

# Remember When You Had No Hope

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Date: 31 May 2026

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[ 0 : 00 ] Ready? Ready? So in chapter 1, we saw the multiple ways that God has blessed us.

He has chosen us. He has adopted us. He has redeemed us. He has sealed us with the Holy Spirit and guaranteed to us our inheritance. Chapter 2, then, two parts there.

We have the first ten verses on salvation. What is salvation? How has God saved us? What has He saved us from? How has He saved us? Why has He saved us? What has He saved us to?

Now we come to chapter 2, verse 11, the second half. And now the focus is reconciliation. So our theme of worship this morning, as you see in the front of our bulletin, is knowing God, wonder worker.

We draw that theme from Psalm 139. The ending verse is there. I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your eyes saw my unformed substance.

[ 1 : 32 ] In your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me. So, wonder worker. From our, before we were born.

Involved in our life. Now we see this theme in Ephesians. Wonder worker, chapter 2. Saved. Made alive from dead to life.

To do good works. To walk in good works. Whereas before, we were walking in slavery. And now, verse 11, wonder worker as well.

Reconciliation. What does that mean? So we're going to look at that today. It's more than just saved. It's reconciled. How are we reconciled?

From what are we reconciled? Why are we reconciled? Reconciled. And to what are we reconciled? So, once again, Paul is breaking down for us. These major doctrines that we believe.

[ 2 : 34 ] The things that God has done. The ways that God has blessed us. And that direct our lives. So, if you're able, please stand. I'm going to read from Ephesians 2.

Beginning of verse 11. And I'm going to read through 19. Ephesians 2.11 Therefore, remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by the so-called circumcision, which is performed in the flesh by human hands.

Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

But now, in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall by abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in himself he might make the two into one new man, thus establishing, excuse me, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross by having put to death the enmity.

[ 4 : 38 ] And he came and preached peace to you who are far away and peace to those who are near. For through him we both have our access in one spirit to the Father.

So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household.

So reads the word, let us pray. Father, direct our thoughts today to see Paul's once again unfolding of truth as he goes back and looks at where we were and then sets it up so that we can understand who we are now.

Help us to grasp, what we were. Help us to remember, to remember the past so that we might further enjoy the present and might more greatly praise you.

We ask in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. So, think of the early church.

[ 6 : 06 ] People often talk about it. If we could just go back to being like the early church, you know, when they're really united, when they're giving, when they're, you know, bonded and had such great unity.

So as you think of the early church, was it all well? Did they all just get along? In fact, there was peace and joy and love and acceptance, but there was also not peace and joy and non-acceptance. It's the reason why we have so many letters from Paul correcting us, teaching us. So, when we think about, oh, it must have been great to be in the early church, yes, absolutely, in many ways, it must have been wonderful and great.

They saw the power of the Spirit. They saw these ways that God was working. But they also saw normal human beings who had been transformed by the Holy Spirit act in ways that they weren't, like they weren't transformed by the Holy Spirit.

And so we read in the book of Acts, we see this explosion of the church, right? We see God working in great ways and the gospel is going out.

[ 7 : 26 ] And it's starting to reach now into Gentiles. Remember, Jesus said, go and make disciples of all the nations, all the Gentiles, right?

Teaching them, baptizing them, teaching them, right? So they started doing that. But that led to an issue. So in Acts 15, Luke tells us that there was the first great controversy in the church.

As the Gentiles were coming in, the Jewish believers struggled with that. Wait a minute. They need to be like us.

They need to be circumcised and they need to follow the law. Right? They need to become Jewish. So controversy. And so it's remarkable as you read Acts 15, you see how the apostles and you've got Peter and Barnabas and Paul and James, right?

All gathering together and the elders of the local church, they gathered together and they began to discuss this. What do we do? Peter shared his vision that he had that's recorded earlier in Acts.

[ 8 : 42 ] Remember he had that vision, right? Right before he went to meet Cornelius had this vision of all these food, all these unclean food coming down, right? And then in the dream it said, go and eat.

And Peter said, no way, no way. I won't eat unclean foods, right? I'm a good Jew, right? And then he saw it again and then he saw it again. And finally, the Lord said, I've made it clean.

I've made it clean. And so Gentile, and he talked about how Gentiles are cleansed by faith alone.

The only issue is, have they received the Holy Spirit? Not have they received circumcision, but have they received the Holy Spirit? That's the issue. And that becomes the issue all throughout.

