

“Walls”

Ephesians 2:11-22

8 in our series on Paul’s letter to the Ephesians

November 11, 2012

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[Song “Come Together”]

Prayer

Father, I have no idea what the Beatles were singing about, with toe jam football and all that stuff, but, Father, the refrain: “Come together, right now, over me”—that’s what you’re singing, isn’t it, Lord Jesus?—to this entire, fallen creation. So, Lord God, I pray that that would be true, and that you would use this sermon for that purpose.

Father, I was literally sick to my stomach this week thinking about what we need to preach on this morning, wondering if I should. Then I came into The Sanctuary this morning, and Nick showed me the report on the news, that Syria had fired rockets at Israel and Israel had fired rockets back...and I thought, this is exactly what we need to talk about. So, Lord God, I pray for your Spirit and your mercy to cover our worship service this morning. Lord, give us the courage to believe your gospel of love, because it looks painful to us from this side of eternity. But, Lord God, help us to see the way you see. In Jesus’ name we pray that you would help us to preach, amen.

Sermon

Last week, we preached on Ephesians 1:1-10 and talked about God, boasting, and even the election. So I know you’re itching for more election coverage, and I aim to please.

[T.V. clip from “The Colbert Report”:]

Stephen Colbert: *And do you know who else could use an ad campaign? God. Because his poll numbers are terrible.*

Commentator: *A new poll by Public Policy Polling looked at God’s approval rating, and you might be a little surprised at what they found. God has a 52% approval rating...*

Colbert: *52%! Barely half of Americans. Of course, the public is always tough on any prominent figure who had a child out of wedlock. But get this: Only 71% approve of God’s handling of creating the universe. And, folks, asking about God’s job performance raises an even more troubling question: What is God’s job? Of course, that is ultimately an unanswerable question. Here to answer it, please welcome the official chaplain of the Colbert Nation, Father Jim Martin. Papa J, what’s going on? What is God’s job?*

Father Jim: *Sustaining the universe.*

Colbert: *Can we judge him?*

Father Jim: *No.*

Colbert: *Thank you so much for coming by... [laughing and shaking hands]. Why do you think his approval ratings are so low? Isn’t that the fault, kind of, of guys like you? Aren’t you God’s P.R. team, and haven’t you kind of dropped the ball? Not to judge...*

Father Jim: *I think that frequently when people are thinking about God’s performance rating or what they think about God, they’re thinking about how things are in their lives.*

Colbert: *Right. I’m not happy at all times. Everything is not working out perfectly for me right now.*

Father Jim: *Right.*

Colbert: *Is there anything that we can do to help God get better ratings right now? I have a Super Pack. Could that help in any way?*

Colbert: Well, since we're talking polls here, can we talk politics for a second? Can God get the upper hand in these polls by, perhaps, going negative on one of his opponents? Like running an ad against Buddha, you know: Fatso wants you to have nothingness; Yahweh wants you to have everything-ness. Vote Yahweh.

Makes sense to me! "Fatso wants you to have nothingness. Yahweh wants you to have everything-ness. Vote Yahweh."

Have you ever wondered why God doesn't do a better job
at promoting Himself and displaying His glory?

Why does He tolerate such hostility from His enemies? Why doesn't He write in the sky, "Nietzsche is dead," signed God? Or, "Mohammed is a wanna-be," signed Jesus? Why does He tolerate such hostility from His enemies? If you're one of God's P.R. guys, like me, you've probably wondered about that.

Maybe God is weak. So He needs us to build some walls around His kingdom and shoot some arrows at His enemies—at "the others." And I'm not just talking metaphorical walls; I'm talking cement walls and rocket-propelled grenades. We're Americans. We have the resources.

Ephesians 2:11: "Therefore..." So we must ask, "What is therefore there for?" It's there for the stuff we've been preaching for eight weeks. From Ephesians 1 and 2, we've learned that:

1. Each of us was dead in our trespasses: By nature, children of wrath like the rest of mankind. Not different, but the same, imprisoned in a body of death—the flesh.
2. God saves us by grace through faith, and this is not of ourselves, that none should boast. It's arrogant. We think competition explains life, but it doesn't explain life, it explains death. Our flesh causes us to build walls and go to war against the others. Our flesh *is* a wall, separating life from life, which is death.
3. God will unite all things in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:10).

