

Ephesians 2:14–18 | “Christ, Our Peace”

*Preached on May 25, 2025 by Pastor Matt Brown*

Please turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 2, verses 14–18 today. *[pause]*

We are working through the book of Ephesians, specifically, Ephesians chapter 2 recently. *[pause]*

Chapter 2 of Ephesians is all about what God has done in our lives through Jesus Christ...

We were dead, but God made us alive together with Christ.

We have truly been saved by grace through faith in Him. *[pause]*

Paul then goes further to describe what God has done through Christ by describing how we as Gentiles, who were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Jesus.

And now, in our passage today, Paul will show us *how* we have been brought near, and what it looks like to be brought near. *[pause]*

What we will find is that a big, glorious result of Christ’s bringing-near-work is *peace*. *[pauseeee]*

We are always looking for peace in life—no one desires a life of chaos and conflict. *[pause]*

We *want* to be at peace with others, and to have a peace-filled life.

No one starts out their day saying, “I can’t wait to experience friction, strife, and hostility with a bunch of people today!” *[pauseeee]*

It’s often days that are absent of peace that cause us the most headaches during the day and sleeplessness during the night. *[pause]*

We all would prefer our days to go smoothly, and for there to be peace in our hearts and in our relationships. *[pauseeee]*

The *results* of peacelessness can be hard on us, too. *[pause]*

A lack of peace can cause us to be anxious or uneasy, as life feels so unsettled and disordered.

Or maybe you feel frustration, irritation, or anger due to the constant conflict you are having with another person. *[pause]*

You never feel like you can take a breath of relief, and the peace-less-ness makes you feel extra lonely and downcast. *[pauseeeee]*

Having no peace can be a really big deal in a person’s life, so the question that we are often faced with is this...

How do we have peace in this life? [pauseeee]

Do we just hope that it comes? [pause]

Can we do a certain amount of steps to create it? That is, can we just manufacture it? [pauseeee]

Author Jim Wilson gives this illustration of what Stanford University tried to do in order to manufacture a place of peace and unity. [pause]

He says, “In an attempt to show tolerance and celebrate multiculturalism, Stanford University designed its curriculum, hired its faculty, and set its policies for students around the theme of political correctness. [pause]

The result was an abysmal failure...

Two Stanford graduates, David Sacks and Peter Thiel, documented the failure of the enforced politically correct standards in the academic environment in their book, The Diversity Myth. [pause]

They tell of black students blacklisted by their peers because they befriended white students and a male excluded from an all-female feminist studies class by the other students. [pause]

A. J. Conyers writes, ‘What became apparent at Stanford was the degree to which multiculturalism issued in gross intolerance, even though it...marched under the banner of tolerance.’” [pause]

Jim Wilson ends his illustration by saying this, “People in their natural state will never get past the barriers that separate them because of their cultures, races, and economic standings.

Even the best attempts of social engineering are destined to failure.”<sup>1</sup> [pauseeee]

So if we cannot manufacture peace and unity, how can we have it among each other?

The answer to that question is revealed in this text—let’s READ it. [READ]

There are two main points this morning...

The first one will take a longer time, and then the second one will be significantly shorter. [pause]

*The first thing that we see in this text is that...*

## **I. Christ created peace for all kinds of people.**

What is the ultimate source of peace? [pause]

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<sup>1</sup> Jim L. Wilson, “The Failure of Tolerance at Stanford,” in *300 Illustrations for Preachers*, ed. Elliot Ritzema (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015).

Too many times we look to better situations or circumstances to be the answer to our peace problem. *[pause]*

Too many times we look inward to find peace, or we look to others to bring the solution.

Yet Paul makes it clear: Christ himself is our peace. *[pauseeee]*

So peace is found in and through a Person—Jesus Christ, He is truly the “Prince of Peace.”<sup>2</sup>

He possesses the true peace that we need, and has secured it for us. *[pause]*

Like a fountain that just keeps springing forth water, so Christ is the fountain of peace that is always and forever springing forth peace for us. *[pause]*

He never runs out of it because He is the Prince of it, and He Himself is our peace. *[pauseeeee]*

We are not to look anywhere else.

