

Ephesians Part 8...Dec.11<sup>th</sup> 2016  
Chapter 2:13-15

**On June the 12<sup>th</sup> 1987 President Ronald Reagan gave a speech at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin.**

In that speech he said as long as this gate is closed as long as the scar of a wall is permitted to stand it is not the German question alone that remains open but the question of freedom for all mankind.

He said there is one sign that the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace.

General Secretary Gorbachav if you seek peace if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe if you seek liberalization come here to this to gate...

Mr. Gorbachav open this gate.

Mr. Gorbachav tear down this wall.

**Many of us witnessed the tearing down of that wall and we saw the freedom and excitement when the wall came down.**

The day that wall came down it was a major event and a victorious breakthrough for that part of the world.

Many had loved ones killed trying to get over that wall because many sought the freedom that was on the other side of the wall.

Because of that wall many in search of a better life were held back.

**When it comes to life, life is filled with walls.**

Matter fact we live around and within walls every day.

As you sit and listen to the Word today you sitting with walls around you.

**We have walls on the outside of our home as well as on the inside of the home.**

Walls on the outside are designed to give protection...

Walls on the inside are designed to give privacy and support to the outside walls.

*Basically in life from our homes to our vehicles we live our lives surrounded by some type of wall.*

**A wall is a barrier.**

A barrier is described as anything built or serving to bar passage.

A barrier can be both good and bad.

A barrier works to keep the bad out and make those inside feel safer.

**A barrier is also a restraint.**

A barrier not only restrains access.

A barrier can restrain progress as a barrier places boundaries.

**When Paul wrote to the Ephesians it was a time when the ancient world was filled with barriers.**

Barriers designed to keep some people in and other people out.

**Many of those barriers dealt with Christianity.**

**In early Christianity there were barriers between the slaves and slave owners.**

The owners did not want the slaves to worship with them or worship the same Lord.

**There was a barrier in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 7 between men and women.**

When a woman or wife became a Christian it automatically created a barrier.

The reason for the barrier was because a husband found it intolerable that his wife would ever do anything independent of himself.

The woman was a subordinate or inferior to the man who saw himself as superior.

The husband told the wife how to live and the woman was to never enter into a man's world.

When a woman or wife decided to follow the Lord Jesus Christ it was out character and the husband suffered tremendous conflict from his friends.

**The Greeks had a tremendous barrier.**

They said all people were divided into two classes...

Greeks and Barbarians.

***The Greek called anyone who couldn't speak Greek a Barbarian.***

The word barbarian came from bar-bar because to a Greek any other language sounded like bar-bar-bar-bar.

Meaning other languages didn't make any sense to them.

The Greeks believed they had the language of the gods and they were superior.

**Last week I spoke about the barrier between the Jews and Gentiles** the Jews saw themselves as superior and the other inferior.

**What all of this means is this... when it came and when it comes to the gospel of Jesus Christ...**

It has to deal with conflicts with gender and cultures, racism and languages, education...prosperity and tensions between people groups.

**What lies behind a lot this is the difference between the world and the gospel.**

*Where the world works to create a neighborhood.*

*The gospel works to create a brotherhood.*

**Jesus Christ came to break down barriers.**

And that is what Christianity is intended to do.

**God's grace has always torn down barriers and embraced all people.**

Dt. 10 says *God is no respecter of person's.*

**The hardest barrier to deal with in Paul's day was the barrier between the Jews and the Gentiles.**

Anyone other than a full blooded Jew was a Gentile.

Between them was bitterness and hatred.

When Jesus came He wanted to bring the Jew and the Gentile together as one in Christ.

But it was a difficult thing to do.

*Unity is always harder to bring about than division.*

*It takes a group working hard to bring unity and only one individual can cause division.*

We need to understand where the division started between the Jew and Gentile.

**As with most division it is usually over something ridiculous.**

The division came as a result of proximity from the temple.

When the temple was built in Jerusalem, the Jews lived right at it or they were near it.

The Gentiles due to the distance of where they lived which was beyond the borders of Israel were seen as far off.

The Jew was near the temple and the Gentiles were far off.

Since the Jews saw themselves as near the temple, near the place of worship they saw themselves nearer spiritually to God.

The division started as a geographical issue.

But it became spiritual issue because the Jews saw themselves by being closer to the temple superior and the Gentiles as inferior.

The Jews did not want to reach those who were far off.

This goes against the O.T.

**In Isaiah 57** God said *peace peace to him that is far and to him that is near.*

This means God always had the Gentiles in His heart.

**The Jews believed and taught that the only way to come to God was to be converted to a Jew.**

To become a Jew it required circumcision.

**In verse 11 we see the words *un-circumcised and circumcised.***

Un-circumcision is a term of derision.

