

The Peace of God
Ephesians 2:11-13
Pastor Jeremy Cagle, March 29, 2020

Hello everyone and welcome to another Sunday morning sermon here at our YouTube channel. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Jeremy Cagle. I'm a teaching pastor at Grace Fellowship Church. We're a gospel preaching Bible centered church in Chilliwack, British Columbia, just outside of Vancouver.

And like many churches right now we've taken to recording our messages online so our people can hear them. In this time of the coronavirus bit unusual kind of a strange thing to do. I was actually talking to and heard one pastor say, this week, that last Sunday in church history was one of the most unusual strange services ever, because everyone did their stuff online here in North America. Everybody recorded their sermons and teachings online, which is not the usual way to do things. As you are well aware, we like being together. I miss seeing you. I miss seeing your faces when I preach. I'm looking at a camera right now. I can't see you and I miss that. I miss hearing your voice. Miss talking to you. But we trust this is what God wants for us now, we trust this is his will for us, and we rest in his sovereignty in that.

I also want to mention that I haven't had a chance to tell you about some things going on in the life of our church, just kind of an update on some events. And one of those is our recent trip to the shepherd's conference. As you know, we took several men a couple of weeks ago to Los Angeles for a time of Bible teaching and fellowship. But there's eight of us who went, eight men, and I asked them while they were there, what they learned so I could come back and share it with you. This was unusual. I've never done this before, but I told them in I've been going to this conference for about 17 years, and I've noticed a lot of guys get really worked up emotionally. They get really excited about the conference only to come home and forget what they've learned. And so one thing I wanted to do this year was have them tell me what they learned. So we could think through that together about how to apply it. And so this is what they told me I wrote it down on a whiteboard here for you. These are the things that they mentioned that they had learned, just to kind of walk you through them here. They said they learned that the church should love each other. The church should be focused on theological training and faithful preaching. Shepherding should be a priority and prayer. There should be a support structure for the elders and deacons. And we should make a priority out of soul winning and evangelism and missions. We should be ambassadors for Christ and a listening congregation. We should work on being healthy Christians and have a love for Christ. Confidence in the scriptures and a passion and zeal for the Lord. And as they said that we were in a room with a with a large whiteboard. I just kind of wrote all these things down. It was our men and several other brothers from Canada and from British Columbia, that were all in there together. And I said, let's talk about how you can get all these things. Let's talk about how you can apply this to your life and not forget it and I wrote the word if you see it, the bottom here, I

wrote a line down to the bottom, and I wrote the word longevity. I said, this is how you get all these things. You have to have a long-term perspective on the Christian life.

You can't get all this after a few days at a conference. You can't get all of this in a few weeks or months. This takes years. In fact, it's been said, that ministry is not measured in years, it's measured in decades. It's measured in lifetimes. And I would say the same thing to you as a church this morning. I would say the same thing to you as a congregation. If you want to know how to survive the coronavirus. It takes years to get through trials like this and we're praying it won't last for years. My point is, though, the maturity to get all of this takes a long, long time. I had someone ask me this week, you know, how are we going to get through the coronavirus as a church so how are we going to survive this time? We can't meet together, we can't fellowship. What are we going to do? And I told them, we're going to do what the church has done for centuries. We're going to outlast it. We're going to persevere.

The church has been through things like this before the church has been through trials for a thousand years. We're going to have a long-term perspective. Other people have asked me, you know, how do we grow in a time like this? How do we reach more people? The same way, you do it by persevering. And I want to encourage you this morning in your own Christian life, and the life of the church, this is what we're going to do.

To say it another way the change has to be permanent in order to be real. And these that stick around through times like this, you don't want to hear today, gone tomorrow religion. You don't want a flash in the pan Christianity. And I don't know about you, but I think there's far too much flash in the pan Christianity going on right now. Amen. There are far too many people whose faith is here today, gone tomorrow. We don't need that right now. That doesn't do us any good in a trial like this. We need something permanent, we need something that's going to last. And that's what we're going to talk about this morning.

This morning, in our time in God's word, we're going to look at something permanent. And to see that if you would open your Bibles with me to the book of Ephesians. That's the book we're going to be in this morning. We are back in the book of Ephesians. And we are looking at chapter two. So if you would turn to Ephesians chapter two, that's the passage we are in. And it talks about the great change that occurs in us when we're saved. It talks about the great work of conversion and the one thing it's going to tell us is that this work is permanent. It is a long lasting change in you. Doesn't last for a couple days at a conference, doesn't last for a couple of weeks or months. It lasts for a lifetime.

