

**Ephesians 2:11-22**  
**18 August 13**

“”

Week two of this four week series on the letter to the saints in Ephesus. We started last week with that great song of praise celebrating who God is and what God has done, is doing, and will do for us, yes, and also for all of creation.

Before we get into chapter two, here's a three word summary of the whole letter which I recently heard: Sit, Walk, Stand. Easy to visualize. Sit. That comes from chapter 1. "God put his immeasurable power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places. And he has put all things under his feet and made him the head of the church." Sit. That applies to Jesus our head, who sits at the right hand of God.

Next, Walk. That comes from chapter 4: "I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling." the Greek word used here for the way you live your life is Walk. We still use the same metaphor as in, "Don't just talk the talk but walk the walk."

Sit, Walk, and lastly Stand. This one comes from chapter 6 which advises us to put on God's own armor so that we might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Sit, Walk, Stand. An easily visualized way to summarize this letter.

If chapter 1 is, in part, about the place where Jesus now sits, today's reading is about what that means for us in this life. Full disclosure: taking seriously what Ephesians says about the work of Jesus and the plan of God means working to make this world a very different place from what it is today.

Specifically, Ephesians says that Jesus has done what Ronald Reagan asked Mikhail Gorbachev to do: tear down this wall. Jesus has done that. Jesus has torn down the wall of languages, the wall of nations, the wall of skin colors, the wall of class and education and privilege that we use to separate one group, one tribe from another. Jesus has gone so far, says Ephesians, as to *abolish* the law of God because it separated Jew from Gentile.

This is a big deal. A very big deal. This is a grand vision. It is much more than, much bigger than, "You in the Church need to get along with one another for the sake of the Church or for the sake of mission." That's what we hear in the letters of Paul, and it is more than enough reason to figure out a way to set aside our differences.

But now in this first generation after Paul, after a generation of reflection and worship and figuring out what is this new thing called the Church, and how is it that we have become a part of it, and what really does all this mean for the way we live our lives, after a generation of that, the Holy Spirit has led this second generation of Christians into further truth.

And that further truth is this: "Before the foundation of the world, God destined us to be his

own.” But wait. There’s more! “God has made known to us the mystery of his will,” and here it is: it is: “it is God’s good pleasure to in the fullness of time to gather up all things, *all* things, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, in Christ Jesus.”

That’s all from chapter 1? Remember that from last week? Have you stuck it up on your refrigerator and been reading it day after day until you internalize? You might want to, because it’s important. It’s important that we understand, fully know, and have complete confidence that God chose us, you and me, before the earth was even formed. And it’s important that we understand, fully know, and have complete confidence in the mystery of God’s will, which is to bring *all things* together in Christ Jesus, to tear down every wall of separation and erase every borderline that leads to distrust, hatred, enmity, war, terrorism, gang violence, racism—this list could on a long time because this is a sinful world. The mystery of the will of God made known to us on the cross is to end this nonsense.

Remember, says this week’s text, we were once aliens, outsiders to God’s family. But we have been brought in. Now, treat everyone out there who is an alien and an outsider in such a way that they too might be brought into God’s family and understand, know, and have full confidence that they too have been destined before the foundation of the earth.

Remember, says this week’s text, Christ is our peace. Not just our inner peace and not just peace with God, though wouldn’t that be enough? But wait, there’s more! Christ is our peace one with another. That, says this reading, is what the cross of Jesus is about.

Here’s a sermon challenge for this week: write down a list of your enemies. Pray for them, one each day, by name. Also write down who you think might consider you to be their enemy. Pray for them—and for yourself.

Christ is our peace, one with another as the mystery of the will of God continues to unfold and the power of the Gospel message of the cross of Jesus works its way around the globe and back again and speaks to our hearts and our hopes and both calls us home and changes us for this life.