

## **God's Temple**

### **Ephesians 2:19-22**

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Paul has lifted us up in degrees of interest and excitement as we continue in this letter.

He had shown us the great blessings that God has given us in Christ Jesus.

He has shown us the depths to which Christ has stooped to pick us out of our sin and placed us in Himself that we might have fellowship with God and with one another.

Now, in this passage we have reached the summit. Where he brings us today is the greatest of all.

#### I. No Longer Strangers and Foreigners,

A. Paul has been pressing this point for some time now.

B. But it was just as important then as it is now.

1. Among Christians there are not to be divisions.
2. Many divisions develop over Bible understanding.
3. But many others are based on divisions that should never be found there.

#### II. But Fellow Citizens with the Saints

A. One of the benefits is that we have come to equal footing with the saints.

1. The word literally means holy ones.
2. All of God's people are holy ones, they are all saints.
3. Not because of anything that they have done but because God has placed us all in the same place.
4. The word saint is not a word of self aggrandizement but an acceptance of the righteousness of Jesus on our account

B. Fellow citizens

1. We are citizens of heaven and not of earth.
2. Philippians 3:20 (NKJV) 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. This is something to keep in mind this next week. We should go vote for the presidential candidate of our choice but in the end Jesus is still king.

### III. Members of the Household of God

#### A. Household of God.

1. This is His family.
2. All the children of God by adoption as we have already seen.
  - a. Ro 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."
  - b. Ga 4:5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
  - c. Eph 1:5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
3. Also children of God by being born of the Spirit.
  - a. John 1: 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
  - b. James 1:18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.
  - c. 1Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
  - d. 1John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

#### B. Members

1. The idea is that we are part of God's forever family.
2. If we are members of the same family then there is union.
3. Union should lead to unity except for sin.

### IV. Built on the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets

#### A. The idea is that of a building.

1. This is a metaphor, a figure of speech, to help illustrate the nature of our relationship to Jesus and the other believers.
2. Of course the apostles and prophets, the leaders of first century Christianity would be the foundation.

3. They were the first building stones that Christ placed in this metaphorical building so to speak.
4. But then the rest of the believers have continued to be added, century after century until God will have finished the edifice.

B. Jesus Christ Himself Being the Chief Corner Stone

1. Of course Jesus is the Chief Corner Stone.
  - a. This language is use frequently in the New Testament which quotes from the Psalms.
  - b. Mt 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"
  - c. Acts 4:11 "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
  - d. 1Peter 2:7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.
2. This was laid out in the Psalms centuries before Jesus was born.
  - a. Psalm 118:22 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.
3. And Isaiah picks up the theme.
  - a. Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;

C. In Whom the Whole Building, Being Joined Together

1. When Solomon's temple was being built, each stone was so precisioned that when the stones were brought to the temple site to be assembled no sound of a hammer and chisel were heard.
2. That is what God is doing in and through believers today.
3. He is fashioning the stones to fit perfectly and beautifully together.

V. Grows into a Holy Temple in the Lord

- A. So God takes us sinners, dead in trespasses and sins and He makes us alive and He works in our lives through the process of sanctification to make us a fit stone in His temple.
  - B. He takes Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, murders and liars and He removes all the ugliness and brings forth a beautiful gem for His temple.
  - C. The tabernacle that we studied last year was ugly on the outside but beautiful on the inside.
  - D. Solomon's temple was beautiful both inside and out.
    - 1. But those were both but stones, metal and cloth.
    - 2. Ac 17:24 "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.
    - 3. Even the Ephesians who had probably never been to Jerusalem to see the temple and temples plenty of their own.
      - a. The pagan world was full of pagan temples.
      - b. And Ephesus was world renown for the temple to Diana, the goddess of fertility.
      - c. Now for these Gentile believers to understand that although they had forsaken the beautiful temple of Diana, they are being told that God is building a temple of them a place where God is worshiped.
  - E. But the temple God is now building is one made up of living beings, His own dear children.
  - F. One of the things we cannot help but notice in this is that there is a joining of the members, the stones, to one another.
    - 1. Too many Christians today have forsaken corporate worship and suppose that they can worship on the radio or TV.
    - 2. But this is contrary to the metaphor that Paul is using.
    - 3. There is a sense in which the people of the Lord are a people apart, belonging to each other in a sense in which they don't belong to anyone else. A. W. Tozer Life Application Bible Commentary
- VI. In Whom You Also Are Being Built Together for a Dwelling Place of God in the Spirit.
- A. It is through the Spirit that God dwells in this figurative building made up of believers.
  - B. It is the Spirit of God that lives in each of His children.

- C. We have the witness of the Holy Spirit.
- D. He bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.