One Puritan said that the one virtue you can't fake is the virtue of perseverance. And that's what you see in this text here, if you look in Ephesians chapter two, we're going to read verses 1 through 10. Paul writes this, he says, and you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked,

according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them too, we all formerly lived in the lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – And he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not as a result of work, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we would walk in them.

If you notice, as you read that there is a great change going on in this passage, there's a great movement and conversion and it's of the greatest magnitude because it's a change from death to life. It's a change from the very bottom of human existence to the very top. If you notice, Paul says before you were saved, you were dead, and you follow the devil. That's about as low as you can go as a human being, you can't get any worse than that. And it ends up saying he raised you up with Christ and seated you in the heavenly places, which is as high as you can go. You can't get any higher than heaven. And Paul's point is that God has changed you. That's the idea here. When you met Jesus Christ and trusted in him, you became a different person. And he did it by His grace. That's what verse 8 said, he did it so that you did nothing. He did everything. It's all of Christ. So the change is permanent. You can't mess it up now. You might be a really, really, really, really good sinner, but you're not that good of one. And I have to be honest, because after studying a text like this, you almost want to close the book of Ephesians. And, and call it a night right there, don't you? I mean, you almost want to say that's enough. Paul, my heart is full. My soul is overflowing. And let's just close in a word of prayer.

Ephesians 2:1-10 is the kind of passage you want to stay in forever because it's so rich. There's so much to say. But Paul actually goes on, and he adds to this wonderful text and if you look in verse 11, he says therefore, remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who were called uncircumcision. By the so called circumcision, which is performed in the flesh by human hands. Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were far off had been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall by abolishing in his flesh the enmity which is the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, so that in himself, he might make the two into one man, thus establishing peace.

Just to walk you through this because this is our text for today. Paul says this is what the change looks like in you. This is what your conversion looks like. It looks like peace. It looks like God drawing you

near to himself. Verse 10, mentions the workmanship of God. The works that God does in us and this is the first word Paul mentions. He mentions peace. Verse 13 says, but now in Christ, you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ, for he himself is our peace. If you notice as you read this passage, this is the second time the word “but” is used in a major way. It’s the second time Paul interrupts his flow of thought. He does it up in chapter 2:4 to say you were this but now you are this. You were once far away from God, but you have been brought near. You were at war with him. You are an enemy of his, you are a sinner – a rotten stinking sinner if you read chapter 2. But now you’re at peace with him because Jesus is our peace. This this is not about you it’s about him. He’s the one who made it possible for you to have peace in this world. Friends, the Christian life doesn’t stop with conversion. Some people think it does they think they prayed a prayer they had some kind of momentary experience and then it’s over Paul says It’s not over. It’s just begun. Because it goes on to become a mission of peace.

As you grow in Christ, as you mature in the Christian life, there comes a certain peacefulness in you a certain restfulness contentment, it's a sign that you're saved. The sign that you're born again, you serve a God of rest, you serve a Prince of Peace and you reflect that. You don't go around with a chip on your shoulder. You don't go around with something to prove to the world. You go around making peace. And I mentioned that because if the world needs anything right now it needs this, doesn't it? If the world needs to see anything from us as a church it needs to see peace because we don't have that right now. This world is lacking in the peace department. Amen? People aren't at peace right now. They're not at rest. They're scared over the coronavirus. They're frightened and it's starting to show you can. You can see this in long lines at the grocery store at Staples. You can hear it in the way people talk in the hospital in the emergency room. I heard one story of a recent altercation at a bank. Somebody's got bit over social distancing those kinds of things.

This world desperately needs peace. You need to show them something different from all that. You show them another way. And you do that because Jesus Christ is our peace. He came to draw us near to God and near to each other.

I heard someone say from our church, I love it when you when you guys tell me this kind of stuff, but someone from our church told me the other day, if it wasn't for Jesus Christ, I don't know what I would do in a time like this. I don't know, I don't know how I would sleep at night. I don't know how I would calm down. He gives me peace. That's what this says.

You know, just to say a little more about this so you can see how important this is to God. This is a big topic in the Bible. You know, the first thing Adam and Eve lost in the garden when they sinned, was peace? First thing they lost. They sin and what do they do? They turn on each other. And they turn on God.

