

## One New Humanity

As preached on Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017

**Read:** Ephesians 2:11-22

1. When have you been aware of separation or alienation from another? How have you experienced this personally, and collectively? What did God show you? How did this awareness form you then, or now?
2. What is Paul's implication in mentioning circumcision is "(done in the body by human hands)" in v.11 (see Phil. 3:2 for greater severity!). Is this primarily about circumcision? Why or why not? What bigger reality exists beyond this external sign? *Consider the prophets: Deut. 10:16; 30:6, Jer. 4:4.*
3. What does it mean that Christ has "destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility" (v.14)? What is the barrier or wall? How did the cross bring reconciliation and death to hostility (v.16)?
4. Consider Acts 21:27-28ff where Paul is arrested for helping a Gentile Christian illegally enter through the temple barrier. Beyond this physical division between Jew and Gentile, what social and spiritual barriers also existed? What equivalents exist in our context and our time? *Name as many as you can.*
5. How does the repetition of "far away" and "near" in vv.13 & 17 highlight one's access to God addressed in v.18? What do you think of when you hear "access"? How does access relate to belonging?
6. Ephesians 2 expresses that Christ embodies peace (v.14), makes peace (v.15), and proclaims peace (v.17). How does this truth impact you personally, as well as all of humankind? How are you called to live in alignment with Christ's peace? In what ways can further the peace of Christ?
7. What would the implications of "citizen" be during Paul's context (v.19)? Why is it a powerful image today? For whom? See Acts 22:27-29 for reference.
8. In vv. 21-22, what does it mean that Christ is the "chief cornerstone" (v.20; prophesied in Isaiah 28:16)? And that the building is joined in him? What is the holy temple?
9. Reread 2:15b. If Christ created in himself "one new humanity," why do we see so much division everywhere, even in the Church? When have you experienced Christ demolishing barriers and reconciling people? How can we as Christ-followers join in the "one new humanity" formed in Christ?