

### **Ephesians 2:12-22**

Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

**Wall of Hostility:** the Law, which separated the Jewish nation from everyone else

### **Jesus' suffering:**

- Did away with the hostile barrier—the law—by fulfilling it
- Made reconciliation to God possible for all people by offering himself as the final sacrifice needed (lamb of God)
- Joined both people groups together as members of the household of God

→ Jesus died so we could be family.

**You can understand something your whole life. But you only take it seriously when it costs you something.**

### **2 Timothy 1:8**

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,

Suffering is the mark of God's family. It is supposed to make us different.

### **SUFFERING AND FOLLOWING JESUS:**

- **John 12:24-26**—whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.
- **Matthew 16:24-25**—to follow Jesus is to take up our cross and follow him
- **2 Timothy 2:12**—if we endure, we will also reign with him
- **Mark 3:31-35**—Jesus' family are those who do the will of God

#### **Romans 8:16-17**

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

### **TAKING SUFFERING SERIOUSLY INVOLVES:**

#### **1 Suffering together in confession.**

##### **James 5:16**

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

##### **Proverbs 28:13**

Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

Confession tears down the walls of hostility known as self-righteousness.

#### **2 Suffering together in resolving our conflict biblically.**

##### **Matthew 18:15-18**

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

→ Resolving conflict biblically reveals that we are part of the problem.

Treating people as “other” builds a wall of hostility and blinds us to remembering that Jesus came for everyone not just some.

### 3 Suffering together in outdoing each other in showing honor.

#### **Romans 12:10-11**

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.

#### **John 11:41b-42**

Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.

The less we show honor the more we build walls of entitlement.

We don't suffer alone. The Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is alive within us, empowering us through it.

#### **SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS**

1. Has it cost you anything personally to be part of God's family?
2. Do you feel comfortable with confession? Why or why not? Have you confessed to a brother or sister in Christ recently?
3. What does biblical peacemaking look like in your life?
4. Is there anyone you struggle to honor? What's one way you can show honor to that person this week?