

Ephesians Part 7...Dec.4<sup>th</sup> 2016  
Chapter 2:11-12

**In life we tend to hang out with our own.**

It is easy to look down on certain people and look up to others...

Not realizing that at the same time others were may have looked down on us or looked up to us.

**There are people who do not to meet our qualifications for acceptance...**

And at times we don't meet others qualifications for acceptance.

Sad to say in life people are often classed as inferior or superior.

**That not only happens in the world sad to say it happens in the church world as well.**

One church sees another church as inferior...

And another church sees themselves as superior.

A mindset exists that if you are not one of us then you have problem...

Or if you do not believe like one of us then you are wrong.

**But in reality we all have taste buds and they do not stop at food.**

One look at the parking lot will tell you that.

Not all the cars are blue or green and not all have the same name as another.

Not everyone who comes here likes the way we do things.

Not everyone likes the style music and worship and not everyone likes my preaching style.

And that's ok we are an acquired taste.

Acquired taste means something you come to like through experience.

And many times it is the same with people the better you get to know someone the easier it is to love them or run from them.

Inferior and superior we will talk more later about that.

**First we need to take a quick look back at what we studied last week.**

**Last week in verses 1- 10 Paul discussed the past life of a believer.**

How before Christ a person is dead in trespasses and sins...  
But when we accept the Lord Jesus Christ makes us alive.

He talked about how we walked  
according to the course of this world...

And how we were led by the spirit of the power of the air and we were disobedient to God.

How we conducted ourselves in the lust of the flesh and fulfilled the desires of the flesh and of the mind  
and that we were by nature children of wrath.

Then he said God who is rich and mercy because of His great love made us alive together with Christ.

Then God raised us up together and made us sit in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

*He told the reason God did all that was to shower us with mercy and blessings and kindness.*

Then he told us that we were saved by grace through faith and not of ourselves.

He said to that to show that every believer was saved the same way through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus did it we didn't and couldn't it was all of God.

And because God did it no man can take credit or boast.

Then we ended with Paul saying we are the masterpiece of God created in Christ Jesus for good works  
and we should walk in them.

Simply our practice should line up with our position.

**Verse 11 is where we start today and Paul starts out by saying something very important that often we forget to do.**

Therefore remember.

He says that because it is so easy to forget.

*In life we tend to forget the things we ought to remember...*

*And remember the things we ought to forget.*

At times we can't remember what day it is but we can remember what someone did to us 10 years ago.

**Paul says remember...**

Remember what?

Remember all that the Lord has done for us that was just covered in the first 10 verses.

**Why is remembering that so important?**

It is important because when you remember where you were and what you were without Christ...

The more thankful you will be for what you and where you are in Christ.

**He said to the Ephesians remember that you once Gentiles in the flesh.**

A gentile is anyone who is not Jewish.

Notice verse 14 he talks about a wall and he calls it the middle wall of separation.

He is talking about a wall that separates people.

Anytime there is separation there is lack of unity.

**Paul is dealing with disunity, disunity that was caused by the Jews seeing themselves as superior and anyone else inferior...**

The reason the Jews saw the Gentiles as inferior and saw themselves as superior was because God chose the Jews to be His people.

*Amos 3:2 says Israel I have known among all the people of the earth.*

**This means Israel is a special nation to God and the Jews are God's chosen people.**

**So we need to understand what God's purpose was in choosing Israel and the Jews to be in that position.**

When God chose Israel he chose them to be the means to an end.

God chose Israel to be a channel that He could to pour through them His blessings to the world.

God said they would show forth His praise and they were to be a vessel through which the flow of God's blessing would come to the world.

*God has always wanted to reach everyone, God has always wanted to pour His grace and love and forgiveness and kindness to everyone...*

And He chose Israel for those things to flow through.

God made the Jews distinct because He wanted to world to look at them.

**To accomplish this God gave Israel or the Jews differences.**

*The differences were given so the world would look at them and see they were different.*

*God gave them differences so they wouldn't be able to intermingle with any other nation.*

**Some the differences were:**

The Jews had strict **clothing** laws, strict **dietary** laws, strict **marriage** laws, strict **worship** laws, strict **festival** laws, strict **custom** and **land laws**.

The reason for the strict laws was so they would not fit into another society.

- God made Israel so distinct that the rest of the world had to take note of them and by doing so take note of God.
- God wanted people to look at Israel and say they have a different God.

*And we read in the Bible where many times people looked at Israel and said who has a God like Israel.*

Everything God did and required was for Israel to be a channel of blessing to the world.

**But sad to say that's not what happened.**

**Instead of being a witness and instead of their distinctness being used as a way to reach people and instead of standing up and showing the world the difference God makes...**

They became prideful and saw themselves as superior to all other nations.

*They became an isolated group they believed God belonged to them and to them alone.*

**When you read the story of Jonah you see this so clearly...**

God called Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach repentance, God told him to do it and they would be converted.

And Jonah said no way not going to do it.

**Why not he was a preacher?**

He was not going to let Gentiles horn in on His God.