We are not to look inward, we are not to look to the world to provide it, or even just better circumstances...

Jesus Christ must be our peace, and if you are a Christian, He truly *is* your peace. *[pauseeee]*

Do you believe that? *[pause]*

Do you believe that Jesus is the answer?

Do you believe that He has secured peace for you, and so you must keep going to Him to find the peace that you long for? *[pauseeeee]*

What if in our hardest, most chaotic-feeling moments, we thought, “Christ is my peace, I must go to Him.” *[pause]*

What if at those times that we felt distant from God, we remembered, “But Christ is my peace, for He has brought me peace with God, so it’s not true that I’m distant from God!” *[pause]*

What if when there was some sort of conflict between you and another Christian, you both came together and said...

“Christ is *our* peace, so let’s both look to Him and to what He has made us together to resolve this.” *[pauseeee]*

May we never forget this monumental truth—Christ is our peace. *[pause]*

In Him, we find peace with God.

In Him, we find peace with other believers.

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<sup>2</sup> A reference to Isaiah 9:6.

And in Him we find the peace that surpasses all understanding.<sup>3</sup> *[pauseeee]*

So if anyone ever asks you, “How do you have peace?” you can respond with, “Because Christ is my peace.” *[pauseeee]*

Now how is it specifically that Christ is our peace?...

Well we find what He created for us, and how He did it, next. *[pause]*

First, He has made it possible for us to have peace with one another. *[pause]*

Listen to verses 14–15 again, “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 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.” *[pauseeee]*

For those who may not know this—a Gentile is essentially someone who is not a Jew, and this passage is telling us that Jesus has made peace between Jews and Gentiles by making us *one*. *[pause]*

In order to feel the radical nature of these things, you have to know what it was like before Christ came. *[pause]*

Jews and Gentiles often wouldn’t eat with each other.<sup>4</sup> *[pause]*

It was considered unlawful for a Jew to associate or visit with a person of a different nation.<sup>5</sup>

And so they tried to avoid each other, and didn’t really associate with one another. *[pause]*

Needless to say, they looked at each other with suspicion, and there was always this distance between them. *[pause]*

Before Christ, the Jews were seen as the people of God, and were the “in” group, while the Gentiles were seen as the “out” group.

There was truly this deep animosity between the two groups, and that’s why even the early church was struggling through this new idea of Gentiles being included in the church. *[pauseeee]*

Even though Gentiles could technically become a “proselyte” to Judaism, they still never felt fully “in”. *[pause]*

In fact, Gentiles weren’t allowed to enter the inner courts of the temple.

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<sup>3</sup> A reference to Philippians 4:7.

<sup>4</sup> See Galatians 2:11–14.

<sup>5</sup> See Acts 10:28.

There were actually messages written on different places of the barrier that said that no Gentile was allowed to enter.<sup>6</sup>

That's why the Jews got so angry at Paul at one point because they assumed that he had brought a Gentile into the Temple.<sup>7</sup> [pause]

So think of being a Gentile before Christ—you would always feel far away from God and His people. [pauseeee]

Between not being able to get within the Temple, and the Jews treating you with distance, you would feel 'far off' and like you don't truly belong.

Well what is Paul saying that has changed? Christ has made Jews and Gentiles one in Him! [pauseeee]

What was once two groups (Jew and Gentile) has now been made one new man in Christ, the church. [pauseeee]

Jesus has created this one new group, where those ethnic distinctions and that hostility is no more. [pause]

Paul says that Christ "has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances." [pauseeee]

Under the Old Testament Law, Israel had certain rules and commandments that they were to follow, which distinguished them from the neighboring nations. [pause]

They had purity and separation laws.

They had circumcision, Sabbath laws, special days, food laws, rules as to what to wear, etc.

