

# THE FIRST 15

Friday, October 11, 2024

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Today is Friday, October 11, and as we continue to explore the reality of Christ as our cornerstone and firm foundation, I want to explore five pillars of life with Christ this week: Trust, Growth, Refuge, Alignment, and Unity. Today, we will talk about Unity.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Lord Jesus, thank You for being the cornerstone of peace and unity. As I reflect on Your work in bringing us together as one body, help me to appreciate the power of Your sacrifice that unites us with You and with one another. Open my heart to receive Your truth and to walk in the unity You provide through the cross. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***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)— 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. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.***

***For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility Ephesians 2***

## REFLECTION

It can be, at times, hard to situate ourselves in the stories of the Bible. We aren't from that time nor live in that culture. In that regard, it may be hard to understand why this text is so pivotal and meaningful to us in our culture that lives amid a great deal of sociopolitical unrest.

The relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the time when Paul was writing the letter to the Ephesians was complex and often marked by deep divisions, misunderstandings, and even hostility. These divisions were religious, cultural, and social in nature. That's what makes Paul's message of the reality of unity as the way of those who follow Christ so pivotal.

Paul emphasizes the radical transformation brought about by Christ's death and resurrection. The division between Jews and Gentiles, symbolized by the "dividing wall of hostility," is a reference to both the physical barrier in the Jerusalem temple that separated the Gentiles from the inner courts and the spiritual separation that existed between the two groups. Paul reminds the Gentile believers of their former exclusion from God's promises, but now, through Christ, they have been brought near.

The metaphor of Christ as the cornerstone is significant in this context. In ancient architecture, the cornerstone was the most important stone, ensuring the stability and unity of the structure. Likewise, Christ unites the divided factions—Jews and Gentiles—into one spiritual house, holding everything together through His sacrifice. In Christ, we no longer have to live in division; we are brought together as one family, reconciled and at peace through His blood.

That's good news for all! The death, and, most especially, the resurrection of Christ not only reconciled us to God but also broke down the divisions between people. Jesus, as the cornerstone, unites people from every background and nation, breaking down barriers and creating a new, united humanity. Christ is not only the foundation of this new community but also the agent of peace, reconciling us to God and to one another.

No matter our gender or races, creed or tongue, present victories or past failures, those in Christ are united in Christ. He is our cornerstone, giving us a common foundation on which we can build our relationships with one another. Through Him, we find peace, and we are called to live as one, reflecting that unity in the church and in the world. This unity is not simply an ideal—it is made possible by Christ's work on the cross, and we are invited to walk in it daily.

**Ask:** In our current climate, it is easy to re-erect the barriers that might be easy to divide us. Where can I allow the gift of unity in Christ to break down barriers between myself and others? How can I experience the freedom of courageous unity in Christ?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Lord, thank You for breaking down the barriers that once separated us. You have united us through Your blood and made us one in Your body. Help me to live out this unity in my relationships with others. May Your peace be evident in how I interact with those around me, and may I always remember that You are the cornerstone that holds us all together. Amen.*