So God is not weak,
and Jesus has all authority on heaven and on earth;
already the Church, His Body, is mysteriously united under Him,
who is the Head.

Ephesians 2:11:

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles [ethnos] in the flesh, called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

Circumcision is cutting away the flesh that covers the place where the groom becomes one body with the bride in the sacrament of the covenant of marriage. And Paul writes that we were circumcised in Christ. At the cross, He bore our sins in His flesh and was cut off. In the Old Testament, the bride is sanctified by her groom's circumcision. The foreskin is like a protective barrier, or wall, covering the place where two become one in ecstasy that is life and bears life. Two become one, no longer separated.

Ephesians 2:12-14:

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.

We love to build walls. Remember the walls around Jericho? [singing] “Joshua won the battle of Jericho, Jericho...” Remember the walls of Jerusalem and the walls in the temple?

We build walls for protection and for order.
We build physical walls and mental walls.

Well, Paul writes, “*The dividing wall of hostility.*” So Bible scholars ask, “What’s *the* dividing wall of hostility?”

1. Some have argued that it refers to the curtain in the temple separating God from the people. That curtain is Christ’s flesh, according to Hebrews 10:20. And you’ll remember that as Christ’s body was broken, that curtain was ripped from top to bottom.
2. Some think it refers to the barrier between man and man, the dividing wall between the court of the Gentiles and the rest of the temple. Paul is probably writing to Ephesus from a prison cell in Rome, having been shipped to Rome from Jerusalem, where he was arrested upon suspicion of bringing Trophimus (a Gentile Ephesian) into the sanctuary and past the dividing wall. This is an actual inscription from that wall in Israel. It threatens capital punishment for any Gentile who passes the wall.

Do you remember what Jesus said when He cleansed the temple? He seemed pretty hostile, and He quoted Isaiah, saying, “My Father’s house will be a house of prayer for all *ethnos*”—all Gentiles, all nations, all people.

3. Some think the dividing wall of hostility is the law of commandments and ordinances, which Paul says, Jesus abolished. God’s law is good, but I use it to build dividing walls of hostility. I use the knowledge of good and evil to judge God, judge others, and judge myself.

Ephesians 2:14-16:

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 and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two....

In Galatians 3:28, Paul writes, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” See? Congratulations! You’re Jewish, chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world. The King of the Jews is your husband. You are His body, and He is your life. It’s His blood that flows in your veins.

...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.

“Killing the hostility.” You know, maybe “the dividing wall of hostility” is hostility. A wall doesn’t have to be a wall of hostility, not if the gates in that wall are open.

In Revelation 21, John sees the New Jerusalem coming down adorned as a bride for her husband. She has the glory of God; she has 12 gates founded on 12 foundations inscribed with the names of the 12 apostles. She’s a city, a bride, a temple. In verse 25, her “gates will never be shut by day.” And there will be no night there. People will bring into it/her the glory and honor of the *ethos*, the Gentiles, the nations. But nothing unclean will enter; nothing hostile will enter. The gates are open, at least from heaven’s side.

See, a wall doesn’t have to be a wall of hostility, not if the gates are open. Every cell in my body has a cell wall, and yet that wall is open to every other cell in my body. My body is diversity in unity without hostility. My marriage is diversity in unity and sometimes ecstasy when there is no hostility and the gates are open.

Well, Paul writes that Jesus killed the hostility. Kill (*apekteivo*) is a very hostile word. I mean, Jesus is really hostile about hostility. It’s like He just hates hatred. He’s so violent toward violence. I mean, when it comes to Hell, He just gives it Hell. Revelation 20:14: “Death and hell are thrown into the lake of fire [and God is fire]...and (Rev. 21:4) death shall be no more.”

Some people argue that Hell is this place of endless death and hostility. The first is endless because God is endless. But death is absolutely not endless, and hostility is not endless. God’s wrath comes to an end. Scripture says it over and over.

Jesus kills hostility.
He is God’s wrath upon wrath.
He does violence to violence.
Jesus is the death of death.
And the death of death is life.

