speaking to a man this morning from America and he stays not far from one of the big cities in America a city maybe not the biggest but a population of over 3 million people in this city and he was saying as he was speaking about this city he spoke of it in this way the city is in darkness the city is godless the city is morally corrupt and immediately as he started speaking in this way I thought you are coming at this from a perspective of the Christian and surely enough he says I am a follower of Jesus and he says in our church it is not a big church by American standards he says it

is just a small church of a hundred people he says well that is not bad when we think of that in Scotland we would love to see many small churches of a hundred throughout Scotland but he was saying we are praying for that city that was a powerful reminder to me and to ourselves I hope this evening that God has his people all over the world we can often feel a burden to pray for others as if we were the only ones able to pray for them whether it's our own islands our nation or many many parts of the world but it was a powerful reminder that God has his people so that even when we are unable or we don't know what to pray for cities in America that there are those who do that there are those who have a burden for all different parts of the world it's a reminder to us that God is at work that even though there is darkness all over the world in many different ways and in many different places that God has his praying people this passage looking at it from the beginning it reminds us of God's power to transform the opening verses in this chapter speak of the very fact that the people were dead in trespasses and sin and this is what we see all around us in so many places but then you have these great words of verse 4 but God but God being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved and that's what this man said about the city it needs the grace of God and that is what our world needs that is what we need for hostility and barriers to be broken down but it's the grace that is available it is a grace that God still offers to people this day as well in a day and age where the gospel seems to so many as a barrier to inclusiveness and equality these words that we hear so often that people are seeking after an inclusive world a world of equality we actually see it in the gospel and people don't want to look there but the gospel is seen by so many as a barrier and almost as a means of division but we are reminded again and again that it is the gospel that transforms it's the gospel that brings equality that the gospel brings inclusiveness to the world in which we live as people are brought to be in Christ as Paul speaks of here the outworking of that is not an exclusive group and we should never see ourselves in that way that we are an elite group an exclusive group but an inclusive group for anyone who believes in Christ who is saved they are speaking here of being built together as one body and it was something marvellous about sitting at the Lord's table together to just look around and see the variety of people there and we long to see where even more variety of people people from every walk of life people from different parts of the world coming together delighting and rejoicing in the salvation that there is through Christ at the cross there are three things I want us just to think of this evening from this passage as we come away from the weekend and as we go ahead in the days before us as well as we look to God's blessing three things we see Paul outlined here for the church at Ephesus reminders of God's power in their midst the first thing is the remembrance that they have and the second thing is the reconciliation that they see and the third thing is the rebuilding that is going on remembrance reconciliation and rebuilding so we begin with remembrance as Paul has written in the beginning of this chapter the fact that we were dead in our trespasses and sins but made alive by the grace of God and we are made in this way as he says in verse 10 for

[ 11 : 55 ] God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them that we have a purpose in life then he goes on in verse 11 he says therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh called the uncircumcision remember that you were at that time separated from Christ remembering isn't always easy for us in the sense of looking back in life and the mixed emotions that we can have in our memories and our remembrances of times in the past remembering is a good thing at times when we recollect happy things that from the past we remember and celebrate different occasions in our life but remembering is sometimes a painful thing for us too but here

Paul is calling the people to remember in the sense of rejoicing it's remembering here the sense of thankfulness and above all that the Lord has remembered us and how do we see that well we see it in this way here where he's saying remember that at one time remember in the past that you were at that time separated from Christ alienated from the commonwealth of Israel strangers to the covenant of promise having no hope and without God in the world it's a grim picture in so many ways remember that there was a time when this was you because in so remembering we remember too that in our day that when this is the case we think well what can change what can make a difference just like that man from America was saying you know he's saying how godless that city was or is at this time but it's nothing new to god it's nothing that god hasn't seen already in this world it's nothing that god hasn't made a difference in this world with before

