

**Title:** Kingdom Family Access

**Text:** Ephesians 2:18

**Ephesians 2:16-18 NLT**

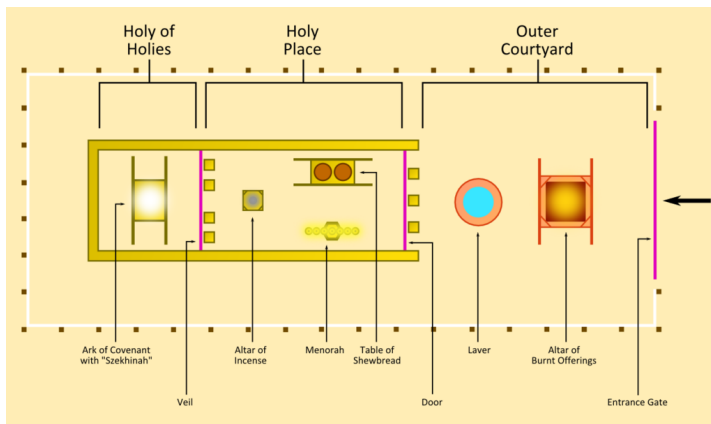
**16** Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. **17** He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. **18** Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

- **Recap and Intro**
- **God has created a new race. It is a family**
- **This is a Kingdom Father starting a brand new Kingdom family.**
- No one has earned a place in this family. Each one came in by the same grace.

And now, as children: **"Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us." (Ephesians 2:18 NLT)**

**We now all have family access.**

- All of us now have "access" to the Father, through the Holy Spirit, because of the work of Jesus.
- The phrase "come to" or "access" in some translations = greek word
- To "come to" (access) Prosagoy. Pros = to turn toward. Ago = to come.
- It means "to come toward". Specifically "to come toward **someone**."
- In ancient Greek, the word was almost exclusively used to speak of granting someone an audience with the the King.
- No doubt Paul had this in mind here, but Paul was a religious Jew before He met Jesus. Paul was an Old Testament Scholar, well versed in the old covenant of the law; well versed in the religious protocols of the Old Testament.
- For Paul this idea of access would've been much broader than just having an audience with the King. For Paul this was about having access to God. Even more, this was about having access to **intimacy** with God.
- **Here's what Paul knew:**
- Under the old covenant of the law, in the tabernacle, and then eventually in the temple in Jerusalem, God's presence dwelt in the ark of the covenant which was kept in the inner most part of the tabernacle or temple. And this inner most of part was called the "Holy of Holies" (or "Most Holy Place")
- There were three main parts to the set up.



- **THAT is the level of access that humanity had to a Holy God.**
- The name alone implies the the lack of access that we had.
- Holy means “other” or “set apart”, and the Holy of Holiest is the most other — the most set apart that you could get.
- Under the Old Covenant of the Law, there was NO ACCESS to the God is only - other and set apart, nd there was certainly no access to intimacy with this Holy God.
- **However**, the DESIRE of God was always for intimacy because this was His plan from the beginning. His plan was always intimate personal relationship with His creation.
- The plan was always unrestricted access to intimacy. This is what we see in the Garden of Eden before Adam and Eve sinned.
- But when humanity sinned the bond between us and God was broken, and we were separated from God because God is holy and cannot dwell in the presence of sin.
- Although we could not dwell in the presence of God any longer, God still desired to dwell in the presence of His people.
- The tabernacle
- The temple
- **God wanted to be in the midst of His people.**
- **It has always been God’s desire to dwell in the midst of His people, though His people could not dwell in the midst of God.**
- **Worship** was always the idea. To commune with God in intimate worshipful relationship was always the plan.
- But as sinful people, we had no access. And the Jews had no real access. They were confronted with this reality every time they came to make a sacrifice at the tabernacle, or even the temple. They could go into the outer courts, sure they could pray to God, but they couldn’t GO IN to the presence of God.
- And the one person who could go in (the high priest), did not have BOLD unrestricted access. He had terrified, very limited, access.