So there was this national, social, and cultural separation that was present under the Old Covenant. [pause]

It sort of "fenced off" Israel from other ethnic people, and so created this distance, which led the people of Israel to have animosity towards others. [pauseeee]

But what does Paul say?

Jesus has broken down that hostility, killing it, and He did this through His death on the cross. [pause]

So Christ killed hostility by being killed for us! [pauseeee]

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<sup>6</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, "Ephesians" in the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary: Romans to Philemon*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 317.

<sup>7</sup> A reference to Acts 21:27–29.

There was this dividing wall barrier between Jew and Gentile before, but through Christ's death, He has destroyed it!

He broke it down, smashing it to smithereens. *[pauseeee]*

But how did He do this?...

Well Christ fulfilled the Law for us by living it out perfectly, and got rid of the penalty that was over us from the Law's condemnation by dying for us.

So now through faith in Him, we are no longer bound by the Old Testament Law. *[pause]*

Those regulations that once set ethnic Israel apart are no longer in place, but Christ has created something new that doesn't have those distinctions. *[pause]*

As Galatians 3:28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." *[pauseeee]*

That old order that prevented Gentiles from being fully included and accessing God has been done away with.

And in its place, there is something new in Christ. *[pauseeee]*

When we believe in Jesus and His work on the cross, we are brought together as one under Him, and as a result, we have peace with one another. *[pause]*

Those barriers that divided Jews and Gentiles are gone, for Christ the great barrier-breaker has done His work.

He has created the path for us to have true harmony and unity. *[pauseeeeeee]*

We are so used to being under the New Covenant and in the church that we sometimes do not understand how revolutionary what He did really was. *[pause]*

There used to always be this tension and distance between Jews and Gentiles, but when they trusted in Christ, there was a special oneness that was possible.

It was no longer outward things that divided them, but they were united around Christ. *[pauseeee]*

The fact that there are churches all around the world among so many nations and people groups is a testament to this new reality in Christ. *[pause]*

The fact that I could go to Mexico City when I was in my college years and preach to and fellowship with other Christians is a testament to this reality.

And everytime that we see different ethnic groups all worshipping the Lord together is a prime display of what Christ has accomplished! *[pauseeeee]*

We should *rejoice* at the unity and oneness that Christ has brought us!

There can now be peace with one another, no matter our background, what we look like, or any of that. *[pauseeeee]*

Way too often our world highlights and celebrates diversity and tries to make diversity the end goal, but that's not the emphasis of Scripture.

Rather, God highlights and celebrates the unity and oneness *amidst* our diversity as the most important, glorious thing. *[pauseeee]*

It's unity amid diversity that's beautiful, and it's that oneness among different ethnic groups that Christ has created through His work on the cross. *[pauseeee]*

Therefore, the most important thing to cultivate this 'oneness' in a church is to keep going back to the Person who has made this 'oneness' possible. *[pause]*

So you don't manufacture unity by thinking about it more.

You don't create unity by just trying harder.

We don't have unity by simply doing some fun team-building activities together—our oneness is strengthened as we look to Christ, who has made us one. *[pauseeee]*

Christ Himself is our peace! *[pause]*

He made one new man, "so making peace," the passage says.

So we look to Christ, we remember that He has brought us together to be on the same level, for we are in the same group—we are the body of Christ. *[pauseeeee]*

Let's rejoice at the unity that we can have in Jesus!

Let's remember that we are one in Him. *[pauseeee]*

As an application of this point—this means that as a church, there should be no barriers erected by us. *[pause]*

No ethnic, economic, or other distinctions should bar us from being close with one another.

None of those things should be barriers that we use to keep certain people at a distance, if they are 'in Christ'. *[pauseeeee]*

So let's just say that every one of us in this room believed in Christ. *[pause]*

There should be no barriers up, but we should all desire to love, be close to, and be unified with each other. *[pause]*

No matter what we looked like, our age bracket, our financial status, our background, or any of that...

There should be no cliques or small, inner circles that keep others at a distance.

We have been made one in Christ, so we should act like it! *[pauseeeee]*

So let me ask you this...

