

## **Eph 2:17-19 Jesus, Prince of Peace Pt. 2**

Now that Paul has explained the preaching of peace to those who were far away and to those who were near, he now discusses the result of that peace.

**so that through him we both have the access in one Spirit to the Father.**

Jesus has brought us together as believers to be introduced to God, to have access to Him through Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and to have a relationship with Him. All of this is only possible, because we have Jesus' righteousness that we have received by him paying for our sins and removing them away from us by His finished work on the cross. In the OT the Jews had access to God by means of the temple, and all of those animal sacrifices, but now in a new much better, Way both Jews and Gentiles have equal access to God. Heb 8:1-2 **Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord set up, not man.** So, this new access that both Jews and Gentiles have enables us to have the freedom to approach God as His People, His Children, with familiarity, but reverence

**18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.**

The body of Christ is united in One Spirit. 1 Cor 12:12-13 **12 For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For [m]by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.** Because of Christ's work, God is approachable. Without Christ's work sinful humans could not approach God.

**19 So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,**

And this standing of being brought near to a Holy God improves our character, making us more like Him, since we worship Him. In Ephesians 4:1 Paul urges us Christians **"to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called."** This does not mean that we should try to deserve our place in God's favor. We cannot earn our salvation after we are saved any more than we could before we were saved. But we can Honor God's sacrifice of His Son on our behalf by allowing Him to achieve the work that He wants to do in us, and through us. And that begins with character. It means that we should recognize how much our place in God's favor, and our standing before Him should affect the way that we live **Living a Life Worthy of Our Calling**

In Ephesians 4:3 the way to lead a life worthy of our calling is to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Verse 2 tells us how to maintain spiritual unity: **"With all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love."**

**What Is the Unity of the Spirit?**

Part of the answer is found in verses 11–13. **Here Paul says that Christ has given to the church "some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God."**

**A Reality to Be Maintained and a Goal to Be Attained**

In a decisive act of atonement and reconciliation, Christ has already made us one. The unity Christ purchased and guaranteed with his blood must now be lived out and brought to full expression in the life of the church. In this sense it is a goal to be attained.

**Three Components of Christian Unity**

When hostility is replaced with love, we have a common care for each other. So I would sum up Christian unity from Ephesians 2–4 as having common convictions about Christ, common confidence in Christ, and common care for each other.

**Flowing from the Holy Spirit**

Ephesians 4:3 calls this the unity of the Spirit. It's the Holy Spirit who frees our hearts from irrational, self-defensive prejudices so that we are willing to own up to true convictions about Christ (1 Corinthians 2:14–16). It's the Holy Spirit who enables us to have faith in Christ and to cry out to God with confidence, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15–16). And it is the Holy Spirit who bears the fruit of love in our lives and gives us a common care for each other (Galatians 5:22). So our common convictions and confidence and care are all from the Holy Spirit. Therefore Paul calls it the "unity of the Spirit" (v. 3).

**Lowliness and Meekness**--As individual Christians, we must continually cultivate an attitude of lowliness and meekness. See Matt 5:3-5 Also, Eph 2:5-8 **5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross.** The first stage of love that leads to unity is lowliness and meekness. This enables us to have the character to Eph 4:3

**"Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called in all lowliness and meekness."** And, in Philippians 4:4 Paul encourages us saying **5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all people. The Lord is near.** The knowledge of our high calling should make us feel very lowly. Christian lowliness makes us think lowly of ourselves and highly of Christ. We regard our righteousness as small and lowly because we have seen the character of God.

**Patience and Forbearance**--As we come to realize true humility, it doesn't mean that we are a doormat; on the contrary, it means that we have been chosen by the King of the Universe. But we glory in Him, not ourselves. And that means that we begin to have patience and long-suffering. "Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience." Lowliness is the prerequisite of patience. Haughty people are not patient. The more highly you think of yourself the more quickly you will think you should be served, and the more quickly you will be offended if everyone else doesn't agree. Another way of describing the results of lowliness is with the term forbearance.

**"Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love."** Endurance is the demeanor of patience.

**Preserving Common Care for Each Other**--The focus in verses 2 and 3 is not so much on how to maintain our common convictions or our common confidence. How can you keep on caring about a person who doesn't like you? Or a person who likes music you don't like? Or a person who opposes you and wants to frustrate your dreams? Paul's answer: be lowly in spirit so that you can patiently endure their differences and their sins. A man of lowliness is keenly aware of the immensity of his debt toward God and how he has dishonored God through unbelief and disobedience. He is also keenly aware of God's amazing grace that saved a wretch like him.

Therefore, let's not be puffed up but lowly and meek. And let's not be impatient or resentful, but long-suffering and forgiving. Then the unity that Christ died to create will become real in our church, and we will not bring any disrepute upon the great God who called us into his kingdom and glory.

The prophets foretold that Christ would come as the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6) who would "proclaim peace to the nations" (Zechariah 9:10). Jesus fulfilled the prophecies and preached "peace to you who were far away [the Gentiles] and peace to those who were near [the Jews]" (Ephesians 2:17). At the time of Christ's birth, the angels proclaimed, "**Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests**" (Luke 2:14). Jesus Himself is our peace. In Him, we have "**the peace of God, which transcends all understanding**" to guard our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:7). Jesus came to bring peace on earth and called His followers to continue His mission (Matthew 5:9). We do this by sharing the gospel—"the good news of peace through Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:36)—and by living in peace with one another (Romans 12:18; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14). Because Jesus Himself is our peace, we can enjoy harmony and wholeness in our relationship with God and others.