

Eph 2.14-18 Christ is Our Peace

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[0 : 00] Please take up your copies of God's Word and turn to the book of Ephesians. Continuing in the book of Ephesians, we're at chapter 2. Question to think over.

When somebody becomes a Christian, should they expect to be free from troubles and conflict in this life? Tuck that away and think upon that as we work through today's sermon.

Our text is Ephesians 2, continuing in Ephesians 2. And this chapter explains to us God's way of reconciliation in the covenant of grace.

The first section, verses 1 to 10, it shows a before and after picture of deliverance from the old life in death to new life in Christ. That before and after picture.

And now, the next section, verses 11-22, show us transforming unity in God's ultimate purpose being realized through the blood of Christ. Now, that bigger section, we're breaking down into three smaller sections.

[1 : 21] So, the first section, which was our last sermon, showed us the former relations of the Gentiles. And that was being aliens and strangers, being foreigners to the church and far off from God.

Now, the next section, which will be today's text that we'll look at, is verses 13 to 18, which shows us the means by which alienation has been removed.

So, we'll read all of chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2.

Ephesians chapter 3.

Ephesians chapter 3.

[3 : 18] Ephesians chapter 3.

Ephesians chapter 3.

Ephesians chapter 3.

Ephesians chapter 3.

Ephesians chapter 3.

[5 : 48] Ephesians chapter 3.

And it depends on Christ. And salvation in us is caused by the triune God. We saw that in chapters 1, verses 3-14.

Peace and unification is caused by Christ. It says in our text, So Christ is the cause of our peace, is the material cause.

If you remember from chapter 1, how salvation is caused by the triune God, we see the efficient cause that is purposed by the Father. We see the material cause, that is redemption accomplished by the Son.

And we see the final cause, which is to the glory of God. So Christ, as the material cause of our salvation, is our agent of peace.

[7 : 13] Now if you've been reading in the book of Judges in your Old Testament, you'll see that there are figures in the book of Judges who acted as agents of deliverance for Israel.

That is, in the place of Israel. And as such, they foreshadowed the person and work of Jesus Christ. If you remember, the Israelites fell away from worshipping God and turned to the gods of the nations.

There was no king in Israel, and everyone did what was right in their own eyes. God turned them over to oppressive enemies, and in time they groaned and called upon the Lord, and then he gave them judges.

Then the Spirit of God descended upon these figures, and God worked mighty deeds through them as agents for Israel to achieve rest and peace with hearts turned back to God.

That is, they were agents of peace and restored relations. Let's take, for example, Shamgar, the third one in the book of Judges. It's in Judges 3, verse 31, and it's just one sentence, one verse.

[8 : 23] It says, After him was Shamgar, the son of Anath, who killed 600 men of the Philistines with an ox goad, and he also delivered Israel. We go over a lot of details pretty quickly there.

Did you notice? He killed 600 men of the Philistines with an ox goad, and he also delivered Israel. Now, Shamgar is the third one mentioned in the book of Judges, and we're just going to briefly look at the first three.

You can keep going, but the first three, there's Othniel, and Othniel, to sum it up, is the Lion of Judah, who brings deliverance, rest, and peace.

And then next was Ehud, who, with a single unexpected blow, strikes the pride of his oppressive enemy. And then third, we have Shamgar. Shamgar single-handedly decimated many foes.

So when you look at them as a big picture and put the details together of what happened, without looking at the men themselves and their names, what do you see? The Lion of Judah, who brings deliverance, rest, and peace, with a single unexpected blow, strikes the pride of his oppressive enemy, who single-handedly decimated many foes.

[9 : 35] Now, this is just the first three Judges. You can continue, but this isn't a sermon on Judges, so we'll stick to our text. But in Judges, each agent echoes and reveals by farther steps more detailed elements of the Genesis 3.15 promise.

However, each figure in Judges was not the Genesis 3.15 promise fulfillment. Each agent of deliverance and peace died, and then the people did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

In Isaiah 19.20, it says, Isaiah here is speaking of another judge to come, a future deliverance, still waiting for an agent of peace to achieve deliverance, rest, and peace.

So back to Ephesians. For he himself is our peace. Christ is the perfect and final agent of peace, who single-handedly, once for all, delivered his people from every single one of their many sins and their wages of death.

