

In the Gospel We Receive Peace

March 26, 2023 ▪ Skylar Bainbridge

What is peace?

What is God-given peace?

Why we have God's peace.

How do we continually experience God's peace?

Ephesians 2:11-19

^[11] 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.

^[17] And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ^[18] For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ^[19] So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: How would you describe what it means to have peace?

Read: Ephesians 2:11-19

Discuss:

1. What is creating the tension or hostility (v. 14) that Paul is describing in this passage? In what ways might we feel similar tension with others today?
2. When you read in verse 12 that before trusting in Christ, we were "strangers to the covenants of promise," what covenants come to mind? How should recognizing this fact about ourselves motivate us to share the Gospel with others?
3. How does the Gospel serve to create peace between believers who might otherwise feel tension or division? Since the tension between Jews and Gentiles isn't something that most of us face today, how might we apply Paul's words to our context inside our Christian community of faith?
4. In verse 15 Paul says Christ "abolished the law of commandments." Yet, Jesus himself says in Matthew 5:17 that he did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. So, what is Paul's point in Ephesians 2:15? What are the practical implications of this for our own lives and our relationships with one another?
5. The cross reconciles us to God, according to verse 16. How can our peace with God help fuel peace with one another? When we struggle to be at peace with other believers, what can we do to move toward the unity and reconciliation that Paul would call us to pursue?
6. Verse 17 describes Jesus as preaching peace to those who were far off and those who were near. How might we do the same today? What is one possible opportunity you could take advantage of this week where you might help someone far off know the peace that comes from the Gospel?
7. Paul makes some statements about our identity in verse 19. How should his words inspire humility in us? What practical difference should this new identity have in our daily lives?

Apply: How would you like the peace the Gospel brings into your life to shape your relationship with God and others this week?

Pray: Repent of any wrong thinking you have had regarding others. Ask God to deepen your understanding of the significant transformation that the Gospel makes in our lives. Pray that God will allow this deeper understanding to produce God-glorifying actions in our church family.