Since all those who trust in Christ have been made one, are there any people in this church that you tend to avoid or neglect due to them being different than you? *[pause]*

Do you readily talk to anyone in this church, or are there *barriers* that you have put up in your mind? *[pauseeee]*

The church should be a place where young people are talking with older people...

Rich people are hugging poor people, white people and black people are standing side-by-side lifting up their voices to Christ...

And people with good backgrounds are praying with people with rough backgrounds. *[pause]*

That's the beauty of what Christ has made in the church, and since He has created this, then that means that this is all possible and should be pursued in a church! *[pauseeeee]*

Because of Jesus, we can have peace with one another, but we can also have peace with God. *[pause]*

Look at verse 16 which talks about how Christ reconciles us both to God, and then verse 18 talks about how we have access to the Father. *[pauseeeee]*

Just think about this—what a wonder—we can have peace with God! *[pauseeee]*

To understand this, you must know the story of Scripture...

Go back all the way to the beginning of creation, and you see this harmony between God and man. *[pause]*

Before Adam and Eve sinned, they had this great, close relationship with God, but once they sinned, God came walking in the garden, and they hid.<sup>8</sup> *[pause]*

There is this separation that sin made between them and God, and that's why they are expelled out of the garden, as well.<sup>9</sup> *[pause]*

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<sup>8</sup> A reference to Genesis 3:8.

<sup>9</sup> A reference to Genesis 3:22–24.



Since God is holy, then sinners cannot draw near to God, and so there is separation between God and sinners.

And as a result, the question comes up, “How can we have a reconciled relationship with our Creator?” *[pauseeee]*

We certainly cannot get rid of our sinfulness ourselves, or do enough righteousness, so what’s the way to be reconciled to God? *[pause]*

Well what do we find here? It’s through Christ. *[pause]*

The Law condemned us and showed that we were guilty before God, but Christ got rid of that condemnation and guilt by taking our place on the cross. *[pause]*

He paid the penalty that we deserved, and so as Colossians says, he canceled “the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”<sup>10</sup> *[pause]*

Jesus made peace by His blood, so that we could be presented as holy and blameless before the Lord...<sup>11</sup> *[pause]*

Through faith in Jesus, we are restored back to right relationship with God! *[pauseeeee]*

Christ broke down the sin and guilt barrier by dying for us.

He reconciled us to God through the cross, killing the hostility that used to be there, due to our sin. *[pauseeee]*

What joyous news—through Christ, we have peace with God! We have been reconciled!

As John Owen once wrote, “This is the great mystery of the gospel in the blood of Christ, that those who sin every day should have peace with God all their days.”<sup>12</sup> *[pauseeeee]*

If you have trusted in Jesus, there no longer remains distance between you and God.

There no longer remains any hostility, but you can know Him as your loving Heavenly Father. *[pauseeee]*

Knowing and believing this makes a huge difference in a Christian’s life.

For it means that even when you sin against God, you can know that that sin doesn’t sever you from the Lord. *[pause]*

That great gulf that used to be between you and God is no more...

You are no longer condemned or eternally guilty in His sight. *[pause]*

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<sup>10</sup> Colossians 2:14.

<sup>11</sup> A reference to Colossians 1:20, 22.

<sup>12</sup> John Owen, “A Practical Exposition on the CXXXth Psalm,” in *The Works of John Owen*, 14:22.

He isn't distant, no matter how much you feel distant, but Scripture promises, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."<sup>13</sup> *[pause]*

He doesn't draw away, but He draws *near* to His people! *[pauseeee]*

We are reconciled with God through the cross—marvel and cherish that truth, for it means we have peace with God. *[pause]*

On your hardest days, this truth can help you to remain firm in faith, for you can know that God is near.

He is near to the brokenhearted, to those who call on Him, and so He's "a very present help in trouble."<sup>14</sup> *[pauseeee]*

*Christ created peace for all kinds of people, but secondly...*

## **II. Christ preached peace to all kinds of people.**

Verse 17 says, "And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near." *[pause]*

So Christ not only created peace, but preached it...

