

“The Church of Christ”
Ephesians 2:19-22
(Preached at Trinity, June 1, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Verses 16-17** speak of the wonderful reconciliation made possible through the death of Christ. While the immediate context is dealing with the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile these verses go beyond the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles. He is speaking of the reconciliation of sinners to God.
Ephesians 2:18 NAU - "for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father."
2. As we come to **Verses 19-22** Paul continues the subject of unity.
"So then . . ." – The Greek here refers to a result statement. You could also translate it "consequently" or "as a result."
Still addressing the Gentiles, Paul speaks of the result of God's reconciling grace. The Gentiles have been united with the Jews to form one people – the body of Christ.
3. Paul now speaks of Jews and Gentiles as one. They are built together as one glorious structure – the church.
Ephesians 2:22 NAU - "being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."
4. The hallmark of God's redemptive purpose rests in the church.
 - a. The church is the body of Christ. In **Chapter 1** Paul presents Christ as the Head of the church.
Ephesians 1:22-23 NAU - "gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."
 - b. In **Chapter 3** Paul marvels at God's glorious work in the Church of Christ.
Ephesians 3:21 NAU - "to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever."
 - c. In **Chapter 5** Paul describes the church as the bride of Christ.
5. As we close out **Chapter 2** Paul describes this church. More particularly, Paul describes the nature of those who make up the church.
 - I. First, he describes them as holy – they are saints
 - II. Second, he describes them as being part of a family—God's household
 - III. Third, he describes them as being uniquely joined together – they are fitted together like a building – **Verse 21**
6. This is important because ultimately it describes you. Each of us should be intensely interested in this because the church is made up of parts, building blocks each one making up the whole. Your part is important.
 - I. They are the saints of God
 - A. This is a designation to describe the people of God
 1. God has always made a distinction between the Godly and the wicked. God's people are holy.

Psalms 37:28 NAS - "For the LORD loves justice, And does not forsake His godly ones; They are preserved forever; But the descendants of the wicked will be cut off."

The KJV translates "Godly ones" "saints"

2. In the New Covenant both Jew and Gentile make up the people of God—the true Israel of God

Galatians 6:15-16 NAU - "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God."

3. Now there is no distinction – there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, Jew or Gentile. Both groups are designated as the saints of God. Paul is writing this epistle to a united people – the saints of God.

Ephesians 1:1 NAU - "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus"

- B. But the word saint means more than just a generic expression for the people of God. It describes the nature of those people

1. The Greek word is ἅγιος – It simply means holy
Our English translation saint comes from the Latin word *sanctus*
2. In its basic sense, holy means "set apart"
The church is comprised of those who have been called out and set apart
3. Christians are set apart as belonging to God – God's possession

- C. Under the Old Covenant God's people were set apart – they were the OC saints

1. Israel was chosen as a holy nation—a nation set apart from among all the nations of the earth. God entered into a covenant relationship with them. They were God's own possession – the Gentiles were excluded.
2. Circumcision marked God's covenant people as being distinct, holy—God's own people set apart from all the nations of the earth. The Jews became known as the circumcision
3. As we've seen before, the problem with circumcision was it was only an outward sign.
Circumcision did not affect the heart. God demands that His people love and obey Him with their whole heart.
God was more interested in circumcised hearts
Deuteronomy 10:16 – "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked."

- D. The glory of the New Covenant is God promises to make His people holy in heart
Jeremiah 32:40 NAU - "I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me."

1. In the New Covenant God still demands absolute separation – that we be holy, consecrated unto Him—but He has given us new hearts that enable us to be faithful to Him.
2. The church is comprised of these holy people. The church is made up of those who have undergone regeneration.

3. God's purpose in our salvation is that we would be holy.
Ephesians 1:4 NAU - "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy"
Ephesians 5:27 NAU - "that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."
4. For the church of Christ holiness must be our chief business. We must train ourselves to that end.
1 Timothy 4:7-8 NAU - "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; ⁸ for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come."
5. While this is the nature of the universal church it should be the goal of every local church – that each of our members be holy.
 It should also be your chief pursuit as individuals.
6. Is our church strengthened by you? We are only as holy as the sum of each individual part. As we have defined the distinctives of our church an important aspect is "Personal Holiness." This must always be a high emphasis.

