

The Gospel Series  
*Reconciliation*

**Ephesians 2:11-22**

What is the problem that Paul is addressing? Who are the Gentiles? How and why were they separated?

The problem is that there is hostility between the groups of Gentiles and Jews. Jews are the group of people descended from Abraham (see Genesis 12-22) and the Gentiles are *all* the people not descended from Abraham.

The Jews had developed the understanding that one had to become Jewish in order to have a relationship with God. They had literally built barriers so that Gentiles would understand that they do not have the same level of access to God as the Jewish people did. They had also developed the understanding that without circumcision someone could not be righteous. So, there was a hostility between the two groups because of the discrimination that existed. The Gentiles would be the outsiders in a relationship with God, YHWH.

Why is circumcision such a big deal here?

It is considered the entry point to being Jewish. One could not be in a relationship with God without it, according to Jewish understanding of the Law.

What relationships are in view in the passage?

1) The horizontal perspective – Paul desires to see peace between Jews and Gentiles.

2) The vertical perspective – Our relationship with Christ is in view because of how it affects our horizontal relationships

How did Christ change the relationships?

He broke down the barrier. He destroyed the dividing wall that separated the Jews from the Gentiles. The two groups would no longer be separated by anything before God.

Christ also affirmed the healthy walls of holiness that God originally set in place. Christ destroyed a wall based on human teachings – race, gender, class, and background. The Jews had erected barriers to God that he did not intend. Christ came to fulfill the Law and show that only a rejection of Christ and what he stands for can separate someone from God.

What is in the foundation of the Church?

The apostles and prophets. We must know their teaching in order to accurately describe who Christ is. The Apostles are the 12 disciples (minus Judas plus Matthias and Paul). They spent years with Jesus and saw him resurrected. They are in alignment with a correct understanding of the OT prophets. We must understand the Jesus they teach because *that* is the true Jesus that the Church holds out to the world.

**Application**

Does what Christ did affect our relationships today? If so, how?

Most definitely. We now cannot use the excuse that some groups of people do not have access to Christ because of anything intrinsic in them. Paul also teaches us to remove the barriers that we place in order to separate ourselves from people. These barriers may keep us safe, from they prevent people from coming to know Christ