And the first thing the Lord Jesus Christ came to do was to give us peace. It was sung about it his birth. At his birth the angels sang Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth among man. I mean, he hadn't even arrived yet and they were talking about peace. He hadn't even gotten here, and they were singing about it. And Jesus spoke about it on the night before he died. Right before he died, He said My peace I leave with you. And the day he came back, the morning he came back he said, Peace be with you because it was on his mind. It was on his mind at the cradle and at the grave. This is why every one of the letters in the New Testament gives us a call to peace. Over and over again we're told to be at peace with all men and make every effort to live in peace. This is why Jesus said Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. He didn't say Blessed are the troublemakers. Blessed are the those who pick a fight. He said, Blessed are those who make peace. Peace is a of fruit of the Spirit. For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness. And the point is this. This is important to God and it needs to be important to us as well. And peace was a priority for him and it needs to be a priority for us.

Yes, there's conflict in the Christian life. And there's conflict when you preach the gospel, there's conflict when you go out in the world and tell them about our Savior. But there's also a mission of peace that goes along with it. And this is so important to Paul that after writing about our conversion, after writing about this great change that God has brought about in us, the first thing comes to his mind is peace. The first thing he points us to, is this subject. You have to have this when you're facing a trial. You have to have this in an other worldly sense of the word. You turn on the news right now you're not gonna find peace. I promise you that. Talk to your next door neighbor, you're probably not going to see it there. Go to work you won't see it there. It's just not there. But you will see it in the God of eternity, for He is the Prince of Peace.

And that's what we're going to talk about today. So if you're taking notes this morning, in Ephesians, two verses 11 through 14, we're going to look at two things you need to remember, if you want to have peace in the church. That's our outline for today. That's what we're going to talk about. If you're taking notes, two things to remember, if you want to have peace in the church. This is a simple outline because it's a simple text. It sounds complicated when you read it, but it's not. Paul is saying Jesus came to bring peace to this world. He came to put us at ease. If we trust in him if we believe in him, he came to give rest to our anxious soul.

It has been said that Jesus did not come to give us a better life. He came to give us a new one. Amen? And he didn't come to change our lives. He came to exchange them for something better, more wonderful and beautiful. Because he came to give us peace and let's look at that with two things to remember if you want to have peace. The first one is this, you need to remember what you once were.

First thing you need to remember if you want to have peace in the church, and peace in the world is what you once were. Because you were once an enemy with God, right? You were once at war with him, and

yet God has made peace with you so you can make peace with others. God has brought you near so you could do the same with them. And if you look in verses 11 through 12, the apostle Paul says it this way. He says, Therefore remember that formerly you the Gentiles in the flesh, who were called uncircumcision by the so called circumcision, which is performed in the flesh by human hands. Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Just to give you some background for what he says here, if you remember Ephesians two is about the power of God. That's how chapter one ends, Paul offers a prayer in chapter one verse 18, and to show you that God can answer it, to show you that he's strong enough to do that, Paul says that he raised Christ from the dead, seated in him in the heavenly places, and he puts you there with him by his grace. You didn't deserve it, you didn't earn it. This is all by His grace.

And what he goes on to say here, and as he flushes this out in the rest of chapter two, is that not only did God do that for you as an individual, but he did it for you as a church, collectively. I mean, not only did he do this for you as a single Christian believer, but he did it for you as a Gentile or a non Jew. If you read in verse 11, it says, Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh. That word therefore ties it into the rest of this passage. It connects it to all we've said before, to say this is how powerful God is, this is how strong he is, strong enough to save you, the Gentiles. It's one thing to save the Jews, they were his chosen people, it's another thing to save you who were not.

This is also another way of fleshing out the word dead. He leads in chapter two by saying you were dead in your sins and trespasses. This is just another way of saying that. Gentiles were walking dead people spiritually. That phrase in the flesh, Gentiles in the flesh is actually a play on words there because it refers to someone who is a Gentile in the flesh, physically and spiritually. I mean, you were dead and lost in the body and in the soul. You didn't have a chance. You were just lost all over. And that's what you were when God saved you. You were the uncircumcised. You know, the Jews had a physical connection to God, I think we understand that if you read the Old Testament, you see that there, they had a tangible connection. Doesn't mean they were all saved because they weren't, but their race was, their bloodline was. That was one of the promises of the Old Covenant. God said he would never forget his Israel. He said, He who touches her touches the apple of his eye, but the Gentiles didn't have that. The non Jews didn't have that promise, and therefore they were, they were dead.

