Sermon Notes for December 21, 2014

Jesus Brings Peace
Ephesians 2:11-18

Introduction

In the whole history of man, there have been very few conflicts as intense and long lasting as the conflict between the Jews and Gentiles in Biblical times.

Everyone had an enemy – someone who was beneath them and despised.

Why is our world like that?

The basic problem of man is sin and that is why only Jesus can bring peace.

I. Remember our past. Ephesians 2:11-12

Never forget where you came from and the wonder of God’s grace.

The Gentiles were:

- Separate from Christ.
- Excluded from citizenship in Israel.
- Foreigners to the covenants of promise.
- Without hope.
- Without God.

“I will try to have a good time while I’m young, because I will lie under the earth for a long time – voiceless as a stone, and I shall leave the sunlight that I loved…then I shall see no more. Have a good time, my soul, while young; soon others will take my place, and I shall be black earth in death. No mortal is happy under the sun.” Theognes 500 B.C.

“The sun can set and rise again, but once our brief light sets, there is one unending night to be slept through.” Catullus 50 B.C.

Why would God want us to remember our past?

II. Remember who it is that saved us. Ephesians 2:13-16

“But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Jesus Christ.”

“He himself is our peace.”

How did he bring peace?
• By destroying the barrier between God and man.
• By abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations.

The Temple Mount was made up of several courtyards that surrounded the Temple and there were restrictions on who could enter each area.

• The Court of the Gentiles.
• The Court of the Israelites which was divided into the Court of the Men and the Court of the Women.
• The Court of the Priests.

But the greatest barrier of all was inside the Temple itself.

There was a veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. It was designed to teach us about sin and alienation.

It is this veil that was torn in two from top to bottom when Christ died on the cross for our sins. Matthew 27:51

All of these barriers Jesus removed.
He created one new man out of the two – no longer Jew or Gentile, but Christian.

The new community he created is called the church.

III. Remember to share the Good News! Ephesians 2:17-18

“Christ came and preached peace to you.”

It was through Paul’s witness and the witness of the apostles and missionaries who were sent out. He speaks through you and me whenever we tell someone else about Jesus.

“We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.” II Corinthians 5:20

It is through Jesus, and Jesus alone, that we can come to the Father by one Spirit.

Conclusion

Remember your past and how God has changed you.
Remember who it is who saved us. It is Jesus and Jesus alone.
Remember to share the Good News with others so they might know him too.