

Outline

Introduction: The Problem of Fences

- Robert Frost's poem "Mending Fences" (1914)
- Common misunderstanding of "Good Fences make Good Neighbors"
- Fences separate, divide, and isolate
- Types of fences: Race, Economics, Education, Social Status, Age, Religion
- Paul's proclamation: everyone is in the same boat—separated from God by sin

Main Theme

- Christ demolishes the barrier of hostility between God and mankind
- Christ removes barriers between people
- Creates one new humanity—God's household temple

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 2:11-22

Three Big Ideas

1. We All Were Once Far Off (Ephesians 2:11-13)

- Paul's call to "remember" their spiritual condition before Jesus
- Gentiles were outsiders, "uncircumcised heathens"
- They were:
 - Separated from Christ
 - Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
 - Strangers (xenoi) to the covenants of promise
- Definition of xenos: foreigner without legal standing or rights
- Grace flipped their status from outcasts to insiders

- Human nature focuses on what divides rather than unites
- Divisions within Christianity itself
- Romans 11:17—Gentiles as wild olive branches grafted into Israel
- Salvation reconciles souls to God AND people to each other

2. We Become One New Man (Ephesians 2:14-18)

- Christ Himself IS peace (not just gives or teaches peace)
- Greek: eirēnopoios—a peacemaker who actively forges peace
- Christ's death tore down two walls:
 1. Between humanity and God
 2. Between Jews and Gentiles
- Reference to literal wall in Jerusalem temple that warned Gentiles
- Christ's body (temple) was torn on the cross
- Goal: Creating one new people from two groups (verse 15-16)
- Jesus created something brand new: the church
- Christ removed hostility from the life of believers
- Believers are brothers and sisters, not competition or enemies
- Unity is created by the Holy Spirit, not man-made

3. Built Together as Temple (Ephesians 2:19-22)

- From citizenship imagery to construction imagery
- No longer strangers and foreigners, but citizens and family members
- The church is God's dwelling place for His presence
- Greek verb oikodomeō: ongoing formation and construction
- God's house keeps growing, one redeemed life at a time
- 1 Peter 2:5: "living stones...being built into a spiritual house"
- Every person is a unique stone, chiseled and shaped by God

- Foundation: apostles and prophets (revealed truth of God's Word)
- Cornerstone: Christ Jesus Himself
- Everyone at Rivers Edge is called and has a calling
- Examples of callings:
 - Mentor, disciple-maker, encourager
 - Serving in Sunday morning worship preparation
 - Intercessory prayer
 - Children's ministry
 - Caring for the sick and shut-in

Conclusion

- Jesus didn't just make peace possible; He became our peace
- Jesus tore down dividing walls (social and spiritual)
- In their place, He built a temple of hearts and souls filled with His Spirit