It means the gentiles were disdained by the Jews.

Which in turn means they were socially alienated.

**In verse 12 it goes from social alienated to spiritually alienation.**

It says *the Gentiles 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.*

That means they were **Christ-less, hopeless, covenant-less, state-less, Godless, and alienated** socially and spiritually.

In other words a Gentile could not get the spiritual message because of social alienation.

They were Godless.

And when you are Godless you are alone and on your own.

**Then go to verse 13** and it says *but now*.

I love it verse 4 says but God and then verse 13 says but now.

**But now means a change has occurred.**

But now then we see how the change occurred...

**Verse 13...***In Christ Jesus.*

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

This means Jesus Christ and Him alone can take people who are far off and bring them near.

In other words Jesus and Jesus alone bring people together.

**This is seen in Acts 2 when Peter preached the first sermon ever preached when the church was founded.**

**He said...***For the promise which refers to the promise of salvation...the promise of the Holy Spirit.*

*The promise is unto you and your children and all that are afar off.*

**Unto you refers to the** believer near or those who believed and...

**Far off refers to** Gentiles or those who do not believe...

*Have been brought near by the blood of Jesus.*

**The words blood of Jesus is a reference to Jesus' death.**

This is very important to understand...

Strife...hatred...bitterness...fighting...  
war...contention...all human suffering and conflict all come from the same source...

**Sin**...so if sin is removed there is none of this.

**An example is heaven.**

In heaven there is no war...contention...strife.

You know why?  
There is no sin.

*Any time there is perfect righteousness there will be perfect relationship.*

The problem then lies with sin.

So sin had to be eliminated.

Notice I said sin had to be eliminated and not has to be eliminated.

*In order for sin to be eliminated and barriers come down Jesus had to die.*

When Jesus died on the cross sin was eliminated position ally.

**Let me say it like this...**

When a person receives Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior His blood or His death washes away all sin.

At that point the individual enters the family of God and is seen as sinless.

This means the death of and the blood of Jesus makes us one.

*Whatever the race, background, nationality, no longer matters because...*

What makes barriers is sin and Jesus dying on the cross removed sin and the removal of sin made us one in Christ.

That is the positional reality of the church.

**Now that doesn't mean our practice always lines up with our position we will discuss that in Ephesians chapters 4-6.**

In the first three chapters Paul is just defining our position.

**Verse 14...***For He Himself is our peace.*

Now make sure you understand when it comes to peace that peace is not a thing it is a Person.

This ought to show you why the world has so much turmoil.

**When Christ is left out of taken out it means peace is taken out as well.**

The absence of peace always results in the presence of turmoil.

I would love to know how many school shootings there were before the Bible and prayer were removed.

**But sad to say the world would rather have chaos and trouble over peace.**

*The absence of Christ is always the presence of chaos and trouble.*

Jesus is peace personified.

When Paul says He Himself it is referring to Jesus as our peace it means Jesus and Jesus alone is our peace and only peace.

Peace on earth means when Jesus came peace came.

**Verse 14 goes on to say** *who has made both one.*

Two people in Christ are always one with each other.

Those far off and those who are near are made one by the blood of Jesus.

Jesus alone brings people together.

This means there are no distinctions, race, color, male or female, bond or free.

When a person comes to Christ their identity is **in Him.**

**Paul says in verse 14** *Jesus has broken down the middle wall of separation.*

This is a picture of what happened in the temple.

When a Gentile went into the temple they could only go to the outer court.

Between the outer court of the Gentiles was a marble screen.

Written on that screen were the words...No Gentile may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary anyone caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death.

A Gentile couldn't pass that wall but when Jesus died that wall was torn from the bottom to top.

**In the same way in the body of Christ the middle wall of separation is been broken down.**

This means there is no more privileged and underprivileged.

A Jew is no closer to God than a Gentile.

**Paul goes on to say in verse 15** *having abolished in His flesh the enmity that is the law of commandments contained in ordinances so as to create in Himself one new man from the two thus making peace.*

Having abolished in His death refers to the crucifixion.

When Jesus died on the cross He abolished or wiped out a barrier.

He abolished the ceremonial, the ritual, the traditional, circumcision all the stuff that meant nothing to God but created a barrier to people.

He abolished and then created in Himself one new man from the two making peace.

New means something of which there has never been before.

**The message is the wall is gone the barrier has been removed.**

**We are all one and we are going to spend eternity together.**

I'm not better than you and you are not better than me we are better together.

Let's not wait until eternity to live this out let the world know as a believer we love each other.

**Stand up, stand with your fellow believer**

when they are in the right.

**And stand in prayer for them** when they are in the wrong.

**Let's keep our problems between us...**

**And let's share our Lord with the world.**

Let's practice heaven here on earth.

Let's tear down walls and not build them.