

The Changing Jesus

Ephesians 2:11-13

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about inmates who are less likely to re-offend if they have plastic surgery, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #10837.
- B. Just like the plastic surgery convicts might undergo, Jesus changes everyone with whom he comes in contact.
 - 1. Some people come into contact with Jesus and are hardened; they desire not to submit to a word of his will.
 - 2. Others come into contact with Jesus and their lives are completely different — no longer do they participate in a host of sins, they strive to live righteously.
- C. Paul wrote to some Gentiles who had been changed as a result of Jesus' work.
 - 1. Their lives were dramatically different after they came into contact with Jesus than before.
 - 2. This morning, we want to examine this passage to see how their lives were different.

LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST, vv. 11-12

- A. Paul is writing to Gentiles about their life without Christ. v. 11.
 - 1. He refers to them as “you Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands.”
 - 2. There was great enmity on the part of the Jews toward Gentiles.
 - a. Jews considered themselves superior to Gentiles because they had been circumcised and they were God's special people.
 - b. You get a glimpse of that here — “they called you the ‘uncircumcision.’”
- B. Paul calls upon these Christians to remember their pre-conversion lives.
 - 1. Memory can be an important tool in our Christian walk.
 - a. We take the Lord's Supper to be reminded of the death of Jesus (1 Cor. 11:24-25).
 - b. To the Ephesian church who had left her first love, Jesus said, “Remember therefore from where you have fallen: repent and do the first works” (Rev. 2:5).
 - c. The benefits of memory in these two cases are clearly seen:
 - 1) If we remember the death of Jesus, we will be less likely to sin than if we forget his death.
 - 2) If we need repentance and we remember what we had when we are faithful, we will desire to be faithful once more.
 - 2. The same thing applies here:
 - a. Don't forget where you came from — don't forget what it was like to be a non-Christian.
 - b. Don't forget when you had no hope, don't forget when you knew the full weight of your sin, and don't forget when you didn't know where to turn.
 - c. If we remember what our pre-conversion days were like, we will be less likely to desire to go back there.
- C. Paul graphically portrays these Gentiles' pre-Christian lives, v. 12:
 - 1. At that time they were without Christ.
 - a. “Without Christ” here could mean that since these were Gentiles they had no promise of a coming Messiah.
 - b. I tend to think that this means they did not have the saving effects of Jesus' death.
 - 1) They were not covered in his blood; they had not been saved from their sin through his death.
 - 2) Do you have Christ?
 - 2. At that time they were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel.
 - a. “Being aliens” in the NKJV is just one verb in the Greek.
 - 1) The verb is in the perfect tense; the perfect refers to an act that occurred in the past but has continued effects in the present; thus, these Gentiles had become aliens in the past and they continued to be aliens.
 - 2) The term means to be alienated, estranged, cast away.
 - b. The commonwealth of Israel refers to the nation of Israel.
 - c. These Gentiles were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel in that they shared in none of the blessings of the nation of Israel.
 - 3. At that time they were strangers to the covenants of promise.
 - a. Unlike the Jews, the Gentiles did not have the covenant from God. God had made no special promises

- to the Gentiles as he did to the Jews.
- b. To the non-Christian, God has made no promises - he has not promised to hear their prayers, he has not promised to forgive their sins, he has not promised to give them a place in heaven.
 - 1) How horrible it is to be a stranger to the covenant of promise!
 - 2) Are you a child of God, or are you a stranger to the covenant of promise?
- 4. At that time they had no hope.
 - a. Hope is the desire of mankind.
 - 1) When Job had lost everything, he cried out, "Where then is my hope? As for my hope, who can see it?" (Job 17:15).
 - 2) When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about those who were in asleep in Jesus, he wrote, "I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13).
 - b. Although hope is the desire of mankind, those apart from Jesus have no hope.
 - 1) They have no hope that if they should die they should live again, they have no hope of the forgiveness of sin, they have no hope of anything but hell to come.
 - 2) Illustration about Doe Tabor, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #5170.
- 5. At that time they were without God in the world.
 - a. The term "without God" in the Greek is "atheos" from which we get the word "atheist."
 - b. These Gentiles had no relationship with God — they could not pray to him, they could not receive his spiritual blessings, they could not expect to be with him eternally.
- D. We need to understand how horrible being lost really is.
 - 1. Being lost is not just something undesirable, but is something quite horrible.
 - 2. Those who are lost are separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the promises of God, have no hope, and are without God.
 - 3. Illustration about the pilots getting no lights during WWII, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #10995.
 - 4. Are you lost? Are you in a horrible state?

LIFE WITH CHRIST, v. 13

- A. These Gentiles had been brought near.
 - 1. These Gentiles had been brought near to what?
 - a. Jesus came that he "might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross" (2:16).
 - b. "Through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father" (2:18).
 - 2. Thus, we see that these Gentiles had been brought near to the Father.
 - 3. Those of us who are in Christ have been brought near to the Father — we have a relationship with him, we are able to go to him in prayer and seek help, and we know that he will help.
- B. Jesus brought us near to the Father through his own blood.
 - 1. Jesus shed his blood in order to make us right with the Father.
 - a. "Having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:9).
 - b. "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19).
 - c. Jesus "loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1:5).
 - 2. Illustration from Conan Doyle's History of the Boer War, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #10914.
 - 3. Are you covered in the blood of Jesus? Are you safe in his blood?