

*Build Up that Temple!*  
Ephesians 2:19-22  
Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18

Bethany Baptist Church  
May 28, 2017 (Memorial Day Weekend)

...pray...

The Gentiles in 1<sup>st</sup> century *Ephesus* grew up in the shadow of the *Temple* of *Artemis*, an ancient Gr *goddess*, also known as *Diana*..

This was actually the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration of the *Artemis Temple*, measuring **450'** in *length* by **225'** in *width* & **60'** in *height*, featuring over **127 columns**.

It was the focus of a *thriving* idol-making industry (ref Acts) & considered one of the *Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*.

And, of course, if you were an *Ephesian Artemis worshiper*, you believed that *Artemis lived* in her temple...!

Then Paul *blew* into *Ephesus*, *preaching* the Gospel! Gentiles heard the story of Jesus: *crucified* to pay for sins & *raised* from the grave to *prove* it!

If you *believed* in Jesus, God would *forgive* all your sins & give you *new life*.

And then there was *this*: if you *trusted* in Jesus, instead of your god just *sitting* in a *man-made temple*...

*You* become a *temple*...and the *one true God* comes to live *in you*! Now wouldn't *that* *blow your mind*!

**Let's open our NT to Eph 2:11-22 (focus 19-22).**

Paul started this section by dealing w/*unity* between Gentiles & Jews. *Unity* is one of the *big ideas* in *Ephesians*.

As he finished the section, the apostle underscored *unity* by *pulling in* a second *theme*, perhaps the *biggest theme* in *letter*: the **church** – the *temple of the living God, made of the people of the living God*!

**How Jesus replaces a *dividing wall* with a *holy temple*:**

1. **He makes us *new*** (v.19). Paul uses the images of a kingdom & a royal family to remind you that our new identity that makes us fit for a new unity.
2. **He keeps us *straight*** (v.20). Paul then begins the picture of a temple, laid on a strong foundation that makes for a strong church.
3. **He fits us *together*** (v.21-22). The church is therefore a holy temple that God's Spirit lives in & unites.

## If you *in Jesus*, Jesus makes you *new*!

1. Paul begins to *wrap-up* this section on *unity* (11-22) by sketching **two brief pictures**: a *kingdom* & a *royal family*.
2. But even before that, the apostle reminds his *Gentile readers* of their “pre-Christ” *identity*.
  - a. They used to be **strangers**. Paul’s Gr word is **ξενος** (from which we now get the word *xenophobia*). It was often used to describe someone who is living *temporarily* in a foreign land (e.g. *tourist*).
  - b. And the Gentiles used to be **aliens**. What’s the difference between an *alien* & a *stranger*? Is Paul just being *redundant* in order to be *emphatic*? Maybe a *little*, but...
    - i. He does use **2 different terms**, here: **παροικιος**, which pictured a *foreigner* living in your land as a *resident alien*.
  - c. *Strangers* and *aliens* never enjoy all the benefits of *full citizenship*.
  - d. In fact, Paul just tersely reminded the Ephesians that *before* they trusted in Christ, *because* they weren’t Jews (v.12), they were **w/o promise of Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, w/o hope, ... w/o God...they stood outside of the wall of Moses...they were far off.**
3. You were *strangers* & *aliens*...**but (now)**; Paul draws a *thick black line* between the *past* & the *present* (cf v.4 & v.13) ! You were *strangers* **but now** you are *citizens*...you were *aliens*, **but now** you are *family*!

4. *Tear up your tourist visa...you were strangers but now, in Christ, you are fellow citizens with the saints!*
  - a. *Citizenship suggests kingdom. God's kingdom.*
  - b. More spec. **fellow** citizens in God's Kingdom w/ the saints. "**Fellow citizens**" helps pound home Paul's point about our *unity*.
    - And by "*saints*," Paul means everyone who has placed their *trust* in the *death/resurrection* of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  
5. You are *no longer* an *alien*, living in a *land not yours*, & *all alone*. Even better than *citizenship*, you now also have **kinship!**
  - a. God the King has *adopted* you into His *royal family!* That's the *image* Paul paints as he writes that *you are "of God's household."*
  - b. Now "*household*" **could** include everything from *hired hands* to *personal servants* to *children*.
    - i. And who could *complain* if our *good & wise* King took him *off the street* gave him a *place in the palace* as a *trusted servant...*
    - ii. But it's *clear* from all we've already read in *Ephesians* that Paul is calling us "**daughters & sons**"!
    - iii. **1:4,5** – *Before the foundation of the world* (before time began) *God predestined us to adoption as sons thru Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of God's will.*
  - c. And as *God's adopted children*, we have an *eternal inheritance*, reserved in *heaven*.
  