Which is what Paul goes on to say, therefore remember that formerly you the Gentiles in the flesh, who were called uncircumcision by the so called circumcision, which is performed in the flesh by human hands, that that's really kind of hard to read. It sounds complicated, but the idea is simple. circumcision was a mark of the Jews. It was a mark of the covenant God made with them, so they bragged about it. They boasted about it, made a big deal about it and they put down anybody who didn't have that. They said we are the circumcision. You are the uncircumcision. We are the winners with God, the cream of

the crop, you're the losers. They used to call the Gentiles the *goh-eem* which meant dogs. You're a bunch of dogs. The term Gentiles here is *ethnos* in Greek from which we get the word ethnic. So it's a refers to anybody of a different race. And it's not a bad term. It's a very neutral term really, but the term uncircumcision was an insult. This was said to provoke a fight. If you remember when David killed Goliath, what did he say about Goliath? He called him an uncircumcised Philistine didn't he? That was to provoke a fight. But those are fighting words. When Samson burned the Philistines fields in the book of Judges, he did the same thing. He said shall I fall into the hands of the uncircumcised? And the Jews picked up on that and they use it for everybody that wasn't Jewish. They call it all of us the uncircumcised. You're a bunch of losers.

They said and then Paul, the interesting thing about this passage, as Paul says, "You earned that in a sense, you deserved it." And he explains why in verse 12, by saying you're several things before you were saved. First he says, You were without Christ. He says in verse 12, remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, that means separate, separate from the knowledge of Him separate from the awareness of him. You had no idea the Messiah was here. You had no idea God sent the Savior. The Jews knew that they had had that information for centuries in the Hebrew Scriptures, but you didn't have that. He also says you were without citizenship, that that's a big one here. The verse says, Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, that word Commonwealth is another way of saying citizenship. You didn't have the national privileges of the Jews. We might say today you couldn't cross the border. With the corona virus going on. We all know what that means right now, don't we? I mean, people have told me don't go back to the States because you may not come back. Or if you do, you'll be under quarantine and all these kind of rules. And then what Paul says here is you couldn't cross the border with God. There was a wall stopping. Which means the temple and the priesthood, and the sacrifices were lost on you. The scriptures and the Torah and all of that was unavailable. You couldn't get to it. You couldn't find it. Because the border was closed.

He goes on to say here. The next thing is that you were without the covenants. Verse 12, says, You were strangers to the covenants of promise, refers to all the promises God made to the Jews. There's something like 5000 of these promises in the Bible. None of them. You had none of them. He didn't know about a single one. And as a result of that he says you were without hope. You had nothing to look forward to.

And finally you were without God. The verse ends by saying you were having no hope without God in the world. Paul says you were no better off than an atheist and we could sum it all up like this. If, if we could put it together to show you how lost you were when God saved you to show you how dead you were. He says, you had no savior, no country, no promises, no hope. And no God no, no, no, no, no, you had absolutely nothing. Nothing. What is a dead man have? Nothing. Nobody looks at a dead man at a funeral and says I want to be that guy. And that's what you were.

Another key word we could use is the word without. You were without Christ. You were without citizenship. covenants. Hope, God. Without everything. You were uncircumcised in every sense of the word you deserved all you had coming to you. Until God stepped in and did something, until Christ stepped in and made peace. And Paul's point here is, you should respond the same way to others.

If God made peace with you, when you looked like this, there's not a man, woman or child on this planet and you can make peace with today. Not a single one.

You can't read a passage like this and not be humbled. It's like, you know, you start off and Paul's got your face down in the dirt in the beginning of the chapter talking about your deadness and your sins and these kinds of things. And he raises you up with Christ. And then what does he do in verse 11, he throws you right back down again. Up and down, and up and down. You're right back down again. You got to be humble. When you read something like this. You got to have your face in the ground. You shouldn't pick a fight all the time cuz God didn't pick a fight with you. You shouldn't have a chip on your shoulder because God didn't have one. And we can say it this way. Listen, friends, God forgives sinners who repent. And if you're not forgiving someone today, then you think you're better than God. We ought to be the ultimate peacemakers in this world as Christians. You know, as you probably know, this was a real important passage at this time when Paul wrote this because the Jews and Gentiles didn't get along, too. If you can imagine a group of people calling you uncircumcised and calling you dogs. You wouldn't like him either. You would hate their guts.