Have they received the Holy Spirit? Not have they done anything else. And so Paul and Barnabas talked about their experiences going to the Gentiles.

[ 9 : 44 ] And then James, the brother of Jesus, James stands up and confirms what Peter says. And then he talks about the prophets agree about this. That it was God's plan to include the Gentiles.

And you think all the way back to Genesis, when God called Abraham. Remember what he said to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12? Right? I will bless you. Right? I will bless you in many ways.

And then in your seed, I will bless just Jewish people. I will bless in your seed, the seed that comes from you, which will be the Messiah.

In your seed, one single seed, I will bless all families of the earth. So the same time that he calls Abraham, that's his plan already. That's plan A.

It's a plan from the beginning. And then Jesus talked about it, and John 10, he talked about it, I have other sheep of other foals. I must bring them too. He talks about his disciples were one fold of sheep, but I've got other sheep too.

[ 10 : 56 ] And I've got to bring them. So he was already planning. So, issue, relationships in the church and how we accept or don't accept people and how we view outsiders.

Right? So in this section, Paul is addressing a historically new situation. The Jew and Gentile relationship.

And how Jesus, because of Jesus' coming, it changes everything. It changes who are God's people.

Started out being the Jewish people, but now it's much bigger than that. As we read, he's making the two into one. One new.

So that's reconciliation. So let's, let me show you kind of where we're going. It starts in verse 11 with a therefore. Right?

[12:06] So he's, he's building, he's still building on what he's already said. Therefore, just like when God makes alive you who are dead and then makes them something new.

Verse 10, he makes us his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. So we're brand new walking in new things. Therefore, remember also, there's another change. It's not just you being saved, it's you being reconciled. So he's going to talk about that.

And it's going to break down just like he did in verses 1 through 10. In verses 1 through 10, the first three verses, he talked about who we were. We were dead, we were walking in the world, right? We were stuck in this situation, we were under the wrath of God. And then we come to verse 4, but God, so there's the change. And then we see verse 10, the result, the newness.

[13:05] Well, the same thing here. Look at verses 11 to 13, he's going to talk about our problem. Remember what you were, right? Verses 11 and 12.

And then verse 13, transitional, you were far off, but now you've been brought near. So there's the change. So you were alienated, verses 11 to 13, you were without Christ, you were outsiders. Beginning in verse 13 through 18, now he's going to talk about this reconciliation and how God did it. How did God reconcile Jew and Gentile? How did he reconcile the human, the rebel human race, both Jew and Gentile, back to God?

How did he reconcile them? A different issue than salvation. Salvation is about our sin, right? And how we walk. Reconciliation, it is about bringing everyone together and reconciling in relationship to God.

Now we're brought near. We have a relationship with God. We're brought into the Holy of Holies. Yeah, Gentiles were away. Remember the temple?

[14:17] Gentiles are way, way, way out there. And don't cross this line or you will be killed. Right? So they're not only brought past that wall, what's called the dividing wall, they're brought all the way to the Holy of Holies.

And the Jews couldn't even go there, just the high priest once a year. Everybody gets in. So Jesus is radically changing. So alienated to reconciliation and then verses 19, 22, he's going to talk about here's the results, here's the outcome.

Right? What we were, how God changed the situation, and now who we are now. Now we're not strangers and aliens anymore. Now we're not separated. Now we're not aliens.

Now we're not excluded. Now everybody's included. In fact, we're fellow citizens. In fact, we're being built into a household and a holy temple.

So it's the temple picture, but now we're the temple. We inclusive. Okay? He's going to talk about what is the, and he hasn't mentioned the word church, but that's what he's talking about.

[15:30] We're the church. Which means the called out ones, right? Where we gather. There's a lot of talk today about, you know, it's just me and Jesus. I don't go to church.

Especially since COVID, you know, we got used to staying home so we don't have to go anymore. Right? So we can do this and sometimes we wonder, you know, we put our live feed on. Not that a lot of people watch live anyway, anyway, but who wonders that, is that defeating the purpose, right? Because we're together. And Paul makes it absolutely, crystal clear here. Yeah, we're to be together.

It's not about me and Jesus. It's about us as the body of Christ. Us as the temple of God. What we together are. So when he says, verse 11, remember that, formerly you.

