

No more strangers ... but fellow citizens (ii)

(Quality: Very good)

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[0 : 00] if the Lord may be pleased to help us we will turn again to this morning's text you will find it in the second chapter of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians and the 19th verse now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God the apostle was speaking as we noted this morning to the Ephesian church and speaking to those who at one time were foreign to the truth of God strangers altogether to the work of God's grace and certainly there was no evidence of them being fellow citizens with the saints and the household of God but the work of grace is to make a definite change to bring in a new life to be as the word has said to be born again and quickened into spiritual life which is indeed another life altogether than the life of nature we all of us are acquainted with natural life whilst we live but the church of God must have in them and be acquainted with a new life which is in Christ Jesus and that life he gave he gave he gave himself he gave himself nothing less than himself that's to be the life of God in the soul and as we look at these points friends how we see the truth of our text there's no there can be no more strangers and foreigners and they must know and will know that the Lord has changed their hearts and given them a living desire but what we want to notice tonight particularly is this of this people being Gentiles yes nationally

Gentiles they were not under the covenant of grace they were not they were under the covenant of grace which you say but not under the covenant of works that was given to the Jewish race they were a people not known to others nationally but there was this to be made known that the Lord God had a people for himself not only amongst the Jewish race but also the Gentile race and they would be given such a knowledge and such an understanding that would be even above a much more than a national notion of God for the Jews knew God that is as a nation they knew he had brought them out of Egypt they knew that he had performed wonderful things in their sight they knew that he had removed enemies national enemies and had done much for them because they were a chosen race and they knew that God had given them a holy law and a law of commandments but we have to remember this whilst they knew all that it was not salvation to them salvation could not come through the law the demands of God was because he was holy and they were the people who had chosen for himself as a nation and amongst them was his living family but it was a point with them that nation or national teaching did not point it out to them because that knowledge of God friends the true knowledge of God must be brought by the Holy

Spirit it's the gift of God in Christ and Christ alone must be the salvation of his people so that the Lord never promised salvation it was do and thou should live or do not and thou should die but the gospel of the grace of God is that precious gift of Christ that the old church of God must receive every one of them so that as this morning we looked into the point of the importance of knowing and having over in our mind and feelings what we were without grace and then to be brought to the want and concern have we that grace whereby we are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and the households of God strange it is to our mind that this great and important matter should have been hidden for many years and generations the prophets many of them had an intimation of this wonderful point when the

Gentile race should be brought to be with also joined to the Jewish race spiritually but how it would come about and when they were not acquainted with but the apostle Paul he was raised up to be a prophet and be a teacher and a leader and want to divulge the mystery of the Gentile race that they would be grafted in with the Jewish race they would be one family in Christ Jew and Gentile so that it must be explained to them explained by the gospel and the gospel would be so powerfully known and felt that it would be taught of the Holy Spirit and that's the only way we learn and that the knowledge would be so much as to convince the poor needy sinner that whether he be

Jew or Gentile whether he be of the Jewish nation or otherwise if he's under the grace of God if the gospel is for him that gospel will make a way for him and bring him to the knowledge true and saving knowledge of Christ the Jew friends he had many they had many blessings God had given them a country he had brought them through the wilderness into Canaan the fruit of the land he had promised them the overthrowing of their enemies and the overthrowing of enemies he performed on their behalf but the Gentile race their blessing consisted that it was all in Christ and that every gift that would be for the Gentile in salvation's work would be all that the Gentile was standing in need of chosen in Christ one family fellow citizens with the saints of the household of God

[9 : 00] I notice in reading the third chapter of Ephesians the 15th verse of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named in Christ yes Christ is our living head Christ is our eternal God Christ is all our salvation and thou one Jew and Gentile when they're under the power of his grace the Jew had the law for his natural and national concerns that the Jew saved in the Lord was brought to Christ by faith all the offerings that were offered before God though they were of those things of nature the fruit of the earth the beast of the field all providing a sacrifice nationally as a

Jew according to God's commandment yet the teaching was for the church of God and faith was given to the godly Jew to know that his offering had no power or efficacy in it but his salvation rested only upon Christ that should come now to embrace this friends and to understand it the Jew must be given a godly faith a faith to believe and looking forward to the coming of Christ now Christ has come and the Gentile race joined with as one family to the godly Jew he the Gentile looks back to see that Christ came and as him writer said my faith looks back to see the burden he did bear when hanging on the accursed tree and hopes our guilt was there it is true at the time that you had much to see and to embrace but he could not see clearly the way of salvation faith must be given him to believe that there was a way and the way would be yet open to him and so many of the