6. Think of the privileges of *citizenship & family*. You can walk into the King's *throne-room*, which is your *Father's room*, and *sit* at His feet and *ask* for your *needs*.
  - a. And often He will *meet your needs* through this *enormous family* which is the *church!*

**We are new...it is good to be new!**

**We are *new* & we are *straight & strong*.**

1. Paul then begins a *third picture* (19-22), the picture of a *building*, laid on a *strong foundation*, resulting in a *strong & united structure*.
  - a. Paul first specs the **three critical components** of the temple's *foundation*: the *apostles*, the **NT prophets**, & the *Christ*. **Read v.20.**
2. We'll examine the first **two components** together: *the apostles* & the *prophets*.
  - a. By *apostles* Paul is referring to the original *disciples* who were *with Christ* & who were *witnesses* of His *resurrection* (Acts 1:21,22). In addition, Jesus picked *Paul* to be an *Apostle to the Gentiles*.
    - i. The *apostles* were the *official representatives of Christ* in the **NT era**. (I like to call them "*Proxies of Christ*." )
    - ii. It was their *mission* to *preach Christ*, *make disciples*, *plant churches*, *oversee churches*, & *pen the NT*.
  - b. By *prophets*, Paul is referring to **NT prophets**, not **OT prophets**. There is some *debate* on this, but it's really clear. The expression *apostles & prophets* appears **3X** in Ephesians, each time in a clearly **NT context**.
    - i. **3:4-5** – *The mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles & prophets in the Spirit.*
    - ii. **4:11,12** – *Christ gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelist, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.*
    - iii. These are **NT ideas** & the role of these **NT prophets** involved *reinforcing* the *apostles' teachings* & also *communicating direct revelations* from God (incl. *predictions of future events*).
  - c. For both *apostles & prophets*, when the **Church** was *established* & the **NT** was *completed*, then their *mission* was *accomplished* & their *office* *ceased* (i.e. about the *close of the 1st century*).

- d. But these *apostles & prophets* **still** serve as part of *our* foundation through the *inerrant & authoritative teaching* of the NT. To draw on the author of *Hebrews* – “*though they are dead, yet they still speak!*”
3. Yet they are **not** the most crucial part of our *foundation!* **Christ Jesus is!**
- a. I’ve turned into a **DIY** guy in the past few years. I like it, *but you know what’s frustrating...nothing* in this world is really *straight!* I have yet to *find* (or **make!**) a room that has **perfectly** *straight walls, flawlessly smooth sheetrock seams, or 90.000 degree corners!*
- b. **But** the Church of **Christ Jesus** stands *strong & straight*, rising from the *straightest & strongest of cornerstones!*
- c. Paul probably had in mind **Isa 28:16** – *Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed." ...and perhaps...*
- d. **Psa 118:22** – *The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone.*
- e. NT teacher Harold Hoehner writes that the **cornerstone** was the *main stone* of the building, *laid first*, and *aligns all other stones* laid or built after it. It was also called the **test stone**, because the *trueness* (*straightness*) of all other stones in the building was *tested* by it.
- f. Paul’s tone is *emphatic* (20): the true *foundation* of the Church *starts* with & *rests* on Christ Jesus **Himself**.
4. *Old buildings get shaky!* So **two thousand** years later, how does the church *stay strong* on its *foundation?* May I pick up on a couple of *lovely hymns...?*
- a. **The church’s one foundation** is Jesus Christ her Lord, she is His new creation by Spirit & the Word... **and so** ...
- b. **Standing on the promises** of Christ our King, thru eternal ages we *His praises sing...*
- c. **Standing** on the promises that cannot fail, standing on the promises of God! **We stand because our Cornerstone is strong & true & eternal.**