That's not singular. That's plural. Right? If you had a King James, it would be, well, it would be you. It wouldn't be, it wouldn't be ye.

[16:37] See, in King James, you knew the difference between singular and plural. Right? King James has ye when it's singular. Or thee. But you is plural.

But in our modern English, we don't know. We don't care about grammar anymore. We don't know. Who cares? Because it's all about me. or all about ye no I don't okay so okay off my box here so let's look at this Paul begins by looking at our past again he wants us to consider this and again look at verses 11 and 12 all that he says he's going to detail it just like before he's going to diagnose right we're not just dead but we're walking in sin and we're walking toward the world and the devil's involved and all of this now he's going to do the same kind of thing in 11 and 12 diagram not

diagram but diagnose what we were and he doesn't just do that but he wants us to remember remember what you were that's interesting aren't we going to forget the past and leave behind us and go forward Paul says no there's a value to remembering who you were what happened because then you see what God has done the wonder work that God has done to bring us out of that into this so we can enjoy it and praise him all more so two things here verse 11 he calls us to remember a social exclusion that we experienced we were socially excluded verse 11 and then verse 12 we were spiritually separated so two kinds of of alienation or exclusion so remember first of all as a Gentile that we're outsiders that we have experienced a social exclusion from God's people from and Paul said

Gentiles experience in that from Jews now that was more pronounced in the first century we don't so much experience that today but if we extrapolate a little bit we can experience it there's a lot of folks who are unbelievers outside the church and they experience that exclusion they feel like outsiders because believers can make them feel that because this situation with the Jew and Gentile the Jews made the Gentiles feel that way okay and so the question for us is to look at it do I treat unbelievers that way do I treat those who are outside the church that way so and then become less winsome right affect our testimony so first he calls us to remember at one time right formally what you experienced before Christ before you were saved when you were an outsider so to speak you were a Gentile not a Jew think back give attention to reflect on this on your past why does he want us to do this is it healthy to think about our past well in this sense it is because he's he's calling us to do it so that we could appreciate how I became how I was out and how I came in right what God has done so we were Gentile what does Gentile mean just means non-Jew non-Jew non-Jewish a nation so the scriptures talk about Gentile and nation same word nations

Gentiles you know not the nation okay this is what Paul's talking about and it was very pronounced in the first century so Paul's addressing a social tension going on now in the church because you have these originally Jewish believers the disciples right and the 3000 and then the 5000 in Acts right this big group of Jewish people coming to believe in the gospel and drawing into the church right and they're all staying huddled in Jerusalem right in chapter 8 of Acts God's got to send a persecution to get them out go back home and bring the gospel to all your communities where you live everybody was staying in Jerusalem because it's nice and huggy and feels good nice warm feelings right because we're all getting along we're all Jews and we all look alike and so he sends them back out so that causes problems right to go out into the world causes problems it becomes uncomfortable now you've got relationships with people that you're not like right we don't look the same we don't do the same we haven't come from the same background so he's addressing that and many of these

Gentiles were treated as outsiders they're excluded looked down upon dismissed treated as second class citizens maybe you before you came to Christ experienced that maybe you experienced that from the church maybe you were young and in the church but treated you know because you didn't behave I got that there were reasons I didn't like the church see those attitudes right and I'm already rebellious so I don't need much I don't need much ah see they're all hypocrites yeah I used to test that yeah I know I'm embarrassed by that now but I did I wanted to prove they were hypocrites and that was pretty easy but there were a few people that weren't hypocrites there were a few people that were really genuine and really kind really gracious

[ 22 : 57 ] I couldn't I couldn't prove they were hypocrites I know right that's the Lord so you know but we can experience it I think that's common you know we can hurt people outside by certain attitudes we become legalistic right or whatever you know they grew up different than I mean I grew up in church so I learned to obey and behave in church right when I get outside I can disbehave but now and so others that didn't have that kind of experience I remember in a church I was in where some folks were coming we had a number of unwed moms suddenly you know come under the ministry of the church and one of the guys came and I don't think he'd ever been in church before but he came in and you know and he had a hat on I don't know how you feel about that but here's a guy first time he's in church and one of the men goes by and just yanks the hat off of his head guess how many more times we saw that young man because of a hat now there's ways to deal with that there's other ways the gentle ways loving ways that you could deal with that but to yank it off his head in the middle sir