He is the Genesis 3.15 fulfillment. Jesus at the cross stood as agent or representative, not only of the Jews, but of Gentiles as well, as the last Adam, the federal head, as public representative, or as our agent of peace, and single-handedly conquered the many foes.

[11 : 21] Christ in our place, as our substitute, as our representative, decimated our enemy and brought relief from oppression of the condemnation of sin and the bondage of sin.

It includes every lustful thought about an image-bearer of God, every hateful thought, every selfish inclination, every grumble of discontentment against God, every failure to love God with our whole being and revere his existence, names, excellencies, works, word, and worship, every idle word, every idle thought, any of which is a strong, oppressive enemy that stands and testifies that our sin warrants the wages of death, condemnation, and wrath.

Christ single-handedly conquered sin and death to bring us peace. Christ did not just make peace, he is our peace.

And Christ, as our agent of peace, achieved reconciliation horizontally and vertically. So, horizontal peace.

Back to our text, it says, made both one. Both being made one is a third entity. That is, not Jew, not Gentile, but a unified new creation, the church.

[12 : 49] That is, one flock under one shepherd. John 10, 16 says, And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.

So, there will be one flock, one shepherd. Horizontal peace by making both one, with one flock, one shepherd, and one king over one kingdom.

Ezekiel 37, 22 says, And I will make them one nation, in the land, on the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms.

So, imagine, if you will, a large crowd, a great crowd, whether it's in a field, or on a frozen lake, but just, there's a great crowd, a great multitude of people, and in the middle of them, there's a dividing wall.

So, this great crowd of people is divided by this wall of partition. And then, this barrier of segregation is removed, and this division of this multitude of people, of the crowd, is united as a unified multitude.

[14 : 08] Our text, it says, Made both one by breaking down the wall. Both the Jews, God's earthly ethnic covenant people, and the Gentiles, aliens and strangers far off from God, now brought near.

He made both one by breaking down the wall. I'm sure we've all probably seen it, where there's two guys who are scrapping, and someone of authority comes and breaks it up, and tells them to stop, and tells them to shake hands and get along.

So, there's still enmity between them, but they come together, and they shake hands, and when they shake hands, one of them gives the other one a dirty look, so the other one just responds by squeezing harder with his handshake, and then the other one responds again by squeezing even harder, trying to hurt the person, and so then that person responds by trying to pull the person off balance, and before you know it, they're back to blows again.

There's no physical barrier between them. There's not a wall, not a physical wall between them. In fact, they're even shaking hands, but yet there's still a psychological barrier. So, there is also here, a psychological barrier, and this wall of hostility, this partition of segregation.

It's been said that the only time there will ever be peace in this world, or world peace, is when everyone stops to reload at the same time. It's not actual peace.

[15 : 36] So, what is this peace that we're talking about? First of all, why, why is there a dividing wall of hostility?

Why is there a psychological barrier of segregation? Why is there enmity? It's because of sin. Sin is enmity with God, and enmity with one another.

Sin has consequences, both eternal and immediate. Sin has consequences, both vertically and horizontally.

So, what is sin? Some preachers today will try to downplay sin by saying it's, they won't even use the word sin, or merely say it's just little mistakes, or maybe not doing things as good as we could, but that, that doesn't draw the picture of what sin actually is.

So, what is sin? What is this sin that causes enmity with God and with one another? Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.

[16 : 52] So, the law of God, we think it's a want of conformity of the law of God, or a transgression of the law of God. What are we talking about when we say the law of God?

Is that saying that I cannot eat bacon? We need to, before we move on, a quick refresher of an understanding of the threefold division of law.

Now, when we look at the Old Testament, we see three divisions of the law. There's the moral law, the judicial law, and the ceremonial law.

The moral law is that which is given from creation, which demonstrates God's character and will, and is for all ages, for all people, through all covenants.

And as God doesn't change, so also his moral character and moral requirements do not change. Now, the judicial law is a further working out of the moral law, but it's a positive law.

[17 : 50] So, if you remember natural law is that which is by nature, or nature from creation, for all of creation, positive law can be given for a particular people, for a particular time.

For example, the commandment to Adam not to eat the tree of knowledge of good and evil. So, judicial law is a positive law. It's for a time, it's for a people.

So, also, the ceremonial law is a positive law. So, both the judicial and ceremonial law were positive law, which is a distinction from the moral law.

