

Radical Fusion

God Brought Jews and Gentiles Together

Connecting to Church Series – Part 1

May 16-17, 2020

Ephesians 2:11-16

Introduction

- **Divisions in Society**
 - Political, Socio-economic (Poor vs. rich), Ethnic division, even how to handle the CoronaVirus division.
- **Divisions in the Church**
 - A lot of that division from society comes in the local church. But we add a few. We divide over non-essential doctrines (Eschatology; Evangelism vs. Discipleship; Charismatic vs. Conservative; High Church vs. Low Church; Music styles, Baptism styles, and the list goes on. There are 30 major denominations which can be broken down to 200 if we get granular, but ultimately it's about unity and there's almost as much disunity as there are churches. This doesn't honor God.
- **Divisions in Us** – flesh vs. spirit.

Only God Heals Deep DIVISION

Lesson

- **The Gentile vs. Jew Story** – How things were set up and the historical animosity that ensued.
 - **Only 2 Groups** - From an Old Testament Jewish Perspective (Bible) there are only two groups of people in the world: Jews (God's chosen people) and Not-Jews = Gentiles. Where did they get that idea from?
 - **God's System to Connect with Creation (Jews)** – In a world that was doing their own thing and being godless, God designed a system to bring His creation Near to Him. He created a people group through a man called Abraham: Hebrews, Jews.
 - **Doorway** - that would be His primary doorway to reconnect.
 - **Abrahamic Covenant** - Gen 12:2-3 - *I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

- **Added part = you will have a child** and through him your lineage be like the sand of the seashore (uncountable).
- **Beacon** - They would be a beacon of light to draw the world to God.
 - **Salt and Light first applied to Jews.**
- **Unique** - They would be called out from all nations of the world to be distinct, different and God-focused.
 - **Strange rules, Strange lifestyle**
- **Living Drama** - They would be a living drama to explain spiritual truths.
 - **Bigger than daily live** – they were a cosmic drama carried out on earth.
- **Prophets** – God would talk to the world through them.
 - **Know them; know God**
- **Bottom Line: How to Get Connected to God** = becoming Jewish. If you weren't Jewish by birth, you could convert through a process and you would get what they got. One of those signs was circumcision of males, which we will talk about later in the lesson.
 - **God demanded Strict Faith & Obedience** – it's really one family line at this point so it was mostly about the heart.
 - **Abraham, Isaac, Jacob/Israel & Joseph (promised line) – story ends with 70 family members in Egypt, later slaves.**
 - **The Moses Era** – Big group = Big Rules System
 - **The Exodus** – Moses leads the new nation out of Egypt with the power of God and they walk into the wilderness. Red Sea, Manna, miracles, 1st battle, etc.
 - **Mt. Sinai – the 10 Commandments** – 3 mths into the journey God gathers them at the foot of a mountain. He reiterates the Covenant with them saying: I will Bless you IF, you Obey Me. And He gave them the 10 commandments: How to Respect God and how to Respect Each Other. Lots of other rules!
 - 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; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’”
 - **Promised Land Rules – this is important** – God told them that He would put them in a land, Canaan, by moving the people groups from that land out in judgment on them (not because Israel was better or more righteous – Dt 9). The Jews were allowed to

backfill the space. BUT, the Jews were not to be connected with those people groups, but remain extremely SEPARATE, ESPECIALLY RELIGIOUSLY. (Ex 23:23-24).

- **Atonement System (Sacrificial system)** – God gave to the Jewish people a way to keep their relationship with God right. When they sinned, they were to offer a sacrifice as an apology. God would see it and ignore their sin until a later time. It allowed connect to be reestablished.
- **Holy/Separate** - Le 20:26 – *“You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.”*
- **New Generation Gets to Canaan (Joshua)** – when you go in, wipe the people groups out (Dt 7:2), but only in that Canaan land (Rule of Engagement elsewhere = Dt 20:11-12). If not they will be a problem for you. Do NOT intermix with them in marriage (heart turned away).
 - Nu 33:51–52, 55-56 - *“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ⁵²then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you... ⁵⁵But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then those of them whom you let remain shall be as barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the land where you dwell. ⁵⁶And I will do to you as I thought to do to them.”*
- **In Promised Land – Circumcised** all of those who hadn’t been during Wilderness journey.
- **The New Society – Strict Rules of Living** – Clean and Unclean foods, Clean and Unclean behaviors.
 - **Some Half Jews Are Out** – Ammonites, Moabites – are all judged for various things their ancestors did so they aren’t allowed to be in the nation of Jews (Dt 23:3-6).
 - **Edomites are ok and Egyptians** – Dt 23:7-8
- **Win with a Warning** – after they got most of the people out, God issued the warning again – don’t you mix with those people who you kicked out. (Josh 23) – They didn’t get them all out. Punished with God saying he’s going to keep those as thorns in Israel’s side. Welcome to JUDGES. Lots more internal wars and skirmishes.

