



# The Beautiful Community

## The Church as the Image of the Trinity

### **The Beautiful Community: Reconciliation**

#### **Key idea:**

God has reconciled us to Himself and one another through the work of Jesus on the cross, creating the Church as the beautiful community of reconciliation in which He lives by His Spirit.

#### **Key text:**

Ephesians 2:11-22

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (that done in the body by the hands of men) — <sup>12</sup> remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, <sup>15</sup> by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. <sup>17</sup> He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

<sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

#### **Key points:**

1. The Church is meant to display the image of the Trinity, and as it does so it will be a beautiful community in the earth.
2. Sin alienated all humans from God and from one another, fostering hostility between us and God and one another.

3. The whole Trinity worked to reconcile us to God and one another.
4. Reconciliation means that we are no longer alienated from God and His people, but now have free access to God.
5. Reconciliation also means that we can be reconciled with one another, and the Church is called to be the beautiful community where this reconciliation is realized and displayed.

**Questions for discussion/application:**

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. Why is it important to think of how the Church should exist as the image of the Trinity in the earth today? How does this affect my thoughts regarding the nature of the Church? How does it affect what I expect the Church to look and operate?
3. Can I think of biblical examples where sin produced alienation from God? What did alienation look like in these cases? Why does sin alienate me from God?
4. Can I think of biblical examples where sin produced alienation from other humans? What did this alienation look like? Why does sin alienate me from other people?
5. Paul describes our alienation as "having no hope and being without God in the world." How did this affect the way I approached life? How I approached other humans? What does it tell me about how unbelievers with whom I have contact might relate to me or the difficulties and pains of life?
6. Paul says that because of Jesus' reconciling work we now have free access to the Father and are at peace with God. Am I experiencing this free access in my daily life? How can I actually grow in my experience of freely approaching God?
7. What phrases and metaphors does Paul use in this passage to indicate the unity that believers should now experience with one another? What do these metaphors tell me of how my Christian life should look and be experienced?
8. Can I think of areas where this reconciliation is not being experienced in the Church today? Can I think of areas where it is not being experienced in my own life? Is there something the Spirit is calling me to do or not do so that I might experience the reconciliation Christ died to give me with other people?
9. Who will I call to encourage this week? What specific members of BRCC will I commit before God to call?