He wanted all people to know that there can be peace with God and others through Him. *[pause]*

In that is love, isn't there? He *came* and preached peace. *[pause]*

This points to the Incarnation...

The Son of God, who eternally existed stepped into time by being born of a virgin, taking on flesh. *[pause]*

He came to us, in order that we could have peace with God and others.

He didn't sit back, and say, "They're on their own!"

But He lovingly, willingly, mercifully came down to us, in order that we would know that there is a way to be reconciled to God—through Him. *[pauseeee]*

He came and He *preached* peace. *[pause]*

His whole life, teaching, death, and resurrection proclaim to us that through Him there is peace. *[pause]*

He didn't come and do nothing, but He came and preached.

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<sup>13</sup> James 4:8.

<sup>14</sup> References to Psalm 34:18, 145:18, & 46:1 (in that order).

And the Greek actually says here that he “proclaimed the good news of peace.” [pause]

Out of love, He wanted us to hear and to know and to believe that peace is available. [pauseeee]

In a world often characterized by ‘no peace,’ there is peace that is possible, for Christ preached it.

And really, He preached it through His apostles, too, who He spoke through using the Spirit. [pauseeee]

This proclamation of peace wasn’t only for a small, elite group.

It wasn’t only for the Jews, but as Paul makes clear, “He preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.” [pause]

Both Jews and Gentiles, really anyone, can have peace together in Him, but can also be reconciled to God and have peace with God. [pauseeee]

Listen up: you are not too far to receive this blessed offer of peace! [pause]

If you are far off, away from God right now, Christ wants you to know that there is peace available to be had with God, if you turn and trust in Christ today. [pause]

You no longer have to feel that separation and guilt before God, but you can be reconciled through trusting in Christ, who died on the cross for your sins. [pauseeee]

Christ came and preached peace to all—what love of Christ that He would do that, and what amazing news to hear! [pause]

And guess what?...

His proclamation of peace is true, for as Paul says in verse 18, “For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.” [pause]

“We both,” Paul says.

So both Jew and Gentile who have trusted in Christ—‘we *both* have access.’ [pause]

We have been brought together as one and can have peace with one another, but that’s not all, for “we both have access...to the Father.” [pauseeee]

Since all who trust in Christ receive the Spirit, now we can approach God, we can have access to our Father! [pause]

There is no more barrier to God, but Christ the great barrier-breaker, has broken it down!

So you can go to the Lord, the Creator of the Universe, who is your Heavenly Father, and find grace. [pause]

You can draw near, you can come close, you can find Him lovingly *there*. [pauseeee]

He will be there to love you, there to help, and there to be with you through everything.  
[pauseeeee]

*Oh, what a blessing that peace is!...*

**In Christ, there is no more hostility, but peace with God and others!**

Everyone longs for peace, but the question is whether you are looking in the right place. [pause]

Look no further than Christ, the one who has created peace between us and God, and between us and others. [pauseeee]

When you look closely at this passage, this peace all hinges on Christ and His work...

He is the difference-maker, the ultimate peace-bringer. [pause]

He's the one who broke down the wall of hostility, and made us one.

He is the maker and preacher of peace. [pause]

He reconciled us both to God, killing the hostility and creating harmony, and opening up our access to the Father.

No wonder Paul says that Christ is our peace! [pauseeeee]

Apart from Christ, there is no peace.

But through Christ, you have peace with God, and He has created the conditions for such great unity and oneness among His people. [pauseeeee]

I'll end with this, and it's near the end of the Bible in the book of Revelation. [pause]

Due to Christ's work, history is going somewhere glorious that displays the peace that He has accomplished. [pause]

Listen to Revelation 7:9–10...

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages...

Standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice...

‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” [pauseeee]

What a wonderful, beautiful, glorious picture—people from every nation, tribe, people, and language all unified and giving glory to the Lord, who saved them and brought them peace.