- **Kings Era – more fighting – Nation splits – things get worse.**
- **Exiles – North, then South – the land is backfilled with non-Jews**
- **Return – Vicious Purity demanded, to do it right this time. But it turned ugly.**
- **Wall off the Samaritans (half Jews); Avoid the Gentiles. For 400 Years.**
 - **Rome Takes over and causes more division – more Gentiles to hate.**
- **Jews Against the World – Zealots, Pharisees – purists.**
 - **And that’s When Jesus showed up.**
 - **Changes & Inclusion** - And Jesus told the Jews that everything had changed. He said that Gentiles were welcome to be His chosen people too.
 - **One Church** - He told them all to get along and be ONE CHURCH.
- **How can you fix thousands of years of division and racial/ethnic hatred?**
- **The Passage (getting our context)**
 - *Ephesians 2:11-16 – “Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.”*
- **Cut Off**
 - **Gentiles Had No Hope**
 - *Ephesians 2:11-12 – “Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the*

commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”

- **Clarifying the Circumcision thing** – from surgery to a status symbol.
 - **How it started** – Abraham was 99 years old. God re-affirmed His covenant with Him to make him into a great people group, specially blessed by God. God told him that kings would come from them, they would have a Promised Land, that it would be amazing! But God clarified that Abraham and his people needed to keep up their side of the bargain too. As a sign of their contract God needed him to do something for him.
 - Ge 17:9–14 – *“And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring,...¹⁴Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”*
 - **If it’s not cut off, you are cut off** – Yikes! That’s severe. The most important sign of inclusion into God’s Jewish people group was now a physical sign: circumcision of males.
 - **A Symbol of Pride (Circumcised/Uncircumcised)** – by the time we got to Jesus’ day and Paul’s day, the rift and division was so extreme between Jews and everyone else, that the catchword “Circumcision” was used for Pure Jew and “Uncircumcision” was used for Nasty Unclean Gentile.
 - **Gentile Called to Remember How it Used to Be** – calling for humility and thankfulness, Paul walks the Gentiles here in Ephesus, through a history lesson explaining how God rescued them specifically.
 - **Separated From Christ** – sinners like everyone else. Spiritually dead.

- **Alienated from Israel** – Non-Jewish with those perks of access to God.
 - **Outside the Old Covenant** – No spiritual ability to connect.
 - **Had no Hope** – No real way to get in.
 - **Had no God** – Disconnected and dead.
- **Brought Near**
 - **The Cross Rescued Gentiles Too**
 - **Ephesians 2:13** – *“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”*
 - **But Now...** – Jesus Christ changed everything.
 - **You, Gentiles who were far away** – as mentioned.
 - **Have been brought near (TO GOD)** – allowed to get close.
 - **By the Blood of Christ** – the cross and the cleansing it brings. The new creation it allows.
- **Tearing Down the Walls**
 - **Christ Made One Family Out of Two**
 - **Ephesians 2:14-16** – *“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.”*
 - **Jesus is our Peace** – both with God and with one another.
 - **He has made us both ONE** – Jews & Gentiles
 - **Broken down the wall of hostility by his flesh** – the Cross changed the scenario, creating a new family of God.
 - **Abolishing the Law** – that kept us guilty and excluded as sinful humanity (Jesus fulfilled the Law and then changed it).
 - **Creating ONE man out of TWO** – one Church, One body of Christ, One family of God.
 - **Killing any hostility, we should have as one family.**

Conclusion

- **Application:** What are our Gentile/Jew divides of today?
 - **What people groups do you think are less than yours?**

- **Ethnic divide?**
- **Gender divide?**
- **Charismatic/Conservative divide?**
- **Formal vs. Informal Church style divide?**
- **Political Divide?**
- **It's human nature to divide, but you see, we are not merely human.**
- **Bridgeway's View of Unity in Diversity.**