Jews friends as you know they embraced with pleasure that God would be their God and lead them out of Canaan and they promised to serve and obey the mediator Moses put forth for their instruction and to guide and to lead them they willingly said they would leave Egypt and follow Moses under the Lord's direction but at the same time friends what was this with them they fell in the wilderness thousands fell in unbelief we have a lesson here friends the Gentile has a more clear lesson friends for we have the gospel the pure gospel of the grace of God and we should know and will know if the spirit teaches us that our salvation is not of works but is alone in

Christ it's not any offering that we can bring no work that we can do but what Christ has done for us for Christ is the end of righteousness to all that believe and the Jew and the Gentile race can be made one in Christ through the operation of the spirit through the life death and merit of Christ and by all this work friends and all this saving knowledge they become as fellow citizens and the household of God they are one family yes the old family in heaven and earth is the family of God in heaven yes we believe there's a great deal if not perhaps a greater part of the family of God are in heaven and there's a remnant yet to come and if grace works in our heart we should be concerned to know whether we are of that remnant you know there are those going about in the world and they're peddling their religion round and they're inviting all and sundry to come to Christ and to serve him but friends this is to do with the family of God not the world the religious world have got their religion they've got their idol gods but

God's people for the fellow citizens with the saints the household of God the living family of God are his by choice by birth he has chosen them for himself in the covenant of grace he chose his people and he chose them out of all nations and they are known to him but he never gave the whole world the covenant of works the covenant that covered them whilst they walked through the wilderness the way which God would have them tread as a nation as a people but there's a family it's the living family of God and they're separated even from many in the religious world for there's many religion friends who know not these things savingly and are unconcerned about being of this family but they are family friends and our safety is this in knowing him who has already taken that family in part to heaven in every generation we read of one even at the beginning of the world in the early days when

[16 : 01] Abel brought an acceptable offering because he pleaded the blood of Christ by faith and his offering was accepted and so there has been friends this family of God since the world began those chosen vessels of mercy and so the nations go on and it's revealed from time to time by the revelation of the spirit here's one here's two here's another here's a band here is a people chosen of God the family of God united by not merely family ties as we know them but a living family whose God is in heaven and this God is their father an eternal one who has chosen them for himself and will not lose one of them he chose none for their nationality friends he chose none because of the color of their skin they could be black or they could be white they are what

God would have them be nationally and they will be his spiritually in respect of their nationality one family think of that holy family their holiness is in Christ the demand of God the father from them Christ has met he himself stood as the one eternal representative of that family and not only so he came as the life of that family he came with all the love of that family that they would be united by the love of God in Christ Jesus and that they would walk according to the dictate and power and leading of the Holy Spirit who takes the things of Christ and reveals them so this is spoken of in our text as the household of

God a living family they weren't always so knowingly and yet they were according to the sovereignty of God in his choice they were always his known to him but the time was come when he must reveal it to them the time was come when he must call them out of nature's darkness into light and when he was dropped his love into their hearts in such a way and manner with such power that they could embrace each other in the true holy family of God friends the family of God whose God is their father whose salvation is alone in the son of God in whom they inherit all things through Christ Christ their eternal inheritance Christ the one in whom they live and move and have a being

Christ the mediator one mediator between God and man the man Christ Jesus and we ever consider this friends in our nature in our flesh we cannot approach a holy God many are bold in religion they say they're going to pray many say they're going to do this in God's name they take on that freshly boldness but where grace is abound it humbles the poor sinner and he says to himself how can I approach a holy God and then he remembers the word of Christ and Christ said no man cometh unto the father but by me no man can claim a family relationship with God himself unless they come through

Christ to the father he makes the way possible the son was ever with the father the eternal son and is made manifest to the church of God by the gift of eternal life so that that is in our text what we were as strangers now comes so close when the spirit brings it as to inform us that if we are right in these things we have a saving knowledge of him and are no longer strangers or foreigners but fellow citizens and of the household of God now friends naturally we desire in fellowship with our natural families to be as near to one another as we can as circumstance permits so we like to live near one another to have the sociability more than that have the love and affection of one another here is a family friends loved of

[21 : 53] God brought together knit together as a household of faith wonderful thing friends when you consider the state and condition of the world and when you know something of your own heart and realize the depths of sin then you marvel that there can be such a knowledge and such a gift that's being brought together by the love of God in your soul love of God in Christ Jesus that's what seals it friends oh if he said to you now my love will be for you if you will love me but friends we have no love in ourselves born at enmity with God born as sinners before God how can we approach the living