So what’s hostility on hostility? Wouldn’t that be grace? Grace is eternal fire that never ends. And there is no greater violence upon evil than grace. And nothing offends evil people as much as grace. But in the end, grace destroys evil and liberates people from the evil. Jesus kills the hostility. He is the end. So on His cross, He cried, “It is finished.” And the walls came tumbling down.

Do you remember what the commander of God’s army said to Joshua on the plains of Jericho when Joshua asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” The God-man said, “No.” And yet He was dressed for battle. What was He fighting? The walls. Israel didn’t tear down the walls. They worshipped Yahweh, and the walls came tumbling down. On one side was Israel; on the other side was Rahab—the harlot, Jesus’ great-great-grandmother. The God-man’s Father was on one side of the wall, and His mother was on the other.

I know the Old Testament is violent. But read it carefully and you’ll discover it is violence upon violence in the service of love. It is wrath upon wrath, hostility upon hostility. In a garden, we made a covenant with death, and the rest of Scripture is...

the story of the death of death,
that is, the story of life and the story of grace,
that is, the story of Jesus, Prince of Peace.

Do you remember why they crucified the Prince of Peace? It was because He preached peace to the other side of the wall, because He quoted Isaiah saying, “A house of prayer for all the *ethnos*.” It was because He prophesied, “These walls will come tumbling down.” It

was because He refused to lead a nation of ethnic Jews in a violent revolt against the Gentiles (the empire of Rome). It was because He refused to be a racist. He was hostile to that hostility, and that hostility crucified Him. But then the walls came tumbling down.

In reality and eternity, there are no dividing walls of hostility. But in space and time, we're still watching them come tumbling down. In other words, we're watching the kingdom come. We're watching the New Jerusalem coming down. If you confess Christ, you are the New Jerusalem coming down. And you've got gates.

Ephesians 2:15-22:

...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 [He didn't bargain for peace or threaten with peace; He proclaimed 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.

One temple

One sanctuary

One dwelling place

One body

One bride

One people

One race

One hundred and fifty years ago, the United States of America was arguably the most racist nation on the face of the earth. And many used Scripture to justify the racism saying that blacks were the descendants of Canaan, who was cursed by Noah. It was terrible theology and totally unbiblical. What is biblical is that the very first became very last. He became a slave and became a curse for each one of us.

[Image of a slave that was beaten; scars cover his back]

About 75 years ago, the most racist nation on earth was arguably Germany. Inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche and Charles Darwin, Hitler believed that Arians were the new Super Man, most fit to survive. And Jews were least fit to survive.

As a kid, my two best friends were Jews. Eight years ago I visited Auschwitz alone. I took these pictures.

These are the ovens:



I lay down in these bunks:



And I knew that Jesus had slept in those bunks and was gassed in those showers. His ashes were spread in these fields:



For He says, "Whatever you do to the least of these my brothers, you do to me."

And, of course, it wasn't just Hitler who inspired the hostility. Christians in Europe had been erecting the dividing wall for centuries, claiming that ethnic Jews were cursed, for they descended from people who crucified the Messiah. Of course, they forgot that the Messiah was Jewish and that they also crucified the Messiah and descended from 12 Jews who began to call themselves the Church.

Eighteen years ago, most Americans would argue that the most racist country in the world was South Africa. The U.S. and the world put pressure on South Africa to end apartheid and tear down the dividing wall of hostility.

But what's the most racist country in the world today?

[Video Clip from Israel Apartheid documentary:]

Rev. Evan Albertyn (pastor, Charlotte, NC): *The word apartheid means separateness, and this is separateness. As a South African growing up in apartheid, I definitely see parallels between apartheid in South African and apartheid here. Apartheid was designed to separate people with the hope, supposedly, that it would resolve a conflict. But the practicality of it is, it never does. This is almost, in my eyes, kind of like apartheid on steroids. But maybe that's because I saw it from a different perspective as a white South African, but certainly there weren't big walls like this that separated us.*

Narrator: *Nothing seems to make a bolder statement about the division between Israelis and Palestinians than the separation barrier, a network of fences and high, concrete walls that cut through the West Bank for hundreds of miles.*

That's from a documentary titled, *With God on our Side*. Do you feel a little hostile about it? Maybe you think, "That's different. Israel is a democracy." Well, wasn't the U.S. a democracy in 1860 with four million slaves? Maybe you think, "But Jews were victims of racism in Germany!" Yes, and it was absolutely evil. Six million ethnic Jews died. And now four million ethnic Palestinians are refugees or exiles. And according to some, over five million have been killed since 1948.

