“The Way We Were”

It’s Time For Us to Be The Church

Ephesians 2:11-22

February 3, 2013
Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands—
Ephesians 2:12

12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
Ephesians 2:13-14

• 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,
Ephesians 2:15

15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace,
Ephesians 2:16-18

16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 AND 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 our access in one Spirit to the Father.
19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, 

20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,
 Ephesians 2:21-22

- 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.
Neighbor...

...it’s very difficult to appreciate where you are if you don’t remember where you’ve been
The Tempest is...

- ...a work by William Shakespeare and in it, Antonio utters a now famous phase to Sebastian...
In Act 2,...

• ...scene 1, Antonio says... what's past is prologue...
He was saying...

• ...in effect, that what has already happened sets the scene for what is to come.
Ephesians 2...

- ...contains two major sections that contrast who we are with what we used to be.
Last week, we...

• ...looked at the first section and it highlighted three characteristics of our old lives
First...

• ...we were spiritually dead but now alive in Christ.
Second...

...we **were** controlled by our natural desires but **now** by the Holy Spirit.
Third...

• ...we **were** committed to our old way of living but **now** a whole new way of life
Today we will...

• ...look at the second of these contrasts between who we are and who we were.
We have titled...

•...today’s message, “The Way We Were”
Barbara Streisand...

- …Memories, light the corners of my mind, misty watercolor memories of the way we were
- Scattered pictures, of the smiles we left behind,
- Smiles we gave to one another, for the way we were
Can it be that...

• ...it was all so simple then, or has time rewritten every line,

• If we had the chance to do it all again, tell me would we, could we

• Memories, may be beautiful and yet,

• What’s too painful to remember, we simply choose to forget
So it’s the...

- laughter we will remember, whenever we remember, the way we were.
When we...

• ...forget who we were, when we forget the past, we lose sight of what Christ has done in our lives.
Paul wanted...

• the Ephesians and us to remember some things about the way we were...
Because...

• ...remembering will have a significant impact on how we live today.
The first thing...

• ...that Paul wanted the Ephesians to remember is they were alienated from God and His people (11-13)
A real problem...

• ...however, is the fact that Paul’s command to remember (the only imperative in Chapters 1-3)…
Seems to conflict...

• ...directly with what he said in his letter to the Philippians (Phil 3:13-15)
The context for...

...verses 13-15 is established earlier in the chapter (Phil. 3:2-11)
It turns out...

• ...that Paul is delivering the same message to the Philippians, to the Ephesians and to us...
No matter how…

• ...painful or disappointing our past may have been, because of who we are in Christ, we don’t have to be defined by our pasts. We remember it but we don’t live there.
Paul didn’t forget…

• …it and he does not want us to forget it. The past should inform our thinking but not dominate our lives (2 Cor. 11:21-30)
• ...believers at Ephesus should remember how they were disparaged by the Jews...bad-mouthing by those who were no better off than you were.
It is amazing how...

...some religious people will try to tell you how bad you while they ignore the awful condition they are in.
Paul’s Command...

• ...to the Gentile believers at Ephesus...

• ...be continually aware of what you were and what you are now...it will enrich your gratitude and your obedience.
Five hurdles…

- ...no relationship to Christ
- ...excluded for citizenship in Israel
- ...foreigners to the covenant of promise
- ...without hope
- ...without God
The only solution...

• ...for a lost soul is nearness to God and only Christ can take us there
Notice the change...

• ...from second to first person in verse 14, back to second person in verse 17 and then back to first person in verse 18
Paul wanted...

• ...the Ephesians and us to remember that we were in conflict with God and His people (14-18)
Jesus is our peace...

• ...He is synonymous with peace. To say peace is to say Christ and to say Christ is to say peace”
The peace...

...that passes understanding is not the absence of hostility or turmoil but the presence of Christ.
Paul wanted...

• ...the Ephesians and us to remember that we are now citizens together with all the people of God (19-22)
Do you ever...

• ...wonder what White Christians must have been thinking when they masqueraded native Americans and enslaved Black people
Lessons #1

• Remember your identity
Lessons #2

• Avoid labeling other people simply because they are not like you
Lessons #3

• Become a peacemaker