There was a positive law for a time, as people, that being, for the Israelites, for the ethnic Israelites, in geographic location of the land, being under God, or as geopolitical, theocratic nation.

So, being under God as an ethnic people in a particular location. Specific time, specific people. So, in our text, when it says, abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, it's important to recognize that three-fold division of the law.

[19 : 06] It's not that every law has the same purpose, the same use. it's not talking about the moral law, which is from creation, for all creation, through all time.

God's moral standard doesn't change. God doesn't change. God's moral will does not change. So, when it says, abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, it is not an abolishment of the moral law, which demonstrates the character and will of God, because the character and will of God does not change.

In Romans 3.31, it says, do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means. On the contrary, we uphold the law. Now, Christ perfected obedience to the law, both moral law and positive law, meriting the promised reward, and by faith, we receive Christ's righteousness, the most complete obedience of Christ to the moral law.

We receive and rest on Christ, his righteousness, mediation, and merits. So, when it says, abolishing the law of commandments, expressed in ordinances, then, what, he, then he abolished what law of commandments?

Remember, it says, abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances. it's speaking about the old covenant mosaic system ceremonial law, which in itself separated and preserved Israel from the influence of the nations.

[20 : 36] So, it in itself was a cause of difference between Jew and Gentile. It spoke to food restrictions, circumcision, clean from unclean, and even a temple worship, precinct, partition, and exclusion, which prevented Gentiles from any of the inner courts on pain of death.

So, it was indeed a cause of difference. It was, it did separate and preserve Israel from the nations, from the Gentiles. Now, this has particular significance for Paul when he writes to the Ephesians.

In Acts 21, we read, when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, men of Israel, help!

This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law, and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.

For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

[22 : 01] Then all the city was stirred up and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple and at once the gates were shut. So we see here this psychological barrier even through that partition in temple worship.

And this has particular significance, as I said, between Paul and the Ephesians as he indicates in the third chapter of Ephesians when he says, for this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles.

Notice the significance here. Notice that the Gentiles aren't to scale up the wall and join the Jews on their side of the Mosaic system.

Rather, the wall has been broken down, has been removed and the segregation and hostility has been abolished by Christ fulfilling the requirements with a perfect, exact, entire obedience.

obedience, a positive righteousness by the law. Christ, having broken down the wall, the two become one new man.

[23 : 14] Where there was that multitude of people with a wall dividing them down the middle, the Jews don't, or the Gentiles don't scale the wall to join the other side, rather that wall is removed, is demolished, and the two come together as one.

The two become one new man. The dividing wall was demolished, and this is not a geographical, physical temple, therefore, that barrier, that wall, is not a physical wall of segregation.

Christ's spiritual temple, composed of or built up with regenerated, regenerated souls as living stones.

In 1 Peter 2.5, it says, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house. They're being reconciled into one body is the result of their being reconciled to God.

Their being reconciled horizontally is from being reconciled vertically. And as one body, a whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

[24 : 35] And joined together is consequent to the demolition of the partition of the segregation. The dividing wall of hostility is broken down. The two on either side were divided by that wall of segregation.

The two are unified as one. God's people have horizontal peace from being unified and vertical peace.

So that brings us to our third point, vertical peace. In our text, it said, broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

That is, killing the enemy abolished by his death. The cross of Christ, the instrument of reconciliation to God and one another. In Colossians 1.20 it says, and by him to reconcile all things to himself by him whether things on earth or things in heaven having made peace through the blood of his cross.

Christ, the instrument or material cause of reconciliation in fulfilling the Old Testament types and shadows.

[25 : 53] Christ by the eternal purpose of God, the mediator between God and humanity, the chosen perfect and final prophet, priest and king, the head and savior of the church, the heir of all things and the judge of the world.

Now in our confession, the second London confession of faith, chapter 8 takes what scripture says about Christ as mediator and it systematizes it together under one heading of Christ as mediator.

Now there's certain parts of it I've taken and stitched together to further explain this. When the fullness of time came, the Son of God took upon himself human nature.

He was born under the law and perfectly fulfilled it. He also experienced the punishment that we deserve and that we should have endured and suffered. He was made sin and a curse for us.

He endured extremely heavy sorrows in his soul and extremely painful sufferings in his body. He was crucified and died and remained in a state of death yet his body did not decay.