II. Second, he describes them as being part of a family—God's household

Ephesians 2:19 NAU - "but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household"

A. The church is the family of God

1. The Church exists as a family – few people understand the nature of being adopted into the household of God.
John 1:12 NAU - "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name"
2. We have received the adoption of God
Ephesians 1:5 NAU - "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will"
Galatians 4:4-6 NAU - "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"
3. A Christian is not simply one who has been forgiven and saved from hell – We have been adopted into the family of God.
4. God is our Father – He is not the Father of all as some presume – He is *our* Father. He is the Father of His children.
 This is what is meant by being a "child of God"

- B. This has some very unique implications
1. Children bear the resemblance of their father
 - a. We are partakers of the Divine Nature
2 Peter 1:4 NAU - "For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."
 - b. By His Spirit who indwells us we are made able to be holy—to bear the likeness of God.
 - c. This is at the heart of our Lord's words in the Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 5:44-45 NAS - "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you ⁴⁵ in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous."
 2. As God's children we have the right to approach God as our Father
 Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven . . ."
Ephesians 2:18 – "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."
Ephesians 3:12 - "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."
 (A good father, even when busy with many responsibilities sets aside everything for his child—how much more does our Heavenly Father)
 3. We also have a unique relationship with one another. Our Christian family is our true family.
Matthew 12:46-50 NAU - "While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. ⁴⁷ Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." ⁴⁸ But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" ⁴⁹ And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! ⁵⁰ "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."
 - a. We are identified by the love we have for one another
1 John 3:14 NAU - "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death."
 - b. We have a particular duty to care for one another
Galatians 6:10 NAU - "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

- C. All of this is made possible because of our relationship with the Son
Romans 8:29 NAU - "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren"
Galatians 3:26 NAU - "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."
- D. There are certain responsibilities of being a part of a household—we need to consider this carefully
1. This is true in the earthly realm.
 Children are taught their particular responsibility in their home. My Dad didn't really believe in an allowance in payment for chores. He said my chores were because I was a part of the family.
 Children should be reminded that they bear the family name and their behavior reflects upon their father and mother.
 2. The same is true of being a part of God's household
 We must live holy lives - Remember the name you bear
Matthew 5:16 NAU - "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."
 3. We should strive for excellence in everything we do because it reflects our attitude towards our Father.
Matthew 5:48 NAU - "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
- III. Third, he describes them as being uniquely joined together – they are fitted together like a building.
Ephesians 2:21-22 NAU - "in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."
- A. The idea of the Church as a great building is taught throughout the NT
Matthew 16:18 NAU - "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."
1 Peter 2:5 NAU - "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."
1. The church is a house built by Christ
 2. It is laid upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as the chief corner stone. We are built upon Christ.
 3. We are the various stones which make up the building
 - a. It is a work in progress – God is continually adding to it
 - b. God has ordained the entire building – He knows each stone
2 Timothy 2:19 NAU - "Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His"
- B. The picture of a building is a picture of unity with each stone perfectly fit together. There is cohesion – "the whole building, being fitted together"
 This is true with both the universal church and the local church

1. The universal church is comprised of various members bound tightly together by Christ. Not a single stone shall lose its place.
 2. The local church must be bound tightly in unity. In a great building if individual stones become loose the building will lose its structural integrity. In the church if any one stone is weak the whole structure is weak. Our church needs strong stones. Each of you must understand your importance.
- C. We've seen this over and over – individualism in the church fades into the body
1. This is hard for Americans to grasp – we thrive on individualism Pastor Gene Getz writes – “The hallmark of Western civilization has been rugged individualism. Because of the philosophy of life, we are used to the personal pronouns I and my and me. We have not been taught to think in terms of we and our and us. Consequently we “individualize” many references to corporate experience in the New Testament, thus often emphasizing personal prayer, personal Bible study, personal evangelism, and personal Christian maturity and growth. The facts are that more is said in the Book of Acts and the Epistles about corporate prayer, corporate learning of Biblical truth, corporate evangelism, and corporate Christian maturity and growth than about the personal aspects of these Christian disciplines.”
 2. As members of the church we are a part of the great building of God – you have been added to it
Romans 12:5 NAS - "so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."
 3. Each member of our church, each stone has been carefully crafted to fit in its place for the strength of the whole. You are essential for the strength of our church.
 4. Each of us must understand that we are a part of God's holy temple
1 Corinthians 3:16-17 NAU - "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷ If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are."
2 Corinthians 6:16 NAS - "For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people."
 5. Again, you must ask yourself am I strengthening our weakening our church.

Conclusion:

1. This is the nature of the church of Christ. We are chosen and brought into God's family through Christ, called to be saints, and uniquely joined together as the body of Christ.
2. As members of God's household we must never forget who we are and who we reflect with our lives – our priorities, our decisions, everything we say and do.