

Being The Body Together – Italy Missions Report

August 27, 2017

- I. We don't have to look far in our society to see things that divide us.
 - a. Political strife
 - b. Racial division
 - c. Generational resentment
- II. Do we reflect a similar environment in the church today compared to the things that plague our society? If so, this a problem. God calls us to HOLINESS (I Peter 1:16).
 - a. He offers it POSITIONALLY through our identification in Christ
 - b. He offers it PRACTICALLY, as we walk in the Spirit, by our daily living (conduct) being like Christ
 - c. He's called us to be one in Christ.

EPHESIANS 2:11-22

1. It's the gospel that brings DIFFERENT groups of people together.
2. If you're in Christ, not only do you have a new **identity** for yourself...
 - a. DEATH → LIFE; ADAM → CHRIST; SIN → RIGHTEOUSNESS
 - b. ...but you also have a new COMMUNITY.
 - c. Rather than ***"Separated, alienated, strangers, no hope, without God, far off"*** (12-13)...we have instead ***"brought near, made us one, broken the dividing wall, abolishing the law"*** (13-15)
 - d. This reconciliation into community is only possible by the BLOOD OF CHRIST (vs 13). Also consider II Cor. 5:18-21
 - e. And this transition can take people who are rivals, even ones who may have formerly hated each other, and instead the gospel can make PEACE (vs 15)
3. Some goals for a community of believers (a church)
 - a. Spiritual **unity** →
 - b. Spiritual **diversity** →
 - c. Growing **maturity** →

- d. To distract us from this calling, Satan offers alternative visions of **FULFILLMENT**, which are really illusions and are not fulfilling. (Matthew 23:27)
4. We're told that we are members of...
- a. A new **family** (vs 18-19)
 - b. A new **citizenship** (vs 19)
 - c. A new **BUILDING** (vs 20-22)
5. **(vs 20-22)** We're a **TEMPLE**, both individually as the place where the Holy Spirit resides as well as corporately when we gather for worship together.
- a. In Genesis we can read that God **WALKED** with his people in the **garden**
 - b. In Exodus, it changes to Him wanting to tabernacle or **DWELL** with his people in a **tent**
 - c. Then when Solomon built the **temple**, this is where God dwelled with his people
 - d. Next God dwelled with his people in the **PERSON** of Christ
 - i. Hebrews 1:3 – He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
 - e. Finally, God has chosen, through His Spirit to dwell individually in the hearts of the **CHURCH**.
 - i. Ephesians 2:20-22 says we are a **holy temple...a dwelling place** for God by the Spirit.
 - ii. Exodus 40:34-35 – God's glory fills the place where He dwells
 - iii. Matthew 27:50-51 – The veil is torn inviting us into His holy presence and His holy presence into us
 - iv. Individually first but then collectively as we gather together like this, we are to **REFLECT** the glory of God to the unbelieving culture around us.

"As a local body first, but also as a part of the worldwide body of Christ, let's function in His will and for His glory."