SANCTUARY, SABBATH, SHALOM

First Presbyterian Church of Bakersfield
2026 Sept-Nov Sermon Series Study Guide

Ephesians 2:11-22 (NIV)

Jew and Gentile Reconciled Through Christ

11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)— 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 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 access to the Father by one Spirit.

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Shalom: Peace with One Another

OPEN

- Without mentioning specifics, is there someone (or a group of someones) you dislike? If so, explain why you find it difficult to appreciate them.
- Background: Deep animosity between Jews and Gentiles during New Testament times stemmed from profound religious, cultural, and political divides. Jews strictly adhered to monotheism and the Mosaic Law—viewing practices like circumcision and dietary restrictions as essential to their identity as God's chosen people—while viewing Gentiles as idolatrous, unclean pagans. Conversely, Gentiles (especially under Roman rule) often resented Jewish claims of religious exclusivity and viewed their refusal to assimilate into Greco-Roman culture and civic worship as arrogant, subversive, and antisocial.
- Read Ephesians 2:11-22.

STUDY

- From verses 11-13, describe how the Gentiles were viewed by the Jews, by early Christians, and now by God.
- What has made the difference, according to verses 13-18?
- From verses 19-22, describe what this "new humanity" and new "household" looks like.
- The word peace in verse 14 is used as an equivalent to **shalom.** As we can recall from last week, shalom describes a state where everything is in its proper place, functioning as designed, and where nothing is missing or broken. It encompasses safety, health, prosperity, inner tranquility, and harmony within families, communities, and nations. How have Jesus' actions in these verses created peace/shalom in the world?
- Why do you think we still don't see that perfect shalom in our world now?
- Have you seen Jesus bring peace to you and your relationships? If so, explain.
- Where are you still hoping to see Christ's shalom ushered into your life and your corner of the world?

PRAY

- Lift those hopes up to God now.