Now, you can argue statistics,
but isn't it weird how victims can become victimizers?
Apart from a deep faith in grace,
that's the way it is.

Maybe you say, "But the Arabs are so angry!" Well, of course. In 1917, there were about 54,000 Jews living in Palestine, peacefully, among their Arab neighbors. Now there are about five million who say the land belongs to them, while most of the Palestinians have been killed, exiled, or still live as refugees, while the U.S. has supported Israel with something like 100 billion dollars. Now, there may be some good reasons for that, but when folks say, "I just don't understand why those Arab terrorists are so angry!" I encourage them to study some history and some theology.

And you may say, "Well, Islam is evil!" and I'd say, "Maybe so." It's a religion of law that rejects the Messiah, who is God's grace. But there are other religions of law that reject the Messiah, who is God's grace. And by the way, many Palestinians weren't Muslim but Christian. In 1922, the British census estimated that 51% of the population of Jerusalem was Arab Christians. That's definitely not the case today. Today there is a cement diving wall between Jewish Jerusalem and Arab Bethlehem.

Six years ago some of us visited Jerusalem and then went to Bethlehem on the other side of that wall. We met with Arab Christians who run the Bethlehem Bible College. The wall was designed to keep *them* out of Jerusalem. But according to Jesus, they *are* Jerusalem. You keep them out, and you keep Him out.



You may say, “Well, Israel’s not racist. There are Arabs in Israel.” Yes, but the law is designed to keep Israel a Jewish state. If you’re a Jew, you can immigrate, and what’s a Jew? The law of return stipulates that a Jew is someone with Jewish ancestry (that’s race), or a convert (that’s religion). But if you’re Jewish by race and you confess Christ the King of the Jews, according to the ruling of the court in 1989, you can’t enter. They don’t want Jesus in Jerusalem.

And you may say, “Well, what should the government of Israel do?” I don’t know. So you say, “Well, what’s the political solution?” Listen closely: There is no political solution. The only solution is on the other side of the wall in Bethlehem.

You may remember that Jesus wept over Jerusalem saying, “Would that you knew the things that made for peace, but now they are hidden from your eyes.” And He told them, “You will not see me again until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

This is Bashir, the Arab Christian professor who hosted us:



All they have to do is say, “Blessed are you, Bashir, who comes in the name of the Lord.” You see, the Messiah is born in Bethlehem on the other side of the wall. You will find Him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a food trough.

And maybe you say, "But God gave the land to Israel!" Yes! But who is Israel? Who are the children of Abraham? Who are the Jews? What is Jerusalem? Who is the temple? What is the sanctuary? Is the dividing wall of hostility torn down? Are there two people, or has God made one? Read St. Paul and all the New Testament, and you'll find a very clear and surprising answer.

I'm not convinced that five million Israelis are the most racist group around...not at all. Many of them are fighting for justice for Palestinians. And many don't claim any ethnic or religious superiority. They're just trying to survive in a sea of hostile, Arab neighbors. It's not those five million Israelis....

Thomas Williamson is a Baptist pastor who wrote the following:

What would you think of a religious sect that taught that there is one race that is by nature superior, and another race that is by nature inferior? And suppose that this sect taught that the superior race has a divine right to dispossess members of the inferior race and take their properties without compensation, and to ethnically cleanse those who resist this expropriation, using violence if necessary? And suppose that this sect believed so strongly in the system of racism and ethnic cleansing that it was willing to plunge the world into a war in order to fulfill its objectives. And suppose that this sect claimed 70,000,000 adherents in the world's most powerful nation, and had a stranglehold on the foreign policy of that nation, so that the military and financial might of that nation was directed toward the goal of helping the superior race and suppressing the inferior race?

