

Ephesians 2:11-14 - Separate No More

Intro - The introduction to today's sermon will double as second introduction to this whole sermon series. Do you like looking behind the scenes or knowing how the sausage is made? I want to let you in on why we are studying Ephesians. The decision was an effort to guard against division. Last summer, as we were on the downhill slide in Daniel, I started to think about where we would go next. I considered several NT books as well as some needful topics for our congregation...but I knew that the new series would be preached in 2024...and with 2024 being a political year I knew it was also going to be a divisive year. My decision to preach through Ephesians was to guard against division. Society is rife with division. Many people focus on pointing out our differences and try to divide us, but the church needs to be reminded about what unites us. We are made one in the Son, and we should live out that unity.

Our text today introduces a subject matter that has a vein which runs through the rest of the book. Chap. 2 - Breaking down barriers/separation. Chap. 3 - The mystery of unity. Chap. 4 - Keeping the unity of the Spirit & being one body with one faith. (Eph. 4:3-5) Chap. 5-6 - Living out that unity amid our diversity and the different ways God has made us. Church, I want to guard against division so that's why I am preaching through Ephesians.

WHAT DIVIDES US

- Differences divide
 - Superficial and artificial differences are exploited by sinful man to cause division.
 - We must use a biblical standard when assessing our differences.
- Biblical Categories of Humanity
 - There is a basic UNITY to humanity.
 - Before we note our differences, we must acknowledge our sameness.
 - There is only one kind of person - Human. Ther is only one race - The human race
 - Acts 17:26 1 Cor. 15:39 IOG
 - We all go back to the same family - Noah's. Same father & mother in Adam & Eve
 - Our superficial differences are downplayed by our common family.
 - Color is not a biblical category of humanity.
 - We are different SEXUALLY. Genetically divided into two different kinds of humans
 - Gen. 1:27
 - Male and Female are the two major divisions of humanity.
 - This division is God ordained and good.
 - We are different ETHNICALLY.
 - God separated out the nations after the Flood - different land and languages.
 - Acts 17:26
 - The nations are divided into two categories - Jew & Gentile
 - Israel is the only nation that God has chosen. They are different.
 - Amos 3:2 America....is not God's chosen nation

- We are different ECONOMICALLY.
 - There are the rich and the poor.
 - These two divisions are also God ordained. 1 Sam. 2:7 Prov. 22:2
- There is one humanity divided into these binary categories.
 - SEXUALLY - Male/Female ETHNICALLY - Jew/Gentile
 - ECONOMICALLY - Rich/poor
 - These biblical distinctions become a battle ground in our separate divisions.
 - Male -vs- Female Jew -vs- Gentile Rich -vs- poor
 - Our sinfulness exploits these difference and even prioritizes other distinctions in order to sow division.
- As a church we must guard against division
 - We should recognize and appreciate our distinctions without weaponizing them to cause division. Jude 18-19 Rom. 16:17-18
- Eph 2 calls a Gentile church to remember how things used to be with ethnic divisions
 - Eph. 2:11 the Jew/Gentile division is highlighted
 - The gentiles were separate from God's people -
 - There was even name calling involved. "the uncircumcised / the great unwashed"
 - Eph. 2:12
 - Separate from Christ - no Messiah
 - Exclude from the Israel
 - Strangers to the covenants and promise
 - No hope and without God
 - This was a serious division
 - This was a real division and a biblical division
- Eph 2 has been about God's amazing grace that changes *what was* to *what is* in Christ
 - We were dead in sin now alive in Christ
 - We were children of wrath now adopted children of God
 - We were lost.... now saved
 - We were separate/excluded/strangers... now we are separate no more
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WHAT UNITES US

- Eph. 2:13
 - In Christ - Christ is the unifier and common denominator.
 - Blood brought us near
- Eph. 2:14
 - Jesus' battle won our peace. Peace with God and with each other
 - The ethnic dividing wall has been broken down in Christ. Gal. 3:26-29
 - Lord willing, we will discuss this further at a later time
 - We shouldn't be putting up ethnic wall where Christ has torn them down

There is one other biblical category of humanity. We are different *SPIRITUALLY*
 This one is also divided into a binary. *saved & lost* *believer & unbeliever*
redeemed & condemned Only Jesus can address and fix this division