

## **Sermon: September 6, 2020**

### **Jesus Broke the Walls:**

#### **Introduction:**

Our country is experiencing tough times. We are facing a pandemic that has changed life as we used to know it. There are racial tensions and racial divisions in our country. People are seeking for answers. These are trying time for everyone. The early church faced some segregation and racial disharmony too as we shall see in our text.

#### **Context:**

God created mankind after his image. They were image bearers of God. After the fall, God chose a people for himself, the Jews and made covenants with them. The covenants established a special relationship between God and the Jews. The covenant of grace was established spanning the breath of the Bible from the Old to the New Testament. God made the covenants starting from Adam, Noah, Abraham, David and into the New Testament. They had laws, rules and ceremonies that separated them from the rest of the people of the world. They had to be circumcised. God established a place of worship starting from the tabernacle to the temple. This was a place where God's presence was and where ceremonies for the forgiveness of sins took place. He actually gave them the measurements for the

buildings. These laws and ceremonies foreshadowed Christ's coming and His work in the New Testament. God was foretelling the story of a new nation He was to have through Jesus. A new nation not made up of an ethnic group, but a new nation for all those that profess Christ. Jesus was a game changer in the New Testament. In the New Testament when the Gentiles were saved, it was hard for the Jews to accept them. Peter had to get a divine vision for him to go to Cornelius's house who was a gentile. "Peter said to them, you are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or a visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean (Acts 10:27-29). The brothers in Jerusalem did not readily embrace the Gentile Christians. This became a bone of contention. The Jews wanted the Gentiles who repented to become Jews first before they can become Christians. They wanted them to be circumcised first. This was the problem. The Jews segregated themselves against the Gentiles. They thought that they were superior to the Gentiles. This is the backdrop to this passage. There were hostilities between the Jews and the Gentiles.

## **Main Body**

### **1. Jesus is Our Peace:**

*Vs. 14 (a). " For He himself is our peace, who has made the two one".* How much we need to hear this today. Our cities are burning today. There is anger, racial tensions, senseless killings, looting and destruction. There is the great racial divide. The answer is not in the political arena or the media. Verse 14 makes it clear that Jesus himself is our peace. The Bible calls him the Prince of Peace who was promised in Isaiah 9: 6b (*And he will be called Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* Shalom used here in Hebrew means an appearance of calm and tranquility. Jesus is the ultimate peacemaker. We sing "what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer". On the other hand, the pandemic (COVID- 19) is raging and galloping across the nation. Thus, mental issues, high unemployment, broken relationships are on the rise. Fear is everywhere. Jesus is our only hope. God gives us the peace that passeth all understanding (Philippians 4:7). 'Fear not' is the command given most in the whole Bible. It is not God`s will for us to live in fear. Anyone one or any doctrine that promotes fear is not from God. For God, has not given us the Spirit of fear (2 Tim. 1:7). He is the one who spoke to the storm and there was calm. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He does not change. He is God. His voice can once again bring peace to our beloved country. Peace be still.

## II. The Two Walls/ Partitions:

### **JESUS BROKE THE WALL THAT SEPARATED US FROM GOD:**

*vv.14 b-15 “and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.  
By setting aside in his flesh the law with its commandments and  
regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out  
of the two, thus making peace.*

- A. There was a partition dividing the Holy of Holies and the Inner court of the temple.
- i) Sin separated mankind from God.
  - ii) Only the High priest could enter the Holies where God’s presence was to offer sacrifices. Jesus became that sacrifice that was offered once and for all.
  - iii) In verse 14 (b), Jesus broke this wall and gave all mankind access to the presence of God (Mark 15: 37-38) The veil of the temple was broken in two from top to bottom when Jesus was at the cross. Meaning it was from God reaching down. Access to God was granted so that we can come boldly before the presence of God. He reconciled mankind to God. He

became the sacrifice that was offered once and for all. He was the High Priest that offered the sacrifice for sin.

**JESUS BROKE THE WALL THAT SEPARATED US FROM EACH OTHER:**

*vv. 16-17 "...and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to you who were near.*

- B. There was the outer wall or partition in the temple, dividing the Gentiles and the Jews.
- C. Verse 16. Jesus reconciled mankind with God first thereby reconciling mankind to each other by his death on the cross. The hostilities were put to death on the cross. Racial tensions can only be addressed by addressing the hearts of mankind. The cross was where the price of sin was paid. True reconciliation only happens at the cross. Animosity was replaced by love at Calvary.
- D. Verse 17. He came to and preached peace to those who were far away and to those who were near. This was also illustrated by the Great Commission in Matthew 28: 19 to go and make disciples of all nations not only the Jews, but all nations. In Acts, the preaching was to start in Jerusalem and end unto the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). This is referring to the near and those far

away. All nations become one in Christ. He declares in John 14:6 that I am the way, the truth and the life. There is no other name by which man can be saved (Acts 4:12). True peace and reconciliation only comes through hearts that have been changed by Jesus Christ.

