

July 18, 2021

Ephesians 2: 11-22

Children's message: I will just start off by saying that you got the fun sermon this week. This morning's reading is about being on the inside or the outside. Either you are in the cool group or on the outside wanting to be in the cool group. Paul tells us that it does not matter if you are a Jew or Gentile. As Christians we are all in the cool group. With Christianity everyone is welcome. So there are no people on the outside or uncool group. All are welcome. Jesus is the reason everyone is welcome.

I do not know if this happens to you when you read scripture, but my mind wanders to episodes of the Simpsons. This passage of scripture took me to the Simpsons episode of the Stonecutters. The one where Lenny and Carl belong to that mysterious and exclusive group. They are on the inside. Homer thinks they are cool and wants to be a member. Only because he isn't one. Homer sees Lenny and Carl's perks and benefits. They have special chairs and parking spots at work, they have special rings, they get free treats from the vending machine. They also know the real emergency number which is 912. Homer so wants to join this group to partake in the benefits and perks. He even follows Lenny and Carl to a secret meeting.

In the end Homer is admitted to the Stonecutters because Grandpa is one. Homer gets initiated and things start to fall apart for the Stonecutters. Not Homer as we might think. Homer ruins the sacred

parchment and is discovered to be the Chosen One. At this point Homer's life starts to have no meaning. The Stonecutters was a far more fascinating and mysterious group when he was on the outside and not a member.

Paul tells us that as Christians we are all in the cool group as children of God. We are all equal regardless if we are Jews or Gentiles. Not at the time we joined, like the Stonecutters. The blood of Jesus is what saves us and makes us inheritors of the Heavenly Kingdom. Mind you we do have an initiation into this Spiritual family and we call it baptism. That is our big requirement and it is open to all who want it. We are not exclusive as the Stonecutters were. There is no one on the outside unless they wish to be.

Who keeps Atlantis off the maps, who keeps the Martians under wraps, we do, we do.

Adult's message: I have read this passage a number of times this week and pondered its contents even more. This is what has bubbled up in my fertile mind. I am thinking and seeing Trinity in this passage. It is about three and not, but more. Starting to sound like Christian triple talk.

Paul talks about two distinct types of Christian that are in Ephesus at this time. The Jewish and Gentile Christians are coming together to one group. They are united with Christ as their common source. Two groups coming together with Christ as their head. Three entities that form one group. The Trinity is understood in a similar way. With God the Father as the source, and the Son is begotten from the Father and

the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. I can only imagine that the Holy Spirit has inspired Paul to write in such a manner. The concept of Trinity is not a Hebrew idea.

Paul wanted the Ephesian church to come together through their shared bonds in Christ Jesus. These are the same shared bonds that hold our Christian communities together today. It is unity in diversity. We do not all need to be the same. As long as Jesus is our common bond. Our God is a dynamic God and not a static or unchanging one. So our communities are to reflect this aspect of God. They are to have the same dynamic energy here on earth. Just like God who is not still or reposing, but is unchanging perfection. We are meant to be dynamic, vibrant, alive, active and inspiring. Our church communities are meant to have the same Trinitarian essence. If we are rooted in Christ with Him as our common bond then these attributes will naturally develop and follow. You and I can do all of this by supporting one another, encouraging one another and praying for one another.

As a Christian community in 2021, we have really evolved past the Jewish and Gentile Christian reality. The thing we still have in common is that Jesus Christ is our common bond. That is a strong testimony to the Holy Spirits work amongst us and in the church. Our Lutheran church is alive, vibrant, dynamic and strong because of that. Our group is so diverse, but Jesus Christ is the bond that unites us. Support this and encourage it as much as you can. It makes us richer because of the diversity. It also reflects the essence of the Trinity. Look around, we are all made in the image of the Trinity. Celebrate these amazing things in our church and our communities.

God Bless you all and stay frosty, Pastor D