And Paul says you need to be patient with him because God was patient with you. I mean, this is important for us to talk about today. This is important for us to hear because so many of our problems start with this. So many of our problems or fights begin right here. They begin with our pride. They begin with our lack of humility. I don't think I've ever seen one fight start with a humble man. It's always with the proud one. Always.

We think we're better than everyone else. We think we're different. So we talk like the Jews, don't we? as a church as Christians, as believers, we go around saying we're the circumcised, you're uncircumcised. We're the winners as a church. We're up here and you're just a bunch of losers. And it starts a war. It starts a fight. Not over the gospel, but over our arrogant attitude.

In seminary, they told us, they said, you can't knock a man down who's an inch tall, but you can knock a man down who's two inches tall, and you can knock a man down who is three inches tall. And that's our problem. At the end of the day, we're just too tall above the ground. We need to take it down. a notch. You can't read a text like this without going down a notch.

Another way to say this is that there's a simple way to destroy the church. There's a simple way to ruin it. And that's to forget all of this. To ignore all this stuff that Paul's saying here and come into the church proud. I mean, that'll destroy the church quicker than anything, that'll burn it to the ground. You know, in his book on great church fights, the author Leslie Flynn tells a story of two unmarried sisters who lived together and they got into an argument, and they stopped speaking to each other because of this argument. They live in the same house, use the same rooms at the same table without ever talking. They even took out a piece of chalk and drew a line down the middle of the bedroom so that they wouldn't bump into each other in the middle of the night. That's how ugly it got and the author of this book says the most tragic thing about it is they brought that attitude into the church. The worst thing about it is they brought it into the house of God. And they split the church in two. One group sided with one sister, one group sided with the other, and he said it all would have stopped if they would have just been humble. It all would have ended if they just would have said, I'm sorry. I mean, how many how many fights would end? If somebody would just say, I'm sorry? I was wrong. Will you forgive me?

Paul says right here that to enter the Christian life, to begin to be saved, to be saved at all. You have to start with those three words. You have to start with that attitude. I'm sorry, God, Will you forgive me? You come in humble.

And friends, if you've worked your way to pride today, as a Christian, you need to go back to this text and get your heart right. You started the Christian life humble, you need to stay there. Let's make this real practical. Make it real personal. Sting a little bit. We've got people in our church from different backgrounds, just like it was in the first century. We've got people in our church from many different places. And we're going to have to be humble in order to make it work. Amen? I mean, we're going to have to be low to the ground, there's no other way. And we got people in our church from Baptists backgrounds and Presbyterian backgrounds. We have people in here from Mennonite backgrounds and Reformed backgrounds, people that grew up Protestant, people grew up Catholic. We have people in our church grew up with no religion at all. They were as pagan as they could be.

And what Paul says here, let me just say it this way, I'll tell you upfront that this church will never make it if you come in here and say, that makes me better than you. That makes me godlier. I'm up here and you're down here. You're just a bunch of losers, because you didn't grow up the way I did. Friends, it'll never work. If you do that. That'll only start a war. It'll never work in the world either. That attitude won't work in the church. It won't work in the world with unbelievers. You can't go to them and say, I grew up this way, so I'm better than you.

Listen friends, Paul says, You were just like the rest of the world when you were saved. You were no better off and then the worst guy, ungodliest sinner. So you have to be humble when you approach them,

as well. Andrew Murray once said, Your pride must die, or nothing of heaven can live inside of you. And we might add that nothing of heaven can live inside the church until your pride dies. Nothing of heaven can even live in this world.

There's only room for one God in the universe and it's not you. Your pride has to die.

Writing to a group of Gentiles, this text says let me tell you something. You don't have anything God would want. You don't have anything that would make him attracted to you before he saved you. You were a mess. But he saved you. He loved you anyway, so you can go out into the world and love them and make peace, which leads us to the next point we want to talk about this morning.

The next thing to remember if you want to make peace in the world. The first one is to remember what you once were. Remember what you were when God saved you, you were helpless, hopeless. You were you were down with your nose in the ground. You couldn't even look up to heaven, you were the tax collector who beat his breast. So you should be gracious with others when you see them the same way. Which leads to the next point. Next thing to remember if you want to have peace in the church and in the world, and I won't say too much about this one because we're going to talk about this next week. So this is going to be the topic of our sermon next week. Just to kind of get you prepared for that, the next thing to remember, if you want to have peace in the church is remember what you now are. You need to remember what you once were, and you need to remember what you now are.