God how can we call him father many of us gamble the prayer and say our father which art in heaven but they cannot tell you anything about the relationship and they know nothing of being born into the family all they know is that they have taken up religion and they address in their so called reverence the name of God their father that he's the God and father of the Lord Jesus Christ he was the eternal son the church of God on earth and even those in heaven are the adopted sons of God they are co-heirs with Christ but mind you he's the co-equal with his father and there's one love the love of the father in the son and the love of the son to the church the son himself brings all blessings down he clears the way friends because we could receive nothing from the father in our natural state in a spiritual way every man is blessed with the things of

God naturally the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof he supplies the earth he supplies every man there's not a man clever enough or with wisdom that he can make a blade of grass he must live upon the bounty of almighty God but there are those of this family in heaven and in earth what a mercy that is friends and when we read in heaven we are reminded that we shall always be on earth shall we know anything of that family relationship in heaven the wonderful union of being united eternally with the father and with the son shall we be able in that day friends to be able as it were to know nothing of earth friends earth finished all its troubles all its so called pleasures all gone a family in heaven a citizenship bound on earth and yet united in heaven this is what our text says but you who were strangers foreigners we said this morning didn't know the language didn't know your way in these things all strange teach you the things of

God he brought you now unto the saving knowledge he taught you by his good spirit he dropped his love in your hearts he united you as one family there can only be one family friends the families spoken of in the scripture they were of different nations and many of them had their different gods and their idols that they worship but this family one god overall one family relationship friends and as they are called from this time state so they join the family in heaven their spirits join these bodies know they can't take them with them what an endurance they are put this way they can never enter no no many think that they can fit themselves for heaven and they do it with their mind and they do it with their works but all their mind and all their works will finish at the grave the soul will be taken he will take the soul unto himself and in that soul would have been performed all that seals that heavenly relationship father god and his eternal sons and daughters one in

Christ Jesus fellow citizenship well the apostle reminds the Gentile races at this time for it's considered in the word of God all out of the Jewish nation were as it were Gentiles but the Lord himself chooses a people and he does not join with his choice of their nationality that he might bless them because of that no there's only one blessing and that's in Christ the father's blessing in salvation is in Christ Jesus the son of God that seals and settles all the family relationship it's a family that will never be dissolved friends our own natural friends and families how they dissolve in time they're those our forebears we never knew them and we're none the worse off for not knowing them they're gone from this time state but the church of

[28 : 57] God on earth is ever the same think of it if this world stands thousands of years yet we sometimes doubt in our own mind but we don't not we know not but if it was to stand thousands of years yet what I'm tracing out now will not be changed the family of God are chosen before the world was made he chose his people he brings them forth not withstanding what man says about birth control and such like all must be born into this world whom the Lord has appointed to be creatures on this earth and all must be born again whom he loves whom he has chosen in eternity God is God Lord over all blessed forever and as we read in that third chapter the whole family in heaven and earth is named what is their name their children of

God their God's living family God is their God God is their father Christ is their elder brother and in him the life of God alone is made known in himself yes he had a body like our own yet without sin his nature was the nature of a man without sin and no one had been able to join in that friends for all the sin the only union the only join in family relationship with Christ is according to the spirit's work and that new birth in Christ Jesus your nature and mine is our own according to God's gift our nationality where God has placed us but our salvation is ours in

Christ Christ alone and therefore the family is united it's an eternal family and there's love in it it's the love of God God is love what God does for this family does in love what he does for the world friends is because he's a great God of mercy and supplies the earth but what he does for the church he does in love who can measure who can know who can understand the love of God it's shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost the one who makes it known is the eternal spirit the one who makes it possible is the eternal son of God it's the love of God friends who can explain it who understands it for God is love if God is in your heart and mine friends it's in love it can't be for what we are friends you and I our whole life is died and stayed with sin our best is nothing worth and how can we enter the family of God in our nature that's why you have a concern if the

Lord is working with you if he's working in your heart you know there can be no union with the family of God unless it's in Christ and you seek to know to find whether the work of Christ is being made manifest to you your seeking after it is your only hope of salvation what Christ has done for you and as you journey on friends occasionally you might meet one here and one there and there is that union felt and you believe it is the operation of the love of God and if so be friends you'll find that that one and yourself will be enlightened by the same work and have a similar love and the same love towards one another the heavenly relationship friends is not broken but they've gone before and God has taken them to himself and he continually does this but poor sinners we are we fear death yes we fear death because we realise

God is at work in such a wild manner that it decides that doubting case we're either his or we are not and death was making known to us the parting of the body and the soul that's what death is friends yes closing our eyes to all the scenes of life the so-called enjoyment and pleasures and even pains sin closing our eyes to that but with our spiritual eyes he gives us to see the glory that awaits in us in Christ he's gone to heaven friends yes Jesus my lord to heaven is gone he whom I fix my hopes upon the narrow way I'll pursue yes says the one