[27 : 02] On the third day he rose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered. In this body he also ascended into heaven where he sits at the right hand of his Father interceding.

he will return to judge men and angels at the end of the age. The Lord Jesus has fully satisfied the justice of God, obtained reconciliation and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those given to him by the Father.

He has accomplished these things by his perfect obedience sacrifice of himself which he once for all offered up to God through the eternal spirit.

Because we are alienated from God and imperfect in the best of our service we need his priestly office to reconcile us and present us to God as acceptable.

Because we are hostile and utterly unable to return to God and so that we can be rescued and made secure from our spiritual enemies we need his kingly office to convince subdue draw sustain deliver and preserve us for his heavenly kingdom.

[28 : 21] Through the cross thereby killing the hostility we see satisfaction of justice. God in his eternal essence is righteous and just and holy but he is also immutable.

He is unchanging in his divine essence. God does not change from being holy or righteous or just rather there is a satisfaction of God's justice that is the price has been paid to satisfy justice.

Christ crossed out sin and put death to death. In our text in Ephesians it says for he is our peace. He is the mediator between God and man and between Jew and Gentile.

He reconciled his people to God and to each other. That which was formerly divided in hostility is now unified.

Our text tells us one new man or one body with Christ as head and also says that he might create in himself that he might create in himself that is new created.

[29 : 34] He new created them a unified new creation regenerated and conjoined to Christ. Now Christ achieved for his people peace with God and with one another.

And all the elect approach God together as a unified body. One body that is the body of Christ. Christ the cause of our peace who has redeemed his bride the church.

This is redemption purposed by the Father Ephesians 1 3 to 6 accomplished by the Son Ephesians 1 7 to 10 and redemption applied by the Spirit Ephesians 1 11 to 14 The Father as the efficient cause the Son as the material cause but what is the formal cause?

By what means does this come to be? Now in our text it tells us he came and preached peace. Now this is written to the saints in Ephesus.

How did Christ come and preach peace to the saints in Ephesus? How did Christ come preach peace in Ephesus? through the apostolic preaching which continues through the church Christ taught and commissioned and equipped the apostles to preach of his kingdom and to inscripturate the word of God for the church to continue in the preaching of Christ.

[31 : 19] So it is through the apostolic preaching which continues through the church and we see the external means of the preaching of the gospel with the internal means of the work of the spirit illuminating regenerating convicting applying the work of redemption purposed by the father accomplished by the son.

So the external means the preaching of the gospel accompanied by the internal means of the holy spirit illuminating the word of God. The kingdom of God is advanced not by worldly means but by pure biblical preaching of the word of God.

This is why the particular Baptist has such a high view of preaching of the word. It is the primacy of biblical preaching in the calling of the church because it is by the pure biblical preaching of the word of God through which the kingdom of God is advanced.

Isaiah 52 7 says how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news who proclaims peace who brings glad tidings of good things who proclaims salvation who says to Zion your God reigns in Ephesians 6 15 we see the phrase the gospel of peace now you remember Shamgar Shamgar brought peace to God's people by decimating 600 foes with an ox goad an ox goad is a tool to poke cattle it's simply a pointy ended stick and its purpose is shepherding in nature and it is used to poke or prick stubborn beasts of burden who are disinclined to go the right way now we've heard this word used before goads

Acts 26 14 Saul Saul why are you persecuting me is it hard for you to kick against the goads so though a stubborn beast of burden or a slave to sin may try to kick against the direction of the shepherd it will be pricked so what is the Lord's goads a metaphor for Ecclesiastes 11 we see the words of the wise are like goads given by one shepherd the words that is words of the wise given by one shepherd are the goads and 1st Corinthians 1 24 says to those who are called both Jews and Greeks Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God Christ is the wisdom of God words of the wise given by one shepherd are like goads Christ is the wisdom of God the words of

[34 : 20] Christ pricks like an ox goad a shamgar what his name means is sword in Ephesians 6 17 it tells us that the word of God is the sword of the spirit the preaching of the word of God that is the preaching of Christ crucified the gospel of peace is a sword in the hand of an almighty God who as a shepherd pricks the soul of beasts of burden that they might go the right way!

our text continues by saying by him we both have access in one spirit to the father in the old testament mosaic system only the high priest and as a representative for Israel had immediate access to God by entry into the holy of holies and only on the day of atonement now by substitutionary atonement through Christ's death and resurrection both Jew and Gentile have immediate access to God Hebrews 10 19 22 says therefore brothers since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain that is through his flesh and since we have a great priest over the house of God let us draw near now

Jew and Gentile before where there was that partition which excluded Gentiles from the inner courts now both Jew and Gentile have access to the inner court of the spiritual temple through Christ as our mediator both the high priest and the sacrifice as one new man cleansed by his blood we have access to the father through the son by the spirit now if I point your attention back to our text for he himself is our peace who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of separation having abolished in his flesh the enmity that is the law of commandments!

