**Unity in Christ (Ephesian 2:11-22)**

 There is no longer any enmity between us believers that can keep us from God – because we are one in Christ. Greetings to you dear brothers and sisters, as we complete today our third sermon from our Thanksgiving sermon series. We are grateful to God because he has united us both to himself and to each other through Christ. Of course, unity is something that needs to be defined here: what kind of unity are we talking about? Which is the most important kind of unity in our lives? Thus, our purpose today is going to be to clarify that the unity we have in our Lord is a major reason for us to be thankful. I say again, there is no longer any enmity between us believers that can keep us from God – because we are all one in Christ. Let’s move forwards with a more detailed examination of our topic…

 We are thankful to God because he has given us unity through Christ. It is important to understand the background of the passage read. Paul the Apostle is speaking as a Christian having come out of Judaism, all the while addressing Christians who have come to Christ from outside of Judaism. He says that at one time, “you were heathens in the flesh”, in other words uncircumcised, without Christ, without being part of Israel who were the only people of God. But now, through Christ, all non-Jews are brought near to God. Christians that have come out from both Judaism and the Gentile world have all become one in Christ. Why? The reason is that he, Jesus himself, is our peace, says the Apostle. He demolished the wall of Laws through his crucifixion, and this he did purposely so that we would all be new people, reconciled with God, functioning together as one body, and living in (God’s) peace. There is no longer any enmity between Jew and Gentile, because those differences were taken away through Christ. All believers in him have access to approach God, and they can do so through one and the same Holy Spirit. Now, because of Christ, each believer is a co-citizen with the people of God, and he or she is considered family. The foundation of that family are the Apostles and the prophets of the church, whose head is Christ himself. Through Christ, then, every person grows in unity with others in church, so that God would live within and among us, through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

 There was once a general who heard that two of his captains were not on good terms with each other. He sent a boat to one of them, and after bringing the two together in one place, he said, “Look, there is the enemy.” Those words were enough for the two. All disagreements were forgotten, and victory was gained.

 Perhaps today we are not dealing with the issue of Christians coming out of Jewish or Gentile backgrounds freshly – but the same principle still applies to us. For example, we are all people who have been given different personalities and abilities. We may be completely different people. But, praise God, through Christ, we are all one through our one faith.

 Today we find ourselves facing many challenges. Many of these have one and the same enemy: the devil himself. If all of us find ourselves before the same enemy, is it not wise to stand against him united and to defend our faith and Christ-centered lifestyle? Whether man or woman, rich or poor, schooled or unschooled, we are all united through our faith in Christ. However, the Lord encourages us to recognize that unity in him which goes beyond any personal differences between ourselves and invites us to highlight Christ in our lives more than our differences with each other, and to treat the rest as secondary.

 My prayer is that our focus be on reflecting Christ’s unity which he won for us (through the Cross and the Empty Tomb), and through that unity, grow in our relationships both with God through the Spirit, and with each other through the same Spirit. Once again, we are thankful to God because he has given us unity through Christ. Let’s honor the Lord through our unity in the Holy Spirit and our hearts. The Lord Bless You All. Amen.