

Ephesians Series: What is Your Life Mission? #14 "Where do You Belong?"

Message Notes, February 19, 2023

Many people are seeking for a place where they belong are really feel accepted. An Amazon search of "place to belong" revealed countless books written to speak to and for those who feel that they don't belong.

Ephesians 2:19-22 (NIV)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.

◆ Starting Point

- Last week we learned about *reconciliation*, the experience of God's forgiving grace that enables us to forgive the wrongs done by others. This week we will go one step further and learn about the **purpose** of reconciliation.
- According to the Bible, God comes to us where we are, becomes our *friend*, and even makes us a member of *His family*→¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household."
- Being given a position as "members of God's family" is something to be grateful for, but beyond that, God has prepared meaningful contributions for each of us to make. That is exactly where each one of us belongs. Today, we will learn about this truth.

◆ Sacred Temple (Countrymen, Family of God)

Each believer is used as one of the stones (rocks) of various sizes to build up the Temple of God (and to find the place where they belong).

- **"I" am included as a part of God's grand plan, which is being carried out according to His elaborate blueprint.**

Foundation: ①The *apostles*: eyewitnesses to the "crucifixion and resurrection," the salvation of mankind that had been prophesied from the beginning of history.

②*Prophets*: not the prophets of the OT era, but teachers who were given the gift of speaking words revealed by God. In the Bible, it is used synonymously with teachers who expound upon the words of the Bible.

➤ We, too. Live on the foundation of always acting according to God's will.

Keystone (Cornerstone): Christ, the stone (rock) that holds the various stones together, the bond that connects all people.

- **We become a part of God's Temple**

The *Holy Temple*: people may have had in mind the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus or the Parthenon in Athens. Paul may have also had the image of the Temple in Jerusalem in his mind, but the word used is *naos*, which indicates the sanctuary, not the entire temple. This is an important place to meet with God, and it is not used for the outer wall or the outer portion of the temple.

➤ Each stone is precisely put together and built up to make the Temple. This is where God has prepared the contribution each one of us is to make.

◆ How do They Fit Together? (How can I Contribute within the Family of God?)

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.

1. Guided by God: in Christ the Lord

- The words “in him (Christ) appear at the beginning of both v. 21 and v. 22...how deep of a relationship do you have with Christ, the *keystone*? Do you take time in your day to quietly listen to the voice of God?
- As we learned last week, it is important to experience the grace of Christ’s forgiveness on a daily basis. We then experience time with Jesus, who is full of wisdom, love, power, and peace. The Lord is always with us.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Isaiah 44:8 Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.”

- ✧ How encouraging it would be to receive these words as God speaking to you in difficult times!

2. Drawing on All of Our Previous Life Experiences: “Joined Together”

- The words “joined together” *synarmologeō* means to fit together perfectly. It is a construction term used to describe the elaborate process of combining stones, including the preparation of the foundation surface, cutting, shaving, matching, and securing the stones with lead nails for clamps.
- When Solomon built the Temple, there was no sound of work being done onsite at all, because all the materials were prepared to the planned size in advance at another location.
1 Kings 6:7 In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built.
- Here is the spiritual meaning: God prepares stones of different shapes and sizes according to His blueprint. His plan was underway even before we met God. :7He uses our talents and experiences, as well as our failures, to bring us up to where we are today, and God’s custom-made training for me will continue.
- The experience of the pain that comes with being hewn down at times was necessary to foster in you the shape (personality and skills) that God required of you to build up His Temple (church).
- When you were cut out and brought in, did you find your place of belonging? The church is the place where those who have been cut out and brought in are joined together or assembled.

3. In the Exquisite Hands of God: “Built Together”

- The word “built up together” *synoikodomeō* is used in architecture and of the human body to convey the idea of being built up together with other parts or people. In the passive present tense, it indicates that the process is still ongoing.
- The previous word (2) is what we have experienced as individuals, whereas this word represents the process of being prepared together with those with whom we have been matched. This is the process of friendly competition together in the church.
Proverbs 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.
- Of course, God is behind this building together, and He prepares encounters with people. At the same time, we study one another “in Christ” (following Christ’s leading). God will let me meet the people I need to meet.
1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

◆ Conclusion

- Are you receiving Christ’s love daily? To what extent do you meditate on God’s wisdom and power throughout your day?
- What is the most important lesson you have learned in the hewing away of your life’s experiences?
- Is there someone God has placed close to you so that you can grow together with them now?
- Where is your place of belonging? What do you think you can contribute?