In Christ, you're a different person now. You don't ever need to forget that. You don't ever need to make light of that. You have been changed by the power of God. And that's a change that is permanent. That's a change that's forever. And that's a change that keeps changing you. I mean you don't have a better life, you have a new one; your life has not just been changed, it's been exchanged for something wonderful. And this is something Paul keeps going back to over and over again, so we don't forget you are an enemy of God but now you're his friend so you can make peace. And if you read on in the chapter, Paul says this in verse 13, but now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off had been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall by abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances. So then in himself, he might make the two into one man, thus establishing peace.

Just to say some words about this so you can understand what Paul is saying here. After telling you what you once were, you were after saying you were without Christ, without citizenship, without the covenants or hope or God in the world. Paul says in verse 13 but now, to form a contrast here. He says this to change directions in the sentence to say, this is what you were, but now this is what you are. This is where God found you, and this is where he left you. And he says, but now in Christ Jesus, you who

formerly were far off had been brought near by the blood of Christ. Paul says, Jesus has changed you and made you different by bringing you near. The phrase brought near means brought near to God or brought near to Christ. It's not a physical term. It's a spiritual term. It doesn't refer to your body being brought near as much as it refers to your soul. Because this is what God has done for you. He's brought you close to himself in your soul. He's made peace with you. Far off is the idea of being at war. When you're at war with someone you want to keep them as far away as possible. You don't want them anywhere near you. But if they're your friend and your family, and your sons and daughters you bring them near.

God has brought you near and you can see the importance of this if you go back to the words in verse 12. If you notice there he says that you are separate and excluded and strangers which means you are far from God as far as it gets. The border was closed, the door was shut in your face. But now Christ has changed all of that and brought you near. It says that he did this by his blood, which is another way of saying by his death on the cross. At that event at the cross, Jesus took the wrath of God on himself. He swallowed all of God's anger toward sin, all his hatred toward it, and he forgave you. God's wrath was the border you could not cross. It was the wall and the door in your face. There was no way you could have ever atoned for that, there's no way you ever could have made up for your sins. So Christ did it for you on the cross. He tore down the wall. We'll talk about that some next time.

You know before in the Old Testament, if you wanted to come near to God, you had to go to the temple. In fact, even if you go to the temple today, they will tell you that to the Jews that go to the Wailing Wall and pray, they do that because they believe that's the nearest place to where the temple is supposed to be. And they're near to God. And this idea of fixed physical proximity was the idea. You had to go to Israel, you had to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Now Paul says you can come to the blood of Christ, which means that you can come wherever you are, you can come close and draw near to God, wherever you may be. You can do it right now in your living room. As you're watching this, you can draw near to God right now. You can do it if you're in isolation. That's a big term right now. It's a scary term right now, some of you may be watching this and you can't get out of your house. But I'll tell you what you can do. You can go near to God. He can meet you right there in your house. If you're watching this on your lunch break at work, he can meet you there. If you're at home watching the kids and the chaos and the craziness when they go down for a nap. You can draw near to God in that. Because verse 14 says here's why, here's the reason for He himself is our peace.

Jesus made a way for us to do that. He made a way for us to come to God, for he is our peace. He was at peace with God. Jesus never had any hostility toward the Father or the Father toward him. And at the cross, he traded places with us. And he gave us that perfect relationship. If you notice, Paul doesn't say that Jesus is our way to peace, or he brings us peace, although that's true, he certainly does that. But he is our peace, which means that peace can only be found in him. You don't get peace by being a Jew or

Gentile. You don't get it by being Baptist or Presbyterian or growing up, reformed or Mennonite, you only get it through Christ. Christ alone.

And going back to how we started this, I would say if the world needs to hear anything today, it needs to hear this. If it needs to be told anything, we need to tell them this because we got walls up here, don't we? We have fences to everything. That's why there's no peace.

