

# Readings

## Scripture

<sup>11</sup> Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— <sup>12</sup> remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup> by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, <sup>16</sup> and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. <sup>17</sup> And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

- Ephesians 2:11-22 (English Standard Version)

## Reflection

Through our scientific and technological genius, we have made of this world a neighborhood and yet we have not had the ethical commitment to make of it a brotherhood. But somehow, and in some way, we have got to do this. We must all learn to live together as brothers or we will all perish together as fools. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured.

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution* (Delivered at the National Cathedral, Washington, D.C., on 31 March 1968)

# Sermon Outline

**The Gospel's Power to Reconcile**  
Ephesians 2:11-22

*The Theology of Tears*  
Brad Anderson

*By grace, we are called to practice our oneness in Jesus Christ...* (Ephesians 2:13)

## How do we practice our oneness in Jesus Christ?

**By remembering the grim reality of our former lives...** (Ephesians 2:11-12)

- Separated from Jesus Christ...
- Strangers to the covenants of promise...
- Having no hope...
- Without God in the world...

**By reconciling to one another through the work that Jesus has done...**  
(Ephesians 2:14-18)

- Uniting Jew and Gentile...
- Creating a new man...
- Achieving peace...

**By living as those who belong to the household of God...** (Ephesians 2:19-22)

- Like fellow citizens...
- Like members of a family...
- Like living stones fitted together as a dwelling place for God...

## Reflection Questions

*(taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)*

- What country did your ancestors come from? Do you think citizenship in this country meant more to them than to you? When have you felt like an alien living in a foreign land?
- What problems faced the Gentiles before Christ? What benefits result from being “in Christ”?
- What is the bomb that Jesus dropped on the religious “class system” of his day? What impact would applying verses 14-18 have on the longstanding divisions between Jews and Gentiles?
- What was the difference between Hitler's idea of a super race and Paul's idea of “one body”? How do Paul's pictures of the new citizenship, a new family, and a new temple help explain the reconciling work of Christ (verses 19-22)?
- From verses 18 and 22, what can you learn about the work of the Father, Son and Spirit in our lives?
- Consider how those receiving this letter from Paul might have reacted to these verses. How easy or difficult do you think it was for them to live out the oneness they were called to as fellow believers in Christ?
- What relationship in your life still needs the wall of hostility knocked down? How will that happen?
- Although God's grace is personal, what social barriers should it be affecting in your community? What is your role in that process?