I saw that anyway that kind of thing that kind of thing so he says they're called the uncircumcision watch the language he uses here Gentiles who are called uncircumcision watch this by the

so-called circumcision so in other words Paul's kind of playing with these so-called circumcision right called uncircumcision it's a term it's a term of contempt a term of inferior and it's the so-called circumcision who are calling that and notice what Paul says oh who's the so-called circumcision the so-called circumcision performed in the flesh by human hands as if because you got circumcised and by the way you were eight days old but because you were circumcised by hand as if that's a great work of God now it was an obedience thing I get that that was that was what they did right it was part of the covenant with

Abraham right it was man's part of cooperating when Abraham did that he did that out of obedience and reverence and honor to the Lord but to call others who are not circumcised because they didn't grow up Jewish and because they didn't know anything about that to call them holy uncircumcision it's like who are you I think Paul's kind of saying who are you it's not like you're right days old buddy who are you so they exaggerated their differences this was going on exaggerated their differences they think they're better because they're the chosen and because they perform some external deed that made them think they were righteous so we're not dealing with that we don't have

Jewish people hanging around going oh you're really uncircumcised but do we have church folks insiders treating outsiders in a certain way because they haven't done what we've done maybe you felt like an outsider that way so what was circumcision why does he bring this up well it was an issue circumcision biblically was a sign right it was given to Abraham after he believed Abraham was already a believer and then he was called to do circumcision as a sign and a testimony of his faith as a follow up it's kind of like when we get baptized we get baptized as an act of our first act of discipleship obedience right we do that because we've already believed right and that well we baptists if you're presbyterian you have a different view of this but and it's a wholly different perspective but from a from a new testament point of view because we're baptists we do new testament presbyterians use the whole bible but we won't get into that yeah

I did I did research it it's like okay I'm not going to dismiss it so easily because it is a biblical view so let's be brothers but so so but here and that's kind of the follow it's it's there was faith and then the sign right it's it's a sign of faith in in God so even in Deuteronomy 10 it clarifies that true and real circumcision is of the heart a work of God it's a it's not the external but the internal work that really matters I mean even Deuteronomy calls us to recognize you know yeah we do external things in obedience to God but what we really need is the internal work of God the work of the Holy Spirit on our hearts we are our hearts circumcised right we are the fleshly dug away so Paul confronts this hypocrisy in Romans chapter 2 as a wrong understanding of God's call so consider

[ 29 : 12 ] Romans 2 the end of chapter 2 Romans with me Paul talks about circumcision so he says in fact he's going to use the word over and over and over again he says Romans 2 25 for circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law but if you break the law your circumcision becomes uncircumcision that's strong so if so if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law here's his clarification for no one is a

Jew who is merely one outwardly nor is circumcision outward and physical but a Jew is one inwardly and circumcision is a matter of the heart by the spirit not by there's Paul and of course Paul would have been on the other side before he was converted once he came to Christ he came to understand there's something greater there's a greater circumcision so Jews were turning their differences into a barrier they're exaggerating the significance of the work of circumcision and they had an outward focus and they were thinking you know because we've done this and this and this and this and this you need to be like us and so this controversy in the church came up because the Jews were saying the Gentiles need to get circumcised just like us they need to keep the law just like us they need to be like us and so churches can do the same thing to outsiders you need to be like us you need to adopt the same convictions that we have and that's true to an extent but there are a lot of gray areas so if we don't go to movies you shouldn't go to movies if we decided it's not good to smoke you shouldn't smoke what verse is that that's just that's just a personal value personal conclusion anybody getting uncomfortable

I remember growing up no dancing no smoking no chewing no movies no cards right so okay well my dog doesn't do any of those well he chews so I mean that was the joke growing up you know it's kind of like and give me those things so that's what I'm going to try because I don't have a verse for those I understand you can come to a personal conviction about I will only watch certain kind of

shows granted good that's great that's your personal conviction that's what you do then do you impose that on someone else I can eat meat sacrifice to idols that you can see that was that issue for them in that day some were not strong enough in conviction to handle that because of what they came out of understand it's like drinking could be an issue for somebody to come out of right dealing with alcohol right that's a big deal but you haven't so you know what I'm saying those kind of side issues can become main issues when we prevent others from following

