

Theme: 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.

## I. The Trinity - The Ultimate Reality

- A. Often thought of as an impractical philosophical concept
- B. The Trinity is the Ultimate Reality in the cosmos
- C. The Trinity is the warp and woof of all reality
- D. This is why we see Trinitarian echoes in all Scripture
  - 1. Creation is accomplished by the Trinity
  - 2. Humans are created in the image of the Trinity
  - 3. Salvation is planned, accomplished and applied by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
  - 4. If we think, we will see the Trinity in all of Scripture and reality
- E. We will look at the Church as an image of the Trinity

## II. Alienation

- A. We were alienated from God, His people, His covenants  
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.** Ephesians 2:11–12
  - 1. Speaking primarily to the Gentiles in the church
  - 2. We were separate from Christ - alienated from God

- 3. Excluded from citizenship in His people - alienated
- 4. We were foreigners to the covenants - alienated
- 5. The summary - without God and without hope  
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.** Ephesians 2:11–12
- 6. True of all of us - alienated from God & hope
- B. We were alienated from others - hostile to each other  
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>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.** Ephesians 2:11, 14–15
  - 1. “Uncircumcised” - initial note of hostility
  - 2. The dividing wall of hostility
  - 3. Based on ceremonial law (commandments & regulations)
  - 4. All of this alludes to the dividing wall in the Temple
    - a. Massive Jerusalem Temple - 80 years to build
    - b. Huge outer court area - 3/4 of a mile perimeter

- c. Four a half foot wall surrounded inner courts
  - d. Thirteen huge stone plaques - "No foreigner is to enter within the forecourt and the balustrade around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his subsequent death."
  - e. Paul imprisoned because they thought he had violated this law (See Acts 21:28-29)
  - f. Talk about dividing wall of hostility!
5. This speaks specifically of Jew and Gentile, but all humans are alienated from one another since the fall
  6. We segregate by race, sex, status, wealth, etc. In 2020 COVID19 & racial tensions are front & center
  7. We do this because we are more committed to our "group" and its cultural expressions than we are to God, His image, and His Kingdom.
  8. This sinful tendency afflicts the Church as well!

### III. Reconciliation

#### A. The Trinity works to reconcile us

For through **him** we both have access to the **Father** by one **Spirit**... <sup>22</sup> And in **him** you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which **God** lives by his **Spirit**. Ephesians 2:18, 22

1. This whole passage rings with Trinitarian structure & allusions, but it is explicit in these verses
2. Him (Jesus), Father/God, Spirit - the Trinity
3. We are created by the work of the Trinity, in the image of the Trinity, and we are reconciled by the work of the Trinity!

4. As we will see, this has HUGE implications for our Christian life and for the life of the Church!

#### B. Reconciled to God

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been **brought near through the blood of Christ**... <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**. Ephesians 2:13, 16–17

1. We were far from God but Christ brought us near by His blood - united to God by blood
2. Christ has reconciled us to God on the cross
3. Reconciliation, hostility, peace are relational terms - we had been alienated but are now reconciled.
4. Jesus has restored unity with God  
For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Ephesians 2:18
  - a. We were alienated but have now been restored
  - b. We were cut off from God but now have access to God

#### C. Reconciled to one another

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**, Ephesians 2:14–15

1. Peace (2x), made us both one - unity restored
2. Broken down dividing wall of hostility between people

3. Commandments, ordinances - Ceremonial law that separated Jew and Gentile in view
4. One new man out of the two - united humanity
5. Jesus has restored our unity with one another
6. This is the basis for the church's existence  
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**. Ephesians 2:19–22
  - a. Fellow citizens, members of God's house, Temple
  - b. One nation, one family, one Temple!
  - c. Joined together, built together - UNITY!!
7. The same work that reconciled us to God brought the Church into existence as the beautiful community of those reconciled to God and one another.
8. 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. (Theme statement)

## IV. Applying the Word

### A. Alienation & reconciliation with God

1. A sense of alienation from God was not a figment of our imagination!

2. Sin actually separated us from God and made us hostile to Him and His ways
3. This alienation is the root of all other alienation
4. Jesus' atoning death has restored us to God!
5. We no longer need to hide from God - we have open access to our Father!
6. This is the greatest gift imaginable - all paid for by Christ's atoning death!
7. I urge all - receive this gift of reconciliation today!
8. Am I basking in this reconciliation with God?

### B. The beautiful community - the place of reconciliation

1. The Church is the community of those reconciled to God
2. This means that we can experience reconciliation with one another as well
3. But sin works to undermine this horizontal reconciliation
4. Rather than being the beautiful community of reconciliation, the Church can become one more place of alienation
5. This occurs when the church endlessly divides over minor doctrine and practice, between 'races', and even as we specifically 'target' one demographic!
6. In 2020, COVID19, racial strife, and politics threaten to undermine church unity.

7. Right now the evangelical church is actually often undermining reconciliation as we prefer political power over people whom God loves, and as we are unwilling to listen, learn, and do the hard work necessary for reconciliation to be worked out in reality.
8. Reconciliation is ALWAYS costly. Reconciliation cost God His very Son, and it will cost us if we wish to see reconciliation worked out in our time and place. We too may find things dear to us being sacrificed in order to build bridges and see reconciliation with others.
9. The Church MUST be the community of reconciliation for only in this way are we the image of the Trinity and fulfilling the call of the Gospel.
10. The Church must display not only the unity of the Trinity but also the diversity of the Trinity. To simply be the gathering of those who are the same is to critically fail our call to be the beautiful community.
11. The Church must display the reality not only of reconciliation between humans and God but also the reality of reconciliation between all of the various people groups who are part of God's image.
12. Am I praying this for BRCC and other local churches?
13. Am I working for this, willing to set aside even things that are dear to me in order to extend the hand of reconciliation to those very different than me?
14. Is my experience of reconciliation with God giving me the freedom to reach across the alienation, hurt, and even sin of others to experience reconciliation with them?

15. Those walking in the experience of the lavish reconciliation with God given in Christ will be able to pay the necessary price to experience lavish reconciliation with others.

### C. A prayer for the beautiful community of reconciliation

#### The Beautiful Community - Reconciliation

Ephesians 2:11-22

June 21, 2020

Prayer

2 Corinthians 13:14

Teaching keywords: Church; Trinity; community; image of God; reconciliation; racism

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:14

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