

In Christ; Ephesians 2:12-14

I. Far Off

A. Who did you used to be?

1. You are not that person now
2. You are a new person

B. Christ changes us

1. We cannot be the same person we were before Christ
2. Our “old self” was crucified (died) with Him (Romans 6:6)
3. Ephesians 4:22–24 (ESV); ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.
4. Colossians 3:9–10 (ESV); ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

II. Separated

A. Ephesians 2:12 (ESV); 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.

B. Look at the words Paul uses to describe those who are not in Christ

1. Separated - apart, by ourselves
 - a) This is a physical and spiritual separation from the Father
 - b) Paul describes punishment (hell) as “eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord” in 2 Thessalonians 1:9
2. Alienated - estranged (with the understanding of hostility)
 - a) The promise of the Messiah through Israel
 - b) We were never meant to be physical Israelites
 - c) We must remember that the majority of the Old Testament is about Israel and the promise God gave to them (that the Messiah, the savior of the world, would come through Israel)
 - d) We were promised to be blessed through the Messiah, Genesis 12:3
3. Strangers - unheard of, foreign
 - a) While many nations knew about the God of Israel through God’s actions with Egypt and Canaan, God was still foreign to them
 - b) As soon as the gentiles heard about (or knew about) God, they became excited for His salvation
 - c) Acts 13:46–49 (ESV); ⁴⁶ And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “ ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ” ⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

C. Separated from Christ

1. “Having no hope” and “without God”
2. Could you imagine a life where this is all there is?
3. We would have no purpose other than to please ourselves
4. There would be no rule except that which pleases us
5. We see this very lifestyle today throughout the nations

III. Brought Near

- A. Ephesians 2:13–14 (ESV); 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
- B. Those who have no hope can now have hope
- C. Those who are without God can now be with God
- D. But it is only “in Christ Jesus”
 - 1. He brought Israel and the gentiles together
 - 2. All nations were blessed through Jesus (Genesis 12:3, Galatians 3:16)
- E. In Christ we have changed from what we once were to who we are now
- F. We are no longer separated, we have become a new person
- G. Just how are we new?
- H. Romans 8:9–11 (ESV); ⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.
- I. We have changed from physical to spiritual
- J. Romans 8:1-8
- K. We must have a complete change of mind
 - 1. We should no longer be concerned with the physical — there is nothing in the physical world that can save us
 - 2. Store up heavenly treasures — helping those in need (food and drink, hospitality, clothing, ill, incarcerated; Matthew 25:41-46)
 - 3. We are always concerned about our physical lives, but Jesus tells us to let God take care of that — we just need to seek Him and His righteousness (Matthew 6:25-33)
 - 4. This is not an easy change!
 - 5. We tend to be really concerned with our physical lives
 - a) The Holy Spirit had to intervene with the Apostles
 - b) They were still very physical (nationalistic) when Jesus ascended into heaven
 - c) They asked Him, “Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6) — will you kick Rome out and become our King
 - d) It took the Holy Spirit (10 days later) at Pentecost to change their mindset from physical to spiritual
 - e) John 16:13 (ESV); When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.
 - f) This very same Spirit has guided us into truth as well
 - g) 2 Peter 1:21 (ESV); For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
 - h) The Spirit gave it to the Apostles miraculously and then wrote it down for us
 - 6. Even though it is hard, we must change our way of thinking
 - 7. We must let God fulfill His promise of taking care of our physical lives while we seek His righteousness (spiritual lives)

IV. In Christ

- A. Letting go of the past is hard, but we must
- B. Use those memories to remind you that you are no longer that way
- C. Forget what is behind, strain for the goal
- D. Philippians 3:8 (ESV); Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ
- E. Philippians 3:13–14 (ESV); ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

F. You are a new person in Christ!