

The Crucial Role of Christ

Ephesians 2:11-18

September 7, 2025

Opening Illustration

Chamberlain's great peace mission failed.

Introduction

History tells us that from 1500 BC to 885 AD there were 7500 peace agreements but none of them lasted more than two years. Jesus' peace mission has lasted for over two thousand years. He still brings peace into the hearts of men and women.

Three Crucial Workings of Christ in Our Lives

1. Remembering our hopelessness before Christ.

remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—¹²remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. Ephesians 2:11-12

This first part of this passage highlights the differences between Gentiles and Jews. For centuries, the circumcision (Jews) had looked down on the uncircumcision (Gentiles) with an attitude that God had never intended them to display.

“I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles. Is. 42:6-7

The Jews had an immense contempt for the Gentiles. They said that the Gentiles were created by God to be fuel for the fires of hell; that God loved only Israel of all the nations that He’d made. The word ‘*without*’ best describes the Gentiles before they met Christ. They were without the blessings of the True God.

Three essentials the Gentiles were without

- **They were without Christ.**

The Ephesians worshiped the goddess, Diana. Before the coming of the gospel, they knew nothing about Christ.

- **They were without citizenship.**

God chose the Jews and made them into a nation. He gave them His laws and His blessings. A Gentile could become a convert but not be a citizen of Israel.

- **They were without hope and without God.**

Historians tell us that a great cloud of hopelessness covered the ancient world. Philosophies were empty and religions were powerless to help men.

Illustration

Meaninglessness without Christ.

2. Recognizing our peace is secure in Christ.

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations.

Ephesians 2:13-15a

Before God intervened, there was enmity between Jew and Gentile and between sinners and God. “But now” tells us that God took the initiative to reconcile us back to Himself.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— Ephesians 2:8

God’s intervention came through the sacrifice of His Son upon the cross and His shed blood. There was no other way that we could be reconciled with God.

Sin is the great separator. It has been the source of division from the beginning of human history and continues to separate individuals and nations in conflict.

But Jesus came to take away that separation. He came to bring true peace and replace old divisions with a new unity. Sin is a dividing wall and He had to destroy the dividing wall. The

dividing wall was familiar to the Jews. The temple in Jerusalem was a series of courts with the Court of the Gentiles the furthest out. The next court was the court of the women.

Between those courts was a dividing wall. There were signs posted on that said: no one of any nation may enter this holy place. Whoever does will be responsible for their own death. That barrier kept the Gentiles away from God's presence.

When Jesus died on the cross, the Holy of Holies, was opened for all to have access to God.

...when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. ⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. Matthew 27:50-51

When the veil was torn, the wall of separation was figuratively torn down and Gentiles were given access to God. The separation between God and man ceased because of Jesus.

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Romans 10:12-13

Illustration

Love moved the fence.

3. Realizing our access to God is from Christ.

His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Ephesians 2:15b-18

The Gentiles needed to be reconciled with the Jews, and they both needed to be reconciled with God. The early church faced its first crisis when some wanted Gentiles to become Jews before they could be Christian. Peter reminded them that God accepted Gentiles on equal terms.

He did not discriminate between us and them, for He purified their hearts by faith. Acts 15:8-9

We have access to God through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul declared that all who believe in Jesus have that access to God.

There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Romans 3:22b-24

Jesus created in Himself a new unity between Gentile and Jew which did not exist because of hatred and contempt. Paul used the word *kainos* for ‘new’. ‘*Kainos*’ means new in quality. It brings a new quality which did not exist before.

Jesus’ new unity didn’t do away with racial differences but brought men and women of all nations into a new identity of being Christians. Jesus enables people to let go of previous separations and divisions inflicted by others and be reconciled.

The conclusion of Jesus’ finished work on the cross was to bring peace and give every person access to the Father by His Spirit. The days of division were ended, and hostility was put to death when Jesus triumphed on the cross. There is now no reason to hold things against people. No matter how badly we are mistreated or misunderstood, Jesus sets us free from our own hostilities and brings us to a new life He provides.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10

Closing Illustration

Forgive and forget (Clara Barton)