

Pastor Lenard Tavernelli--Union with Christ--Ephesians 2:19-22 The Church: Citizens, Family, God's Temple

Main Idea: Because of Jesus' reconciling work, we are fellow citizens, one family, and God's temple in Christ. 3 snapshots.

Sermon Summary: What do you look for in a church? Similar people, good programs / sermons, specific music, nice facilities, etc? Or something deeper? The truth is the church is people--imperfect, sinful people. And wonder of wonders, Jesus calls the church His bride. He loves and cares deeply for His church—as imperfect as we are. Pastor Lenard shared today that Ephesians 2:19-22 teaches us that Christians in the church are fellow citizens, family and God's temple---all because of what Christ did.

1) We are fellow citizens (2:19) No longer strangers and aliens—but fellow citizens with all of God's household. Dual citizens.

- Colossians 1:13-14: "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. "
- Hebrews 11:10: "For he (Abraham) was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God."
- Hebrews 11:16 "But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city."
- Philippians 3:20 "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"
- 1 Peter 2:11-12 "I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation." We are part of one city—the city of God. Conversion is a community creating event. And the native language of these citizens is love and holiness.

2) We are one family (2:19) Brothers/sisters mentioned 200x in the New Testament. In Christ, we have one Father.

- Hebrews 2:14-15 "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. "
- John 1:12-13 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."
- 1 Timothy 3:15 "if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth."
- Ephesians 5:1-2 "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma".
- 1 John 4:20-21 "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also."

3) We are God's temple (2:20-22) The temple was God's mtg place. We are now the temple of the Spirit and Jesus is the temple.

- John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. "
- John 2:19 "Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."
- 1 Peter 2:4-5 "And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. "
- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are."
- 1 Kings 6:7 "When the house was built, it was with stone prepared at the quarry, so that neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron was heard in the house while it was being built."
- Ephesians 4:4-6 "*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."

Questions (select some to discuss):

- Citizens implies a city. Are we living in the city of God now—or is that only future?
- How often do you think of being an American citizen? Or a citizen of God's city? Should you think of this more?
- Describe the city of God: What does it look like? What goes on there? How do you fit in?
- 2:19 says "God's household". Christ sees His church as family. Do you? How different than just a gathering of friends?
- Does Bethel truly have a family feel to it? What can we do to make it even more so? What can you do?
- Do you ever feel closer with your Bethel family than your blood family? Why?
- God dwelt with us in Eden. Then in a mobile tabernacle. Then in a stationary Jerusalem temple. Jesus became our dwelling place with God. The Spirit now dwells in the church. We will dwell with God in heaven. What's the meaning of all these changes?
- Do you ever think of yourself as a living stone of a growing building built upon Christ—and the apostles/prophets? As you consider it, what comes to mind? See the Scriptures above.
- Do you think you see the church as Jesus does? Where do you think you differ?