

*Sermon: He Is Our Peace; Delivered by: Dr. K. Edward Copeland, lead pastor, New Zion Baptist Church, Rockford, Illinois; Date: August 19 2018*

***Bible text explored: Ephesians 2:11-22***

<sup>11</sup>Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>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, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. <sup>17</sup>And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup>For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. [ESV]

***Review and application:***

1. The first word of this paragraph draws a conclusion growing out of mankind’s universal situation as depicted in Paul’s preceding paragraph (*Ephesians 2:1-3*). What were we all by nature?  
*But Pastor Copeland noted how prone humans are (China, Berlin, Israel, our border with Mexico, etc.) to erect walls to separate ourselves from others.*
2. What words (*vv. 11-12*) does Paul use to remind his Gentile converts about their former exclusion from God’s covenant with Israel?  
What (*v. 13*) changed that status?  
What words does Paul use (*v. 19*) to describe who they are now?
3. How (*vv. 14-18*) did Jesus establish, proclaim, and embody “our peace”?  
Pastor Copeland pointed out that the word *peace* goes well beyond negative absence of tension. What positive features characterize *peace* when understood biblically?
4. Three “So then” implications (*vv. 19-22*) of having become one body in Christ are spelled out:
  - a.) What does being one nation tell us about the solidarity we should feel with all Jesus followers?
  - b.) What does being part of a single family tell us about hospitality, loyalty, and interdependence?
  - c.) What does being carefully fit as a “living brick” into a structure of which God is the architect tell us about ignoring gaps between bricks?