



What stood out to you most from the sermon? Why?

Key Takeaways:

1. Before Christ, every person was without him, without citizenship in God's family, outside the covenants of promise, without hope, and without God -- and some people are still living in that reality today.
2. The only basis for our nearness to God is the blood of Jesus Christ, not effort, attendance, behavior, or good intentions.
3. The gospel does not merely change who is in the room -- it changes how we see everyone in the room.
4. Christ is not simply someone who brings peace -- he is our peace. He tears down the dividing wall of hostility between people and creates something entirely new: the church.
5. The church is a living demonstration of the manifold wisdom of God -- a beautifully diverse group of people who, apart from Jesus, have no business being together.
6. The gospel does not erase our differences -- it redeems them.

Discussion Questions:

1. Before the sermon, how would you have described the purpose of the church in one or two sentences? Did anything in the sermon challenge or expand that description?
2. In Ephesians 2:11-12, Paul lists five markers of life before Christ: without Christ, excluded from citizenship, foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope, and without God. Which of these five resonates most with how you remember your life before Christ -- or how your life feels right now if you have not yet placed your faith in him? Why?
3. The only reason Jonah had breathe in his lungs to point those words at God is because God was slow to anger. He acknowledged God's grace and compassion while being furious that God extended that same grace to the Ninevites. Where do you see the spirit of Jonah showing up in your own heart -- a tendency to appreciate grace for yourself while quietly resenting it for others?
4. Read Ephesians 2:14-16. The cross did two things: it tore down the ceiling that separated us from God, and it tore down the dividing wall that separated us from one another. Why do you think it is easy to embrace the first truth while neglecting the second?

5. What specific differences -- educational, political, generational, cultural, economic -- do you find it most difficult to look past when it comes to fellow believers? What does the gospel say directly to that tendency?
6. Ephesians 3:10 describes the church as the means by which God's "multifaceted wisdom" is made known to rulers and authorities in the heavens. What does it mean to you that the unity of the church is not just a witness to the watching world but also a display before the spiritual realm?
7. The gospel doesn't erase our differences. It redeems them. What would it look like practically for your differences -- your background, personality, experience, or perspective -- to be redeemed rather than erased within your church community?
8. Is there a person or a group of people toward whom you have erected a wall -- someone you have dismissed, avoided, or quietly considered beneath you? How does the truth of Ephesians 2 speak directly to that relationship?
9. Remember where you came from. How regularly do you think about your life before Christ? How does forgetting that reality affect the way you treat others?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, practice remembering. Set aside time to write down what your life looked like before Christ -- spiritually, emotionally, relationally. Let that reflection recalibrate how you extend grace to others who are still far from God or who are different from you.
2. Prayerfully ask God to show you one relationship or one people group toward which you have built a wall of hostility, indifference, or superiority. Bring that honestly before God and ask him to begin tearing it down.
3. Pursue an uncomfortable conversation. Reach out to someone in your church family who is meaningfully different from you -- in age, background, political perspective, or life experience -- and invest in that relationship intentionally this week.
4. Memorize Ephesians 2:13. Commit the verse to memory as a regular reminder that nearness to God is entirely the result of the blood of Christ and not personal merit.
5. Pray for the global church. Spend time this week praying for believers in places where following Christ is costly -- as a reminder that the church is far larger, more diverse, and more beautiful than what you see in your immediate surroundings.