He's not talking about Jews, Muslims, or Nazis. He's talking about American Evangelical Christians and, in specific, Christian Zionists, who base their beliefs on a particular brand of very bad End Times theology. They love to quote Genesis 12, where God said to Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you." They say it applies to Abraham's seed. So if you bless Israel, you get stuff. If you oppose Israel, you don't. Because Israel is Abraham's seed.

Yet Paul makes it clear: Abraham's seed is Christ. Israel is not your judgment; Christ is your judgment. And we seem to always find a way to put Him on the other side of the wall. Maybe that's our judgment. And not only that, God said that He "blessed Abraham and his seed that he might be a blessing to all the nations, all the peoples of the earth"—even Arabs, especially Arabs. You know, Isaac and Ishmael were brothers and both sons of Abraham. Isaac, it's your brother on the other side of the wall! It's your family, and that's the blessing: your brother and your Father's heart, Jesus from the bosom of the Father. Whatever you do to the least of these His brothers, you do it to Him.

People say theology doesn't matter. I would suggest to you that bad theology may be responsible for 9-11, several wars, and the death of millions.

People say that theology doesn't matter.
And it is literally the only thing that matters.

Theo logos means, "God Word." The Word of God is Jesus. So you don't have to be a scholar to have good theology. But maybe you have to be a scholar to explain Jesus away, to explain how "love your enemies" doesn't mean "love your enemies."

Well, in 2005, having preached through The Revelation and preaching through Matthew, I preached several sermons on this topic. And let me tell you, I had never experienced such hostility. But now I know I had only begun to taste the hostility. One day around that time, I met with the pastor of a nearby mega-church for lunch. I remember he showed me a passage in Romans 11:26. Paul writes, “And in this way all Israel will be saved.” George said, “Look, Peter, in this passage Paul isn’t just talking about the Church, He’s talking about old, ethnic Israel that had made themselves enemies of God—‘and Israel will be saved...’” And the more I looked at it, the more I realized he was right. In fact, Ezekiel prophecies the very same thing in Ezekiel 37, that the dry bones will rise from the grave and enter the land.

Romans 11:26: “All Israel will be saved.”

My pastor friend thought that meant they were a different breed from the rest of humanity. But I kept reading. Six verses later, Romans 11:32: “For God has consigned all to disobedience that He may have mercy on all.” On *all...on all*.

Well, it was when I began to preach that (mercy on all), that I encountered hostility. Not from Nazis, Muslims, Jews, or even Christian Zionists. But from my own tribe: Evangelical Presbyterians—Calvinists. You see, staunch Calvinists believe that people are saved entirely by grace. But they also believe that some people can never be saved.

Which means Jesus died for *some* and not for others.

Which means *some* are “vessels of mercy” and others are “vessels of wrath.”

Which is to say, there really are two races of people in this world:

One created for endless bliss, and the other created for endless, conscious torment.

And, you see, the way you view people changes the way you treat people.

- If I think someone has the curse of Cain, it’s easier to make them my slave.
- If I think someone is an inferior species, it’s easier to exterminate them.
- If I think God has chosen my race over another’s, it’s easier to justify injustice.
- If I think I’m chosen and another is not chosen, it’s easier to justify my stuff in a world of poverty.
- If I think I’m a vessel of mercy and another a vessel of wrath, I don’t have to love them.

But if the other is the beloved child of the same Father, everything changes.

You know, it’s in Romans that Paul talks about “vessels of mercy” and “vessels of wrath,” but then he writes, “God consigned all to disobedience that He may have mercy on all.” And in Ephesians he tells us we “were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.” We all have a vessel of wrath. Then he writes, “He has broken down the dividing wall of hostility [walls of flesh] in himself making one new man in place of two.”

One man, one body, the Church.

The Church is that group of people who already believe Christ has united them in one body under one head. But in Ephesians 1:10, Paul told us that the plan for the fullness of time was to not only unite us but all things in Christ Jesus. And, you see, if in the eternal realm all things really are united in Christ Jesus, then ultimately in the final analysis—the final judgment—there really are no dividing walls of hostility. And I think they call that realm—that kingdom—Heaven.