[35 : 18] I'll pursue that narrow way if in so doing I view him and see him and know he's my forerunner well fellow citizens with the saints all this work friends is to make poor sinners the saints of God but again they're made that before they're born into this world how wonderful but when they come into this world we're brought with a living soul and the soul when dealt upon and in by the Holy Spirit takes up and fulfills the purpose of God from all eternity I know we are right in saying we are born again so we are but we are born with a saving knowledge that before ever we was born into this world he knew us and appointed us for salvation and for this fellowship and for this household union what do we know about it you know this morning we tried to emphasize what we were what we are rather no more strangers and foreigners and emphasize to what we were in that nature but there's a but in it here but now being born again being brought into the spiritual fellowship your citizens one with another you abide under the shadow of the almighty the lord of his government in your heart his love is shed abroad in the heart by the holy ghost you feed upon the gospel of his grace it's the household food it's the faith of god's elect which god himself makes manifest friends this is something more than a vain religion is our religion anything more than coming into the pulpit to speak or into the into the pew to hear or the observance of the lord's day which is right and it's it no more than say we mix with god's people we walk with them so you might up and down the road but to walk with them in faith it's god's own work friends and without a new birth you and i know nothing of it that's putting it very straight and very plain because i would not deceive anyone i don't want to be deceived and you don't want to be deceived and i certainly do not want to deceive anyone because it's a matter of eternity friends yes it's not just another life that some ways say we should live another life we should go into heaven and there we should have all the enjoyments of heaven and so forth it's eternal life i give unto my sheep eternal life and they should never perish it's being brought to that friends that will never perish we are living now in the perishing time there's not a thing that we handle but what we shall have to let it go it can't hold us and we cannot hold it no that which is eternal is God i give unto my sheep eternal

life well you say how do i know i'm a sheep well i'll tell you what the scripture says and christ said it he said my sheep hear my voice and they follow him have you ever had a word from the good shepherd have you been persuaded in your heart that he was a good shepherd that he laid down his life for you for the good shepherd laid down his life lays down his life for the sheep the highland doesn't oh no him that hires himself out in religion and and teaches you the things of the scripture he doesn't give his life no christ the good shepherd gave his life for the sheep and he calls them he calls he knows their name perhaps you have said you have received the word from god in such a way and manner it's come so personally to you as if he really called you by your name but you've heard his voice yet he says my sheep hear my voice and they follow me friends there is a way to follow him many ways it's in the scripture it's the word of god and when the word enters into your soul really enters it comes powerfully it's quick and powerful it's sharper than two edged sword it does the dividing friends does the dividing many who take up a natural religion they go over in their thoughts and feelings what they shall have to leave and what they will have to take up if they're going to be believers but no that's not it friends no that's being what we might call a nominal

Christian but a believer is the one that believes in what Christ has done and grace enables him to believe that it's for himself and therefore he comes to the father who calls him he comes to the son of God who has died to redeem him he finds that he's in union with the family of the living God the household of faith it's called household of faith faith God's gift having a people bringing under one roof as it were one covering almighty power and love cover them all and everyone and fellow citizens with the saints one law for them friends one special ruling Christ himself ruling in their hearts and giving them a hope of glory friends what do you want this in your heart for to be nominated a

Christian to be thought of well by your neighbor no you say I want to be right in the hour and article of death I want to know and to feel that all my religion is what God has given me and what has been taken from me the Lord himself did not want no what he gives his people is what he says I give unto my sheep eternal life they should never perish God himself then through his word and this was for the Gentile race yes as well as the Jew the Jew could claim nothing more than his nationality and if he claimed the law he could only claim it with his own disobedience and breaking it so what profit is there in these things the profit alone is being one in

Christ's rent and being one of this eternal citizenship where what of his law you say his law his law is in your heart his ruling is in your heart it's the holy principle of the work of Christ he teaches his people you learn his ways you love his ways you walk humbly in his fear you do that according to the spirit's leading which is right and pleasing in his side the Jew was never saved under the Levitical law the law of works they were a nation they got to be kept in order they got to be separated from other nations and God did it by his dealing with them and his holy law but that was not their salvation their salvation was in Christ the saved Jew his salvation is in

[44 : 40] Christ the saved Gentile his salvation is in Christ and it's his only hope of glory some have gone many have gone entered into the realm of bliss but the whole family in heaven and earth is named in Christ Christ they're not mere nominal Christians they belong to him the love of God the Father the love of the Son and the love of the Holy Spirit who rules and reigns in their heart is the only hope for time and for eternity remember ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God if so be friends he's taught you this and brought you to a saving knowledge and your hopes are built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness amen amen