***Christ holds us up and Christ holds us together...read vv.21-22.***

1. Paul moves his attention from the *foundation* (20) to the *building* that rises up from it.
2. **V.21** begins “*in whom*” and of course that means “*in the Cornerstone – in Christ.*”
  - a. The *building* and its *construction process* are *in Christ*; everything that happens as the building goes up is *connected to Him*.
  - b. The individual stones are being *fit together*. Here’s *another* word that Paul made up! Instead of being *separated by a wall* (v.14) we are being *fitted together into* a *wall* that grows into a *building*.
  - c. There are *four truths* (21) about this *building*:
    - i. ***Growing*** – *stone by stone* → *Christian by Christian*; a **7x24** project that will *only end* when *Christ returns*. *Nothing* stops it!
    - ii. ***Holy*** – i.e. it is *set apart* for *God’s use*.
    - iii. ***Temple!*** – ***now*** we know what *type of building* we become!
      1. This *holy dwelling* is a *temple*...
      2. There are **2** Gr words that can be translated “*temple.*” One pictures the *entire* temple grounds; but the one Paul uses ***here*** focuses on the *Holy of Holies* – where the *Presence of God* lived among His people. (Let’s *hold that thought* until **v.22!**)
    - iv. ***In the Lord*** – it’s as if the *Lord* is the *foundation* & the *contractor* & the *building site*...!

3. **V.22** also begins “*in whom.*” In fact, **vv.21 & 22** are very similar: **v.21** examines the *building* & **v.22** makes us *a part of the building!*
- a. Paul uses a *second* construction verb: *built together*. His grammar is *passive voice* – it’s the *Lord* who does the *fitting*. Don’t miss that both *construction terms* strongly emphasize **unity**: *being fitted together, being built together*.
  - b. In the *midst* of centuries of non-stop *construction*, the *Great Craftsman* pauses to *pick you up* out of the *stone heap* of *humanity*. He *cleans* you & *cuts* you & *shapes* you & *smooths* you, then carefully *fits* you in **exactly** where He *wants* you! Among *whatever* other *stones* He chooses, in *whatever* part of His *temple* He wishes.
  - c. The apostle finishes by making *clear* what he’s just *previewed* in **v.21**. We are, *together*, God’s *dwelling place!*
    - i. The **NT** teaches that each individual believer is a *temple* that God’s Holy Spirit *lives in & never leaves*.
    - ii. Paul wrote in 1 Cor 6:19,20 - *Or do you not know that your body is a **temple** of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? You were bought w/ a price, therefore glorify God in your body.*
    - iii. And now (Eph 2) Paul teaches that God’s Holy Spirit *also* lives *corporately* in His *Church* – *you also* (pl) *are being built together* into a *dwelling place of God in the Spirit*.
  - d. So Paul has pulled together **two** of the most important ideas in *Ephesians*:
    - i. Our **unity** in Christ – no matter what walls once *divided* us, &...
    - ii. The **Church** in Christ – *together* we are the church, where *God dwells*.



In **2 Chron 7** King Solomon has just finished *dedicating & praying* for the brand new *temple*. At the conclusion of the *king's prayer* you read this: *Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the house. The priests could not enter into the house of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house. All the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the LORD upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the LORD, saying, "Truly He is good, truly His lovingkindness is everlasting."*

4. Nevertheless, Solomon's Temple stood for *only 500* years...
5. **This temple** (Eph 2), this *temple* into which you (*we!*) have been *fitted together*, filled w/ the *glory* of the Holy Spirit of Jehovah, will stand *forever!*
  - a. This is for *you!* Paul is pointing to you! ...*you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.*
  - b. And so, in a sense, this can be true for us! ...*the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house! 2X*
6. Beloved, how could any Christian think that belonging to **this temple** is an *inconsequential* thing...? *May the Lord's glory fill His Church!*

*...pray...*