So instead of preaching repentance to the inferior he found a boat going in another direction and bought himself a ticket.

The boat nearly sank so Jonah told them he was the problem and they threw him overboard. Jonah disobeyed God but God had a whale that obeyed...

When Jonah went overboard the whale took him on board.

Finally there was two ways out of the whale the north end and the south end.

If he obeyed God he would come out the north end...

If he didn't he would go out the south end.

This gives a whole new meaning to being pooped out.

Jonah was vomited out of the whale...

Being vomited out shows how God felt about his attitude.

***Jonah gets out and does what God told him to do he preached repentance and to his dislike the whole city repented.***

But instead of shouting over what God did he pouted.

He sat down and told God he couldn't stand what God had done and wanted God to kill him.

***He couldn't stand the fact that the Gentiles accepted the message and now served the same God he served.***

That is an illustration of how far Israel had gone away from God's plan for them to be a channel of blessing to the world.

God was their God and they were not going to share Him or the blessings given by Him.

***\*\*\*Israel celebrated the ritual and the ceremonies but they forgot the Master of the ceremony and what the ceremony was all about.***

Instead of compassion for others they had a sense of contempt.

**The contempt went deep.**

**The Jews** actually thought the Gentiles were created by God for fuel to use in hell.

They thought only they were loved by God and all other nations were hated.

**It wasn't lawful for a Jew to help a Gentile mother in child birth** because if they did they were held responsible for bringing another Gentile into the world.

**When a Jew went from the south part of Israel to the North part there was a little area called Samaria the people there were not full blooded Jews.**

So when they went north they went across the Jordan River to the east and up the east side of the Jordan so they wouldn't set their feet in Samaria.

**If a Jewish boy or girl married a Gentile a funeral was held for them** because when a Jew touched a Gentile in anyway physically it was equivalent to death.

So instead of the distinction God wanted the Jews to demonstrate they demonstrated alienation.

**God didn't stop or give up with His plan to bless just because Israel tried to dam up the blessings.**

When Israel failed to do what God planned for them for them to do...

God sent His Son Jesus Christ and Jesus founded the church to take up where Israel dropped off.

**Paul wants them to understand this so he says remember what you once were you were Gentiles in the flesh.**

Gentiles in the flesh means physically speaking they were a Gentile.

*He then says who are called un-circumcision by what is called the circumcision made in the flesh by hands.*

The Jews called themselves the circumcision.

And they called others the un-circumcision because they didn't have the surgical sign of Genesis 17 to mark them out as the people of God.

That was a term of mockery, defamation and reproach.

Paul says the Jews were circumcised but it was all in the flesh not the heart.

**What they were saying was there was no way Gentile could have a relationship with God.**

**With those words Paul is reminding the Gentiles of their former state of alienation.**

It refers to being alienated socially.

**Verse 12.** *...That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world.*

**Paul now goes from social alienation to spiritual alienation.**

He is reminding the Gentiles before Jesus came they were cut off from God.

Paul is telling them they were Christ-less separated from God.

To be Christ-less means they had no hope of a Savior.

No Christ means no hope, no deliverer, no one to help them.

If you are Christ- you are Godless.

**Acts 4:12 says.** *...Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby you must be saved.*

**Verse 12** *Then Paul says they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.*

That means they were people without rights of citizens.

God built the nation of Israel and blessed it and they were aliens to the blessings.

Then Paul tells them they had no covenant no covering.

*They were strangers from the covenants of promise.*

### **What was the promise?**

*He is referring to the promise God gave Moses in Genesis 12.*

The promise of **blessing, prosperity, multiplication**, the promise to save them and to give them a kingdom.

He says all of you Gentiles were strangers to it...

They had no promise, no guarantees, and no securities.

*Then he says they had no hope...*

### **Very important to understand what hope is.**

Hope is confidence based on credible promises from someone who can perform it.

*And they were without God in the world.*

Wow I would hate to think of what it would be like to be in this world without God.

**Verse 13**...*But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Jesus.*

When the Jews failed to do what God wanted them to do God sent His Son Jesus...

**Jesus didn't walk around Samaria like the Jews did** He walked right through it.

**Jesus didn't walk past people** in need that were seen as inferior He **walked right up to them.**

**Jesus didn't imprison** He set people free.

**Jesus didn't class people** as inferior and superior.

**Jesus didn't see Jew and Gentile** He saw people in need of a Savior.

**Jesus didn't come to keep people from** God He came to unite with God.

### **Where Israel failed to bless those that were not one of them...**

*Jesus came so all could be one with God.*

**When Jesus came all the distinctions went.**

**I am so glad when God looks at us He sees us as one.**

No upper and lower class...

No white collar class or blue collar class.

**Romans 10:12**...*There is no difference between Jew and the Greek for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

God loves all and Jesus died for all.

None of us should ever feel inferior and none of us should ever feel superior.

We are family... one in the body of Christ a peculiar people, all saved by the blood of Jesus.

**Paul tells them to remember what the Lord has done...**

Where they were and where they are now!