- i) Only the Jews were allowed into the inner court.
- ii) Gentiles were only allowed into the outer court. Entrance into the inner court by a Gentile carried the death penalty according to some Bible commentaries. He created one humanity in himself out of the two namely Jews and Gentiles to make peace. Jesus broke this wall that separated man from man, Jew from Gentile. Jews, Gentiles, and all races became one in Christ. Racism and division is a by-product of sin. Through-out history we have seen this manifestation of hostilities. From the time of Hitler trying to destroy the Jews, the holocaust. What a sad story. In Africa, it is mainly along tribal lines. We all remember with sadness the genocide in Rwanda. Watching the movie, Hotel Rwanda was very difficult. Hostilities and segregation go beyond skin color. It is a sin problem. It came about all because of the sin in the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve disconnected from each other after they sinned. The blame game then started. Are we familiar we this today? Jesus broke

those walls of hostilities. Christ shed his love abroad in our hearts Rom. 5:5. This enables us to love strangers. The love of Christ compels us according II Cor. 5:14. The Jews viewed the Gentiles through the Jewish cultural lens and vice versa. They did not understand each other.

Example:

When I came initially from Zimbabwe I had a totally different view about allergies. Allergies in Zimbabwe are very mild. They are nothing to worry about. Whenever, someone complained that they were suffering from allergies this did not make any sense to me. I was using my Zimbabwean perspective to interpret an American situation. Firstly, one of our boys started having allergy problems. It was bad. The boy suffered a lot and had problems breathing. He started taking allergy shots. Seeing him having an allergy skin test, when they stuck all the needles in his back was hard. I slowly began to understand allergies. He had to use a nebulizer and an inhaler. After eight years living in Tulsa, I also started suffering from allergies. Itchy eyes, running and stuffy nose, sneezing and itchy ears. For the first time, I started experiencing what my American friends had been experiencing all along. I started to feel the discomfort and pain of the allergy season. Never try to interpret things from your own cultural perspective because you have no idea what the other people are going through. I was kind of dumb, thinking that Oklahoma allergies are the same as Zimbabwe allergies. What did I know? Instead seek to

learn and understand other people. Learn their story and their pain. What walls are we putting up that separate us today? Yet, Christ came to tear down those walls. After tearing down the walls, Christ built something new up.

### **JESUS BUILDS US INTO A NEW HOUSEHOLD:**

- i) *Verse 18-19. "For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of His household".*

We become members of his household. Jews, Gentiles and all nations are joined together. We are a chosen people, God in Christ created a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God (1 Peter 2:9). God chose us. We are a united nation made up of different ethnicities. We are not permanent residents but we are citizens of God's Kingdom. We represent his Kingdom wherever we are.

Example:

It took us many years and many lawyers for us to become US citizens. Thanks to some of you here who were part of that journey. We appreciate you guys.

Every year across the globe people scramble and apply to become US citizens. Some are even scammed thousands and thousands of dollars in their quest to become US citizens. Bogus agencies in other countries promise path to American citizenship. This country is blessed. When you are a citizen, you are protected by the constitution and the mighty of the USA government. You do not need a visa to come into the country. Carrying the blue passport makes it easy when you are in transit passing through other countries. Venencia and myself were greatly relieved when we became citizens, because we did not need to apply for visas for other countries when in transit to Zimbabwe when there are long layovers. There is pride and security in being a US citizen.

Paul is teaching the Ephesians that they are citizens of a superior Kingdom. The Kingdom of God, where ethnicity of a person is no longer relevant. All the citizens have been washed by the blood, justified through Christ and clothed in His Righteousness. Citizenship in God's kingdom is better than citizenship of any earthly country.

*Verse: 20-21. Built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.”* Jesus holds everything together. It all

fits together in Him. He is at the center of it all. We are not just a big church on a hill. We are part of the universal church built upon the teachings and doctrines of the apostles, some who died for this gospel. We are now part of the invisible church. We do have a cloud of witnesses in this race (Heb. 12:1). We should take encouragement from those that went before us, their faith. We are not a club or a society but we are the temple of Christ (verse 21). All people of the world, who profess Christ, are joined together into this new household.

### **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?**

*Verse 22: "And in Him you are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit. Every race, every nation, every tribe to become a dwelling place for God. We are the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16). We become one in Christ.*

#### 1) Looking In:

Let us ask God in quietness to search our hearts (Ps. 139:23-24). Ask God to show you walls that are in your life that need to be brought down and repented of. David pleaded with God to be shown the dark areas of his heart.

#### 2) Looking Up:

During these what I call evil days, God promises healing for his people if his people shall humble themselves, pray, seek God and turn from their wicked ways (II Chr. 7:14). We need to realize that we cannot legislate our way out of the current quagmire. We have been doing the prayer series. It is time brothers and sisters to fall on our knees and pray. Get together a group of friends, or just as a family and set aside time to pray weekly besides your individual prayer time. Read the Word and hear what God is saying to you. Only God can heal our country. We lift our eyes to the mountains. That is where our help comes from.

### 3) Reaching Out:

Find someone of a different ethnicity. Try to learn their history and their story. Being united doesn't mean being the same. Be intentional. Be willing to listen and learn from their history and story.

### **Conclusion:**

By dying on the Cross, Christ reconciled mankind to God. He opened the door to God's presence. Simultaneously, Christ reconciled mankind to one another. We are all united in Christ as one body to the Glory of God. There is no longer any Greek or Jew, man or woman before the presence of God. Finally, John saw "a multitude

that no one could count, from every nation and tribe, people and language standing before the Lamb (Rev. 7:9).

**BENEDICTION:**

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.