Ephesus Corinth you go back to the old testament you think of Jonah going to Nineveh it was a godless city and yet so quickly the grace of god transformed it so how often do we remember what god has done for us we are told as we were told as we took communion at the weekend do this in remembrance of me how we gone on in this week continuing to remember and to give thanks to god for what he has done for us in christ continuing to remember the body and blood of our lord jesus christ so much of what we read here in ephesians continues to remember what has taken place by christ at the cross you see it here as he speaks of the blood of christ in verse it's verse 13 but but now in christ jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of christ it is something that has made such a difference for us that is what we remembered at the weekend what we have in christ it's so important for us to take that time to stop and look back and we can look in our own lives and see how alienated we were as well how we were strangers to the covenant promise having no hope and without god it's important for us to remember these things and as we do it still reminds us of the faithfulness of god we were reminded of that on friday night in the service god's faithfulness even the midst of our own unfaithfulness there's a man called frederick marsh he was a christian writer in the 19th and to the 20th century and he spoke of this way of how the christian should always look back in a sense in life at times because as you look back he said you see the deliverance that the lord has done for us you see the way that he has led us you see the blessings he has bestowed on us you see the victories he has won for us you see the encouragements he has given us it's a good thing to look back and even remember many of the hard times and yet still see god's faithfulness he said he went on to say we sometimes forget god's past faithfulness we only see the detours and the dangerous paths but look back and you will see also the joy of victory you will see the challenge of the climb you will see the presence of your traveling companion who has promised never to leave you or forsake you would you be here tonight if it were not for the grace of god would your hearts desire to be here tonight be still there without the grace of god it's the grace of god that brings us from death to life it's the grace of god that gives us

hope in this world it is the grace of god that makes all the difference for us and we thank god for that in verse four of this chapter it says but god there was the difference the grace of god you notice the same word used in verse 13 but again but now in christ jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of christ isn't it a wonderful thing to be able to remember what god has done for us far off but brought near through his blood it's important for us to remember but then we see secondly the reconciliation here paul's day as we said was a day of much hostility and that hostility ran deep especially between jew and gentile speaks here of the circumcision and the uncircumcision there was a tension among these people the jews in many ways saw themselves better than the gentiles and the gentiles they really hated the jews they didn't want to mix but in verse 16 of this passage we are told there and might reconcile us both to god in one body through the cross thereby killing the hostility it is the cross that is central to breaking down this hostility to restoring relationships among people being reconciled to god as one looking to jesus as one people wherever you are from whatever whatever background you have we can come to the cross and see that christ died for sinners of all kinds paul in writing to the corinthians he speaks of it in this way as they were ambassadors for christ he says we are therefore christ's ambassadors as though god were making his appeal through us we implore you on christ's behalf be reconciled to god it is this great need of the world to be reconciled to god because it's the only way and out of this hostility and this wickedness that is in the world speaks here of thereby killing the hostility this tension that existed between the gentiles and the jew it is put to death through the cross because it brings people together he says then in verse 17 that he came and preached peace to you who were far off talking to the gentiles they seem to be far away from god but he also says that he was preaching peace to those who were near those who were near to god the jews they still needed this gospel because they weren't there yet and the cross is the common thing for them both the cross where christ died for our sins and that is what he is offering to the people of ephesus that's what the world needs to hear today the gospel of christ who came to break

down these barriers to bring people together as one body what one thing could you offer today that would bring peace to this world we don't have the answers in so many ways and yet we do we have the gospel but people will not listen there was a welsh missionary he was called robert jermaine thomas he was the son of a minister and from a very young age he had a real burden for mission he went to china and then from china he went to korea he was only in his mid twenties and as he went to korea he went there to distribute bibles to the people there and he was on this ship going up a