Christ by them see last last week I got lost I did something and I'm like where are we and I was going to go back and listen figure out what I did and I forgot and now I just did it is this what happens this is there's a fading see last week's never came to me I don't know what I did I got to go listen to the tape okay so that's one one kind of exclusion that we experience is a social kind of exclusion right for you you need to be like us and kind of thing whereas what we're really called to is follow Jesus and as I follow

Jesus he'll make clear to me what I do and don't do that are black and white issues so secondly he wants us to remember to not just this social kind of exclusion but that we as outsiders before Christ had experienced a spiritual separation from God's people that's absolutely true and he names five kinds of disadvantages if you are a Gentile you're an outsider you're not in the church yet you're not with Christ yet these are all things that you did experience so he names them verse 12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ separate from Christ you're apart from Christ you're without Christ you were a non Christian you did not know the Messiah you didn't even know the word Messiah you didn't maybe you knew you've heard the word Christ because people throw it around when they're swearing but you don't know who

[ 35 : 32 ] Christ is you don't know that Christ means that he's the anointed one the king who comes antiquity you didn't know that it was God's plan to save all Jew and Gentile through the promised one Jesus himself knew this right Jesus himself said I am the way the truth and life no one comes to the father but through me and by a statement he makes salvation exclusive to Christianity it's not many roads to heaven it's not many roads to God there's only one only one there's only one son of

God there's only one father who sent his son there's only one father and son who planned from eternity right to come and pay the price for our sins for our rebellion Nicola says that's you know in our culture it's been rude for a lot of years to draw lines you know it's rude to draw lines rude to say this is our way and this is the right what's wrong right everybody's got their own way except for Christians well they drew it's not rude for the world to draw lines against Christianity but but it's rude for us to draw lines but you know we follow a savior that drew lines we follow a God that drew a very clear direction for all and we don't have to be rude about it absolutely not unwinsome about it but we tell the truth is there only one way yeah so if you're

Joel Osteen and you go on Oprah you know and then you get asked that kind of question and you don't tell the truth who are you Joel Osteen I'm sorry he's low fruit easy pick on but he had a chance his daddy never would have said what he said so so there I go again but I found where I'm at that wasn't in my notes I'm sorry hopefully that's from the Lord I pray that it's from the Lord so not only separated Christ but alienated from Israel you don't belong to Israel you're an outsider and he says you're excluded from the commonwealth of Israel you're excluded from the citizenship of Israel the word he uses the Greek word is polity so we get over politics right from so you're excluded from that political gathering of Israel that they're a nation under a king they're a nation under one king who is God they're a theocracy and every Jew is a citizen of that nation and then he says thirdly you're strangers to the covenants of promise right those are foreign the covenants you've probably never heard of if you're a Gentile you've probably never heard of the covenant with Abraham the covenant with Israel the covenant with David or the new covenant unless you read the Bible you read in Genesis 15 God made a covenant with Abraham that it will be through you through you will come the one seed that will be the blessing of all the families of the earth or to Israel the covenant with Israel Exodus 24 that was a different kind of covenant that was a covenant of you either keep it or you deny it if you keep it I'll bless you if you don't keep this covenant of the ten words then I will kill you and I will curse you right it's either or it's black and white that covenant and of course we know Israel failed the covenant with David that would be through him right there would be a son there would be a seed of David who would take his throne and not just rule for 40 years like Solomon but he would rule forever that son that son and he would put enemies under his feet that son and then the new covenant right the new covenant that's that's the one Jesus said he fulfilled at the last supper right when he took the cup and he said this is the new covenant in my blood the new

covenant in Jeremiah 31 and not like the old covenant the one that you couldn't keep not the one on laws on stone but this is the new covenant that I'll write in your hearts it'll be internalized and I'll change you I'll transform you so that you will know me and hugest difference between the old covenant and the new covenant I will forgive you I'll forgive you what the old covenant could not do because it was just about justice and what you deserved the new covenant is not what you deserve it's gracious it's good it's built on

[ 41 : 04 ] Jesus and we love that but we didn't know that before until we came to Christ we didn't know about those covenants and then he says two more things he says you have no hope and you're without God you have no hope boy what is that I mean we hope for things right we hope oh you know I've been hoping I'd feel better I've been hoping you know to get a remedy for this neck problem I got going on no no no strike three this week and so hope right that would be a game changer God said no but see that that's a hope that's just a temporary thing that's that's just an earthly thing and when I put myself under the mighty hand of God when I humble myself under his mighty hand you know what I'm going to hear you're okay you're alright I may not heal you but you're alright because my son healed what you cannot heal and when

