

E. Notice all three Persons of the Trinity in v.18. This is how we come to Christ in prayer and enjoy fellowship with Him. Through Christ, we have access to the Father by the Spirit.⁸

F. God Himself has broken down the middle wall of separation.

1. Illustration: The Berlin Wall. Nov 9, 1989

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqySsC7ihSI>

2. Taking down the Berlin Wall important symbolically. It had been standing for almost 30 years. Moreover, it represented the fall of communist ideology which had divided Europe, and much of the world, for over 70 years, since the end of WWI.

3. But Christ did so much more. The barrier between Jew and Gentile was real, not merely symbolic. And worse than that was the barrier between humanity and God.

4. The Berlin Wall separated Germans from Germans. When they took it down, they were all still Germans and, let's face it, the world still had its issues and we are still dealing with them today.

5. The cross unites people worldwide, across ethnic and geographical boundaries and across the ages. The result is a "new man" (2:15), a new people – the church. Any barrier we can imagine or create – between one another and between people and God – is removed thanks to the cross.

III. We are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. 2:19-22

A. 2:19 **No longer strangers and foreigners**

1. **But fellow citizens with the saints**

Illustration: Being a foreigner in Holland: Speaking the language, doing my best to fit in, but always feeling like an outsider. Non-citizens can't live there forever, at least not legally, so we needed a visa. In Poland we needed that visa to stay, since we were American-born.

Php 3:20 NKJV For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. **And members of the household of God** It may be possible for a country to forget its citizens, but we are more than that to God; we are members of his household. We are His servants, His people, His children. He always remembers who we are and what we do

B. As the church we no longer have a temple. We are the temple.

C. 2:22 Notice all three Persons of the Trinity.

Applications:

Access to God gives us freedom in prayer. In the temple in Jerusalem was a huge veil or curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies or “the Holiest Place of All”, where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. This veil was a constant reminder that no one could go directly into the God. Only the High Priest went in and he was only allowed in once a year, on the Day of Atonement, and he had to bring the blood of the sacrifice with him on that day.

In the Gospels we see that on the day Christ was crucified, “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” The barrier was gone. If people wanted to come before God, they could do so on the merits of Christ’s blood. We have been brought near by the blood of Christ, both Jew and Gentile.

In those days, Gentiles were only allowed into the outer court of the Temple. There was a sign posted on it which read: *‘No foreigner shall enter [inside the railing] of the Temple, or within the precinct, and whoever is caught doing this will be responsible for his death that will follow as a consequence.’*

[See the sign here.](#)

The cross is the great equalizer. Christ has destroyed the barriers people build between themselves. Because these walls have been removed, we can have real unity with people who are not like us. This is true reconciliation. Because of Christ’s death, we are all one (2:14); our hostility against each other has been put to death (2:16); we can all have access to the Father by the Holy Spirit (2:18); we are no longer foreigners or aliens to God (2:19); and we are all being built into a holy temple with Christ as our chief cornerstone (2:20-21). (Handbook of Bible Application)

Pride distorts our view of ourselves and others. Jews and Gentiles alike could be guilty of spiritual pride—Jews for thinking their faith and traditions elevated them above everyone else, Gentiles for trusting in their achievements, power, or position. Spiritual pride blinds us to our own faults and magnifies the faults of others. Be should never become proud of our salvation. Instead, we should always humbly thank God for it, and encourage others who might be struggling in their faith.

Our relationships with others are made possible through Jesus. There are many barriers that can divide us from other Christians: Age – generational differences, appearance, education, political persuasion, economic status, race or other ethnic tensions, theological views. One of the best ways to stifle Christ’s love is to be friendly with only those people that we like. One of the best ways to cultivate Christ’s love in our midst is to intentionally reach out to those who are very unlike us. Christ has removed the barriers and has unified all believers in one family. The cross unites us. The Holy Spirit helps us look beyond the barriers to the unity we are called to enjoy. It’s now up to us to bring about that unity in practice and do all that we can to maintain it.

Closing Passages:

Ephesians 4:1-3 NKJV ¹*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Hebrews 10:19-22 NKJV ¹⁹*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹and having a High Priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*