river in Korea and they were stopping in different places seeking to bring the Bible to different people there but there was a fear as they were on the ship going up the river that the river was getting shallower and that the ship would ground but they kept going and they were meeting more and more hostility and eventually the ship did ground and on the shoreline they could see a number of people a large number of people but what happened was through the orders of the government people were ordered to kill everyone on that ship there was a fear of what they were bringing to the Korean shores to the people there they were afraid of what they were hearing about this Gospel but it's said that Robert Thomas he managed to swim to shore and he managed to take with him a number of Bibles and as he reached the shore he was met with hostility and he was on his knees before the man who was just about to shoot him and instead of pleading for his life what he did was he held out a copy of the Bible and he pleaded with him to receive it now it's said that that is how the word of God came into that area of Korea it wasn't wanted by everyone but one copy at least made it to people and people started to see this word and take an interest in the word of God and now many people who come from Korea today they'll want to visit Wales and the village where Robert was born because they recognized the sacrifice that he made in bringing the Gospel to them is that what we would do is that what we are willing to do when we live in a hostile world when we see all that's going on around us it doesn't have to be a big city of millions in America that's godless and needs the grace of God our own town our villages need the grace of God they need the Gospel they need this hope of reconciliation and that is what we have to offer the reconciliation that is found in Christ he has come to be our peace and destroy the barrier the dividing wall of hostility

[ 26 : 34 ] we pray for reconciliation in our town in our villages that the power of God and his word would bear fruit third and final thing we see here though is the sense of rebuilding that is going on in verse 19 and say so then you are no longer strangers and aliens but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone we are no longer foreigners and aliens but fellow citizens this breaking down of hostility it brings people together the kingdom of God is coming and the rebuilding work is ongoing and as his kingdom comes in our midst we see it little by little bit by bit the house is being built God is calling his people to himself not just here but all over the world God is the Gospel of God is bearing fruit the Lord's people there is a blessing in belonging as we see here and it's such an encouragement and it's wonderful to see and to hear as we've rejoiced in a new member ourselves this week we rejoice as we hear that there are people who are longing and deciding after Christ rejoice that God is working in our midst and we pray that the rebuilding would go on that God would continue to come in power that we would see the Gospel bearing so much fruit in her midst we are reminded here of the power of the Gospel in him you are also being built together we are all part of this whenever a major building work is going to be done it'll go out to tender so that people or companies can bid on it but it's interesting when you look at the tenders and the bids that come in which one is accepted do they look at the quality do they look at how long it may last or do they look at the price so often it's a sense of the cheapest offer wins no matter the risks that there are no matter that it may be done cheaply that shortcuts may be had it's just the short term view that is in mind what is the cheapest way for us to get the job done but we've heard the saying so often buy cheap pay dear but when you look at the way the household of

God is being built you recognise no shortcuts have been taken it's not about the cheapest option it's not about a short term fix the greatest price of all has been paid and the Lord himself is at the heart of it it is he that is the cornerstone Christ himself being the cornerstone and what we remembered at the weekend was the price that has been paid for your salvation and mine the greatest price of all has been paid Christ has given his life for sinners the greatest sacrifice of love ever given no short term in mind but eternity in mind for his kingdom is one that will last forever and that is what we have in Christ that is our security that is what our salvation is built on not us not our works but what Christ has done for us we were far off we were strangers to the covenant of promise we were ones with no hope and without God in the world but now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ he has paid the price for us that is what we rejoice in and as we rejoice in that as we see our security in that our desire should be with Paul as he wrote to the Corinthians to making his appeal through us we implore you in Christ on Christ's behalf be reconciled to God the day in which we live is a day that seems so dark and godless in so many places and in so many ways but we have God on our side and he is building his kingdom we praise him it's not just one here and there but he has many people many people who are coming to

salvation in him and trusting in him and we pray that cities huge cities throughout the world will know the grace of God we pray that towns and villages will know the grace of God we pray that people near and far will know the saving grace of God and rejoice in him we have much to be thankful for we look back and we give thanks for his goodness to us in so many ways but let us keep looking forward with a sense of praise and expectation and joy that he is building his house that he is bringing people in and that Christ is the cornerstone of it all may God bless his word to us we'll sing to God's praise