So as to create in himself one new man from the two thus making peace and that he might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross thereby putting to death the enmity and he came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near for through him we both have access by one spirit to the father in conclusion I'll draw your attention back to that original question that was asked at the beginning when someone becomes a Christian should they expect to be free from troubles and conflict in this life from our text we see Christ is our peace not this world which has fallen broken and cursed this is contrary to the prosperity gospel this life in this world system is not where our peace is to be found in fact we know that this life will be one of tribulations!

trials! persecution! affliction! reviling! sickness! suffering! and death! whether that be politically sanctioned gaslighting of Christians for not affirming rebellion against God and his good design of the human race or whether that be perhaps an unstable employment security not knowing if there will be enough to feed your family or whether that will be having to work long hours of exhausting workload to keep the income incoming or whether it be unsettling domestic circumstances or when children's sin nature seems to be winning the day or perhaps more internal troubles such as sickness injuries aging depression anxiety lack of assurance or struggle with remaining sin or when sorrows like sea billows roll whatever my lot thou hast taught me to say it is well it is well with my soul!

[39 : 04] now just as the Israelites met with many troubles in the wilderness on their journey to the promised land of Canaan so also the church today is met with many troubles on their journey to Christ's eternal kingdom of glory because this world is not our home John 16 33 Jesus speaking to his disciples said I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace in the world you will have tribulation but take heart I have overcome the world these troubles tribulations trials persecutions afflictions reviling sickness suffering and death these troubles are not an indication or a lack or a withdrawal of God's fatherly presence and eternal spiritual peace rather it is through these troubles that the redeemed have an objective peace because they have

Christ who is our peace though Satan should buffet though trials should come let this blessed assurance control that Christ has regarded my helpless estate and has shed his own blood for my soul my sin know the bliss of this glorious thought my sin not in part but the whole is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more praise the Lord praise the Lord oh my soul remember what does the apostle Paul want the saints to know in Ephesians that you may know the exceeding greatness of God's power toward us who believe that is the power which was on display on the raising of Christ from the dead having suffered and died in the pouring out of his life on our behalf to pay for the sins of those given to him by the father and his ascension and exaltation with all authority and all power the risen and exalted

Christ is our peace remember also and you he made alive a new creation sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory this is a new creation hope at the end God will recreate the world more wonderfully than the temple in Jerusalem more wonderfully than the recreation after the flood and even more wonderfully than the first creation before the fall where all of God's people will be transformed with resurrected bodies no longer able to sin as a redeemed unified entity living in perfect harmony with God and with each other in perfect peace O Lord haste the day when my faith shall be sight the clouds be rolled back as a scroll the trumpet shall resound and the

Lord shall descend even so it is well with my soul our great God Lord we thank you for your word and we thank you for all that you revealed to us in your word that message of salvation that is the gospel of peace we thank you that in Christ we have peace with God that we have reconciliation reconciliation with the holy and just God because justice has been satisfied by Christ suffering and dying is pouring out of his blood is pouring out of his life in our place as our substitute as our agent on the cross we thank you that we have remission of sin by the shed blood of Christ we praise you and thank you Lord that we have peace with God because of Christ we do not stand on our own trying to plead our own merits but we plead the blood of Christ the mediation of Christ and the merits of Christ I thank you that in this fallen and cursed world with these unredeemed bodies with remaining corruption that we as we face much turmoil and conflict and troubles that this world is not our home that this world system is not our home but that we on our way have as an objective peace

Christ who is our peace I pray Lord that this would comfort your people today and I pray that if there are those who do not know Christ as Savior as Redeemer as peace that you would shine light in darkness and cause lost sinners to turn from sin and self this world condemnation and wrath to you I praise you that you are a redeeming God that in all of eternity you by your almighty power purpose redemption accomplish redemption apply redemption that we who are dead in sin might be made alive to the glory of your grace pray these things in Jesus name Amen