I mean, just think about all the things that divide us today right now in light of the coronavirus, you know, where the government is asking us to practice self distancing and isolation from each other, which we should do. They're asking us to do that and we need to comply with that. But I don't know about you, but it doesn't make me feel very peaceful inside. It doesn't help me get along with people. It makes things very restless right now. Feels like a wall. We've been asked to stand two meters apart. You can meet in groups of 10 people or more. They tell us not to share your food or not to share drinks; don't shake someone's hand. Or if you do those things, you know, wear a mask and a glove and these types of things. Now, I'm not saying it's wrong to do that. Again, this is a government request, we should comply. But the point I'm making here is that Jesus has come to make peace. Amidst all of that. He has come to tear the walls down inside of you. See all that stuff's physical, all that stuff is on the outside. This is on the inside. This is a spiritual piece. And I might add, he's the only one who can do this. He's the only one who can give you peace like this amidst all the chaos, because he's the only one that can do it inside your soul. The government can't do that. Schools can't do that. Philosophy can't do it. Other religions can't do it. Psychology can't do it. All these experts can't do it. They've tried for decades. Jesus Christ is the only one who can give us peace like this. So we need to be telling people about him. That's how you get through the coronavirus. That's how you're going to make it, you tell the world that we have a Savior. If we can't stand near to one another physically right now we can stand near to God. Because we have Christ.

You know during World War Two, the story is told of a group of soldiers who wanted to bury their friend in an old church cemetery. He died near there, and they wanted to bury him in there. And so they went to talk to the priest. And they asked him, can we do that? And he said, Well, no, you can't, because he's not of our denomination. You have to bury him outside the walls. So they did that the soldiers buried him outside the walls. And they came back the next day to find his grave and they couldn't find it. They didn't know where he was. And so they went to ask the priest, they said, where's our friend? And he said, the priest said this, he says, you know, after talking to you last night, I couldn't sleep. My conscience was really pricked, so I moved the wall. I moved the barrier, and your friend is now buried inside the cemetery.

Friends, I want to tell you, that's what Jesus Christ has done. That's what our Savior has done. He moved the wall that was between us and God, he moved the fence so you can be inside it. So you can be near to

the throne of God. Doesn't that blow your mind? Doesn't that amaze you that you, a sinner like this, could be close to the God of the universe, through Christ.

Listen friends, we have to go back to this, we have to always go back to this. We go back to this in our personal lives and we have to go back to this in our relationships with others. It's been said this world is too small to have 7 billion fences put up in it. And so is the church. You can't come into the church and throw up a fence wherever you want it. You can't come in here and just have it your own way. You've got to make peace, and you got to make it in the world as well. That's what separates Christians from non Christians. The world can fight on its own. The world can go to war on its own. We're the ones who teach them about peace. That's what we do. Which leads me to ask are you doing that today? Are you making peace in the world?

Charles Spurgeon once said, while other people are congratulating themselves and patting each other on the back, I have to sit humbly at the foot of the cross and marvel that I'm saved at all. And when I do that all the other things of life seem to fade in the background. All the other things that I fight about don't matter anymore. Friends, have you felt that before? Have you seen that in your own life? Are you sitting humbly at the foot of the cross? and everything else just fades?

Let me put it another way, maybe to make it more direct. If you're fighting with someone today, if you're at war with someone in the world, can I ask you this? Is it over Jesus Christ? Are you fighting over him or for his namesake? Because if you're not can, I encourage you to let it go. Stop it, let it go. It's not worth it.

Listen, there's enough of that going on right now without us adding to it. There's enough fighting going on without us making it worse. We need to make peace. He was a Prince of Peace, so we need to be servants of peace. He said, blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Friends, are you a son of God this morning? Are you making peace? Let me pray that you would.

Please come back next week, we're going to pick up this verse in verse 13 and talk more about it. But for now, let's close in a word of prayer and pray to the God of all peace. Let's pray.

Father, we do come before you, Lord, just humbled at the thought of the salvation we have. And the fact that you have done a work like this in us. You've saved us when no one else could and you saved us when no one else would have done so. Lord, you've turned us from darkness to light. You've turned us from death to life. You have done a work of recreation in our souls. And most important of all, as this text reads is the peace that you've given us, between us and yourself. You ended the hostility Lord, we didn't end it. You ended the fighting, we didn't end it. And Lord, the least we could do is go out and act

that way toward others. Lord, I pray for those who are listening right now. I pray for those who don't feel this peace in the midst of this crisis. Lord, that you would help them to do that in Christ. If they're saved, may they draw on the resources they have in their Savior. May they turn to the one who draws them near to you. Or if they're lost, would you give them peace for the first time in Christ? Would you open up their hearts to a Savior that can love them like this? Lord, we thank you that you were this merciful to us. We thank you that you are this gracious and kind and then we go out now into a world that desperately needs to hear this. And may Christ be glorified as we do. For he's the Prince of Peace. We pray this in his name. Amen.