concept as “the church” as an entity, and expressed individually in each individual church member. We are both collectively and individually the **one temple** of the Holy Spirit of God!

**AC 7.48-50** ~ *Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says,* ***49****“‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.
What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest?* ***50****Did not my hand make all these things?’*

**EX:** What had been warned by the Lord in the time of David and Solomon was fulfilled completely in Christ: *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,****20****for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.* (**1CR 6.19-20**)

**AP:** But let us not forget—while we are all the **one temple** of the Lord, that temple is not up to us to build how we wish. Consider again the words of Paul: that temple is to be *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,****21****in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.****22****In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.* (**EH 2.20-22**) We, all of us, are to be built into a dwelling place for God. But for it to be an acceptable temple, it has to be founded not on the teachings of the Jewish leadership, not on the teaching of the Gentile members, but on the teachings of the apostles and Prophets, with Jesus, Himself, as the cornerstone.

**CONCLUSION: One Responsibility**

It is easy to be divided. But Paul reminds us that, regardless of our backgrounds, we have unity in Christ. We are **one nation, one family**, and **one temple.** It can be tempting for us to try and find our place by finding people who are just like us. We see this encouraged all the time online and in the modern society—where people break apart relationships left and right by focusing on their differences. But ultimately, God desires for us to find unity in what we have in common—by our common purpose and our common **responsibility** in Christ Jesus: to be a place for all to gather in worship and service of the Lord God!

**EH 2.20-22** ~ *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,****21****in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.****22****In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

**INVITATION**

#477 [Exp-NTPE] **What Are We?** EH 2.19-22

01/10/2023 PC \_\_ Pchd

**QUESTION:** What does it mean for us to be “united” in Christ?

**TRN TO EH 2**

**INTRODUCTION**

**ILL—Politics in the US** (we complain—justifiably—about working together; it’s hard when you have two groups who seem diametrically opposed on everything) And that’s just with two big parties largely dividing control over government. I can’t even imagine if we had more!

**POLITICS/United Kingdom/Parties in Parliament**

And yet, somehow, they do it! Somehow, they keep the wheels of Parliament turning (for good or ill, I’m sure). But still, we wonder, **how?** **How can such disparate people find unity?**

**BACKGROUND**

**ILL—Commonality at Blackman** (a group of fishermen; you can count on the men here to largely be a group of like-minded people) But at the same time, we have differences! Some of us love to talk about politics; others would rather have their teeth worked on. Some are football fans—others are more about hockey. But at the end of the day, we’re largely a similarly minded-group!

Ephesus was a key part of Paul’s ministry. Founded during Paul’s second missionary journey, Paul spent between 2-3 years there teaching and strengthening the church. This church was unique, at the time, for a very particular reason: it was a hodgepodge group made up of people from every walk of life. There were people raised Jews. Others were raised Pagans. And this led to a problem: **how could such a disparate people find unity?**

This ultimately brings us to the beauty of the message of Ephesians. Paul sought to help them find unity together. He didn’t encourage them to run form their own congregations: some filled with AL fans and others with UT fans. He encouraged them to find their strength in their differences and to find unity together!

**BD1: One Nation (vs. 19a)**

**ILL—Electoral College** (every year, when the election happens, I’m stunned to see how things break down across the country; in many ways, it feels like we’re two separate countries) As it stands, every election year, there’s talk from multiple people about the desire to just break us up into two countries. This breaks my heart—if this were to happen, it would be evidence that the American experiment in federalism has truly failed.

**EH 2.19a** ~ *So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens*

**EX:** As Paul was writing these words, he’s writing to a people who were every bit as different as modern people are today. Some had worshiped Yahweh their entire lives—others had worshiped every foreign god we read about in fairy tales and fables. But now, in Christ, there was a new singular kingdom—**one nation** for Jew and Greek.

**MT 21.42-44** ~ *Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?* ***43****Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.****44****And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”*

**EX: “But, we’re God’s people! We’re the ones that He rescued. We’re the ones He guided through the wilderness!”** True! But amazingly, God had never intended for the Jewish nation to be the only place where His name was worshipped. He wanted a single kingdom with a diverse nationality—a true melting pot!

**EX 19.5-6** ~ *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;****6****and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”*

**ILL—Melting Pot** (The goal of America; this has been lost as we’ve instead become a culture of “X-Americans” with a bunch of small cultural groups and neighborhoods) Instead, regardless of where we come from, God intended His people to be a single kingdom—**one nation!**

**1PT 2.9-10** ~ *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.****10****Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

**AP:** What an impact this makes on our priorities; what a difference it makes in how we treat others! For regardless of national borders and politics, we, as His church, aren’t a group of people across nations, we are **one nation** across many lands!

**PH 3.20-21** ~ *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,****21****who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.*

**BD2: One Family (vs. 19b)**

**ILL—Getting the Extended Family Together** (can count on one hand the number of times this happens; largely because we’re from different parts of the country, but also we’re very different people) What my mom and dad do for fun is different from Erin’s parents. My sister’s personality is dramatically different from Erin’s brother! If we were to get together, I know one thing for sure: fireworks would ensue!

**EH 2.19b** ~ *So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are…members of the household of God,*

**EX:** These people had come from even more dramatically different backgrounds. And yet, Paul is reminding them that, in Christ, we are all **one family**. We may have different nationalities and different backgrounds and genealogies. And for the Jews, this would have been abundantly difficult to accept—after all, everything they hinged on was their bloodline. Their priesthood was based on their bloodline. But in Christ, there was just ONE bloodline. There was ONE nationality. There was **one family!**

**EH 3.14-15** ~ *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,****15****from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,*

**AP:** Today, I see black churches, Hispanic churches, while churches, rich churches, poor churches, and it breaks my heart. For when this happens, we are setting ourselves up for strengthening the divides our culture puts in place between one another. In Christ, it doesn’t matter who your father, grandfather, or great-great-grandfather was. It matters who your Father is! For we all, together, have a single family—we have a single Father. We are all, in His church, to be **one family**.

**PH 2.9-11** ~ *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,****10****so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,****11****and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

**BD3: One Temple (vs. 20-22)**

**ILL—Number of Churches** (every time I see a new church built, my heart is torn; there are thousands upon thousands of churches today; but I wonder, **how many of them are truly His church?**)

**EH 2.20-22** ~ *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,****21****in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.****22****In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

**EX:** Even among the Jews, there were multiple temples: there was the temple in Jerusalem, sure, but there was also the Samaritan temple. And then you look at the Gentiles! They had THOUSANDS of temples to every god named and unnamed! But, following the death and resurrection of Christ, there was now but one temple: the temple of the church—expressed in