



Big Idea: As the church, we are radically rooted in reconciliation.

Background and Context

- An apparent problem: The destiny that Paul now accords to the church was supposed to be *Israel's* destiny.
- Israel was God's chosen people, and He was their God (Deut. 14:2, Isaiah 43:1, Genesis 17:7, Exodus 6:7, Romans 9:4-5).
- Whereas the Old Testament makes clear that God's aim was to fill all things with his glory through Israel, the New Testament declares that God is now accomplishing that very same purpose through the church of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 49:3, Jeremiah 13:11).

1.) At the root of the church is the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile.

- v. 12 – Our condition as Gentiles before Christ came.
- v. 19 – Jesus comes and everything changes (Ephesians 3:6).
- The emphasis of this passage is that all God's people, whether Jew or Gentile, can only enter into God's eternal blessings through Christ.
- **The picture of this text: The true Israel becomes the church of Christ, and the church of Christ emerges as the true Israel.**
 - What unites this new people is Jesus (John 14:6).
 - As members of Christ's body, we are not primarily Jews or Gentiles, but *Christians* (Colossians 3:11, Galatians 3:28-29).
- v. 14 – Jesus came to make Jew and Gentile one in his church.
- v. 15 – Our reconciliation is so radical that we become one man.
 - This new man into whom the church is joined together is Christ.

- v. 16 – By the atoning sacrifice of Christ, both Jew and Gentile are made one body, which is the body of Christ.
- The proof of whether or not a Jew was part of the true Israel was his response to Christ (1 John 2:23, John 5:23).
- The coming of Christ is the point in redemptive history at which true Israel becomes the church of Christ and where the church of Christ (both Jew and Gentile) emerges as the true Israel.

2.) Reconciliation is only possible through the cross of Christ.

-- Only through Christ's cross can we be reconciled to God (v. 16).

- More important than the hostility between Jews and Gentiles was the hostility between sinners and God (Ephesians 2:1-3).
- v. 12 – Without the atoning sacrifice of Christ, we are without God and without hope in the world.
- v. 16 – If we are in Christ, we are reconciled to God through the cross, by which Christ became sin for us.

-- Only through Christ's cross can we be reconciled to each other.

- Only the cross compels to stop dividing over our differences and start unifying around our need for Jesus.
- Only when we recognize our common sinfulness can we embrace Christ and make Him—not our differences—our all in all.
- Jesus alone is the unifying foundation of His people (v. 14-16).

3.) As the church, we must wholeheartedly pursue unity.

-- Since the church is rooted in reconciliation, there is no place for divisiveness.

- Anyone in the church with a divisive spirit misunderstands what the church is and what it is about (Titus 3:10-11).
- A life is characterized by a continuous pattern of division with other believers is a life disconnected from Christ.

-- Being reconciled to God means being reconciled to each other.

- Woven into the very fabric of the church and stamped upon its foundation is unity.
- Not only has God commanded us to be unified, but He has established the church to be the epicenter of unity on earth.
- Unreconciled relationships are so opposed to what Christ has done in forming us as the church that they cannot persist without casting doubt on a person's true participation in Christ's body.
- Because we are a reconciled people, we are called to be a reconciling people.