And yet here in space and time, in an effort to maintain control, I erect dividing walls of hostility...in fear. I think those walls protect me. But maybe those walls enslave me. I think I'm building Heaven on earth, and I'm only enslaving myself in Hell. Maybe there's a Holocaust far worse than any in Germany or Israel, and maybe it's committed by people like us, and the victims are us. "For the measure you give is the measure you get." So if we give walls, we get walls. And if we give Hell, we get Hell. But we've talked about all of that before...and you may be stuck on some practicalities.

I think I know what you've been thinking. "Peter, that's nice theology, but just try going to the Middle East and living without dividing walls of hostility. Gosh, just walk down Colfax or meet my in-laws! If you live without dividing walls of hostility, you'll get the crap kicked out of you! You'll get yourself crucified!"

Exactly.

Maybe that's why He said, "If you want to be my disciple, pick up a cross." It's like the cross is a doorway to Heaven. And "the only place safe from the danger of love is Hell" (C. S. Lewis).

You know, I think Jesus was the first man (*Adam*) to walk through this world without dividing walls of hostility. And that's why this world was so hostile toward Him. And yet that's how He broke down the dividing wall and killed the hostility.

Now, you may be wondering one more thing: "Hey, Peter, didn't God command the Jews to build those dividing walls? The curtain in the temple? The walls around the sanctuary? The city of Jerusalem? Why did He have them build dividing walls of hostility? Just to watch Him tear them down?"

Maybe so.

"For God consigned all to disobedience that He may have mercy on all." And when we receive mercy, we become merciful. When we receive grace, we become graceful. And God is grace. Hostility upon hostility is grace. And that's the final judgment: burning, hot grace.

In 1960, a pastor in East Germany wrote a play called *The Sign of Jonah*. The last scene depicted the final judgment. All the peoples of the earth were assembled on the plain of Jehoshaphat awaiting God's judgment. It's Armageddon, and they're not waiting submissively. They're hostile, gathered in small groups, talking indignantly, disapproving of God's job performance.

One group is a band of Jews, a group that has known profound suffering at the hands of Christians, Nazis, and Arabs. They demand to know what right God has to pass judgment on them. Another group consists of American blacks. They too are hostile. They have suffered humiliations, floggings, and servitude, and so judge God to be a poor judge. Another group is composed of those born illegitimately, of questionable birth, having suffered insults and derision.

Hundreds of angry and hostile groups like this are scattered over the plain...Jews hostile toward Gentiles, Gentiles hostile toward Jews...hostile toward each other and all hostile toward God. Each group appoints a representative to demand justice from God. They meet in council and make a decision. They judge that God is unfit to judge...unless He knows their pain. The conclusion reads as follows:

You must be born a Jew; the circumstances of your birth must be questioned; you must be misunderstood by everyone, insulted and mocked by your

enemies, betrayed by your friends; you must be persecuted, beaten, and finally murdered in a most public and humiliating fashion.

Such is the judgment passed on God by the assembly. The clamor rises to fever pitch as they await His response. Then a brilliant, dazzling light illuminates the entire plain. One by one those who have passed judgment on God fall silent. For emblazoned high in the heavens for the whole world to see is the signature of Jesus Christ with this inscription above it: I have served my sentence.

That's the final judgment. That's how He kills the hostility and calls us into ecstasy. That's how God makes us in His image.

Communion

This is the final judgment. This is how He kills the hostility and calls us into His ecstasy. This is communion. On that night when the hostility of all humanity turned against Him, He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body which is for you. Take and eat." And in the same way after supper, having given thanks, He took the cup saying, "This is the New Covenant in my blood. Take and drink."

This is how He kills the hostility and makes us in His image as His body, His bride, His city, His temple, His sanctuary.

When we started The Sanctuary, I received this prophetic word on several occasions. It's basically Zechariah 2:4: "Jerusalem, my church, will be a city without walls. I will be to her a wall of fire all around. And I will be the glory in her midst."

We'll talk about that next time when we finish this sermon, but, Church, you are not protected by dividing walls of stone. You are protected by fire. This is the fire. The life of Christ, the love of God given to you, is fire. Come to His table. Both cups are fire. Tear off a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, and place the glory in the temple.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, give us the courage in the power of your Spirit to believe the truth and live the truth, no matter what it costs us, knowing that you are the King of kings and Lord of lords. All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to you. It's in your name that we pray, amen.

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