

UNITING POLARIZED PEOPLE EPHESIANS – PART 4

Introduction – Our world is characterized by polarized groups. The Palestinians and Israeli's are in continual conflict. The Shiites fight the Sunnis in Islamic countries. Russian and native Ukrainians are at odds with one another. The Republican and Democratic parties continue a war of words that divide us rather than unite us. People are alienated along ethnic, economic, gender, religious, and personal grounds. Where is the common ground on which we can unite?

A. Remember that formerly...but now in Christ...

Ephesians 2:11-13

1. The separation between Jews and Gentiles seemed insurmountable in the first century just like some of our contemporary alienations.
2. We must remember and never forget that in the past we were separated from Christ, excluded from citizenship, foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope, and without God in this world.
3. But now in Christ we have been brought near to God by the blood of Christ. Both blood sacrifice and blood transfusion give us life.

B. Christ is creating a new humanity.

Ephesians 2:14-18

1. The division between Jews and Gentiles is best symbolized by the wall between the outer and inner courts of the Temple in Jerusalem.
2. Only Jesus can overcome our hostilities and bring peace.
3. Christ's intention was to create one, new humanity in a covenant community.
4. Jesus sacrificial death on the cross provides access for all people to God the Father by one Spirit.

C. God is still in the process of building a Temple of living stones which will offer spiritual worship.

Ephesians 2:19-22

1. Once we were strangers but now we have become fellow citizens of God's people.

2. The foundation of the Temple is apostolic preaching and Old Testament prophecy. Jesus is the cornerstone that holds it all together.

1 Peter 2:4-6

Conclusion – Notice that this biblical vision is about individuals being built into a harmonious home where God can live by his indwelling Spirit. The only hope for the world is a Christ-centered, God-oriented, and Spirit-empowered reconstructed humanity. This is God's predestined plan of grace where dead men can be transformed by resurrection power.

Discussion Questions

1. Why are we so easily divided from one another?
2. What are some of the worldly ways that are tried to unite alienated people?
3. How does Christ serve as a unifying force among all kinds of people?