I reconcile with that yeah first Peter five says I humble myself under your mighty hand so that at the proper time he will lift me up well when's the proper time well that's whenever he decided that might be the resurrection that might be a rapture I'm all for that if I can go early that might just be heaven I don't know what that is but the real healing's already been done when it matters here's a perspective no hope see I may not have any hope about that kind of healing but I've got real hope about eternal life I've got real hope because my king is on his throne I can hear from an earthly perspective remember ecclesiastes what was his theme right that a life without God was vanity vanity of vanity everything's empty nothing has meaning nothing has significance right because everything you know everything fades away everything earthly fades away and when I put my hope in earthly things it fades away so it's all vanity but that's because it's without God they finally he says you're without you're not only without hope but you're without God atheos atheos what do we get our what words do we get from atheos so theos meaning God a meaning not God atheism atheism atheos atheos atheist without God no God or the unknown God right so without I mean that's the ultimate of you know no one there's no hope there's no God and they're separated from Christ but now so there it is again there's that key phrase but now verse 13 but now in Christ Jesus you plural all of you who were formerly far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ you Gentiles way out here way from the holy holies have been brought all the way through all the way through into the holy holies you've been brought not just near but to under his arm or under his wing you've been right near you've been all those hurdles brought away all those barriers taken away especially particularly we're going to find out next week the barrier of the law was removed because that was the biggest enemy because the law was accusing me the law was saying not you not you I know what you did you're out right and Jesus says I got it I got it I got it for you I did it you're good on that one in fact you're good on all of them come on come see my father so that's the remedy the remedy of Christ in Christ you have been brought near by the blood of Christ by his substitutionary death so

Colossians 1 similar message here here how Paul writes to the Colossians he says he the father has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son he's taken us away from the kingdom of the devil and put us into the kingdom of his son we're now under a new master the good master in whom we have redemption the forgiveness of sins he Jesus is the image of the invisible God the firstborn of all creation for by him all things were created in heaven and earth visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities all things that were created through him and for him and he is before all things and in him all things hold together seems kind of central doesn't he and he is the head of the body the church he is the beginning the firstborn from the dead that in everything he might be preeminent for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of his cross and you plural you who once were alienated and hostile in mind doing evil deeds he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death why it's in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him wow not just to present you to God but to present you holy and blameless and above reproach

[ 48 : 00 ] I didn't earn that because of Jesus Christ all the past disadvantages are removed and now I'm reconciled I was far away now I'm near I was excluded and now I'm included I didn't know I

was a stranger to the covenants now I share the new covenant I did not have hope now I have hope I was without God and now I know God and so Christ has made peace with God for us by his blood his life for ours forgiveness freedom from sin and a belonging identity with him so remember what you had before your experience of exclusion your experience of separation

Christ has changed all of that so have you experienced some social exclusion have you experienced the spiritual exclusion you remember what that's like Paul wants us to remember that I think maybe for two reasons one to highlight what God has done for us and so we might thank him but secondly that we might be sensitive to outsiders we might be sensitive to those that haven't experienced what we've experienced because we've experienced what we have by grace not because we did something right because we came to the cross and that's where everybody comes across the outcome needy and empty and helpless so the more we experience Christianity let our Christianity not become heartless toward those who are outside let's be sensitive let's continue to be sensitive especially the more different people we meet are from us right

I don't have tattoos but maybe they have a lot of tattoos does that make you comfortable uncomfortable maybe they got hairstyle that's kind of a color and stuff I don't know I don't know what your upbringing makes you afraid of in others because God may bring somebody really different from you alone see how you're going to do how you're going to do are you going to love them are you going to see them that they're just like you they don't look like you they may not act like you they may not talk like you but inside they're saying just try and connect this a little bit okay I don't want to get lost anymore let's close the prayer

Father we thank you for Paul we thank you for how you direct him how you speak through him we thank you for Ephesians as it begins to kind of unpack our lives both before and after before we knew you and how we came to you maybe really think about this as we are a church on a hill we desire to be a light for you help us to be the light that causes people to look to you not look away cause us to be a congregation and a group of people Father who love you love one another and love those who are outside of us who are different from us may we draw Father may we draw people really different from us that they might know you that would be really cool Lord so we ask you these things in Christ's name

Amen