

THE CHRIST COMMUNITY, PART 2

THE CHURCH AS GOD'S NEW HUMANITY

Ephesians 2:11-18

The only way to fully experience the God who is community is to participate fully in his new community—the church.

God's Dual Intention

God seeks to demonstrate the power of his grace in the life of a believer. (2:1-10)

God seeks to demonstrate the power of his grace in the community of believers. (2:11-22)

Churchless Christianity is not a full demonstration of God's power to the believer.

Churchless Christianity is not a full demonstration of God's power to the world.

Humanity's Dire Situation

Fallen human beings are alienated from God because of sin. (2:11-12)

Fallen human beings are alienated from each other because of pride. (2:11, 14b)

A case in point—Jews and Gentiles in the first century.

The source of alienation—the law, one of God's good gifts.

God's Drastic Solution

Amazingly, the source of alienation—God's law—was put on the shelf. (2:15a)

Amazingly, the source of reconciliation—God's Son—was put on the cross. (2:13b, 16b)

When Christ was on the cross, the Father regarded him *as* hostility itself.

When Christ died on the cross, the Father regarded the hostility itself as having died.

Humanity's Dramatic Reconciliation

God's purpose was to create a new humanity—horizontal hostility replaced with horizontal peace. (2:15b)

God's purpose was to create a new harmony—vertical hostility replaced with vertical peace. (2:16a)

Vertical reconciliation demonstrates the power of God's grace in the life of a believer.

Horizontal reconciliation demonstrates the power of God's grace in the community of believers.

God's Disarming Invitation

Irreligious people (those who thought they were far off) can hear and believe the gospel of peace. (2:17a)

Religious people (those who thought they were near) can hear and believe the gospel of peace. (2:17b)

The gospel humbles us because it reveals that *all* persons were at one time far from God.

The gospel elevates us because it reveals that *all* persons can now be brought near to God.

Humanity's Divine Imitation

All three Persons of the Trinity work together to grant the Jews access to God. (2:18)

All three Persons of the Trinity work together to grant the Gentiles access to God. (2:18)

God in essence is community—unity in diversity.

God's church in essence is community—unity in diversity.