- For the high priest, the Holy of Holies was not about intimacy with God. It was about making atonement for His sins, and for the sins of the nation of Israel, and it was terrifying.
- And yes it **was** an act of worship. But his act of worship was consistent with all Old Testament acts of worship:
- **Worship in the Old Testament was primarily about two things: Reverence and Sacrifice.**
- **Reverence:** “Shachah”
- **Sacrifice:** The sacrifice and blood of animals. Something that would foreshadow what Jesus would do in the future.

ONLY AFTER offering an atoning sacrifice, could the High Priest, one time a year, on one day, have access to the presence of God, and when He did there was nothing intimate about it, and for the rest of us, there was not restricted access. There was ZERO access.

#### **Hebrews 9:7-8 NLT:**

7 But only the high priest ever entered the Most Holy Place, and only once a year. And he always offered blood for his own sins and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. 8 By these regulations the Holy Spirit revealed that the entrance to the Most Holy Place **was not freely open** as long as the Tabernacle and the system it represented were still in use.

The Holy of Holies, where the presence of God DWELT, was NOT FREELY OPEN. Access had not been granted.

#### **Hebrews 10:11-12,14 NLT**

11 Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar **day after day**, offering the same sacrifices **again and again, which can never take away sins**. 12 But our High Priest offered **himself** to God as a **single sacrifice** for sins, good **for all time**. Then he **sat down** in the place of honor at God's right hand. 14 For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy.

The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins. People's good deeds could never cleanse the conscience of mankind, but by this one sacrifice of Jesus, our guilty consciences have been cleansed, and our sins taken away forever.

#### **Hebrews 10:19-22 NLT**

19 Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, **we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus**. 20 By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the veil into the Most Holy Place. 21 And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, 22 **let us go right into the presence of God** with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

Access has been granted. The work is finished.

- **Worship in the OT was about sacrifice and reverence. God is Holy and Infinite, and there is no way for me to dwell in His presence.**
- **Worship in the New Testament is about intimacy.**
- There's still a sacrifice involved (praise)
- Bloodshed (Jesus)
- Yes, NT worship is not without sacrifice, but what worship is really about in the NT, is one thing: **Intimacy.**
- **What Jesus purchased on the cross was access to intimacy.**
- **John 4:23 NLT: "But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way."**
- **"Worship" = "Proskeneo" = "Pros" (to turn toward) "Keneo" (to kiss)**
- The idea was always intimacy.
- Jeremiah wrote about it when He prophesied of what the new covenant would be like.
- He prophesied that the Messiah would one day come and inaugurate a New Covenant, and it would be a covenant of relationship.

#### **4 Descriptors of Relationship Under the New Covenant (from Jeremiah 31)**

- 1. God would write His law on their hearts (Transformative Relationship) (vs. 33a)
- 2. God would be their God, and them His people (Covenantal Relationship) (vs. 33b)
- 3. God would permanent wiping away, and forgiveness their sins, removing their guilt and shame (Shameless Relationship) (vs. 34b)
- 4. Each person would know God (Intimate Relationship) (vs. 34a)
  - **Jeremiah 31:34 "And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, 'You should **know** the LORD.'** For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will **know** me already," says the LORD.
  - **"know" the Lord = "yahdaw" = intimacy**
- This is the new covenant that Jesus purchased with His blood. And this is what Paul is talking about when He says that **ALL OF US CAN NOW COME TO GOD.**
- **Access to Intimacy has been granted.**
- **Jesus came to give us direct, unhindered access to the Father as children in His family.**

- The veil that separated us from intimate, worshipful, relationship with God, had been torn down. Matthew makes sure to tell us HOW. From the TOP TO THE BOTTOM. Ie: BY GOD.
- This is what happens when you put your trust in Jesus. The barrier of sin is removed and access to intimacy is granted.
- Intimate worshipful relationship was always God's desire.
- **Here's the point I want to make with our remaining time:**
- **Worship was always the goal, but worship was always intended to be a communal thing.**
- **This is what Paul knew that we often miss because we don't live in a culture that values community with other people.**
- This wasn't about just one person having an audience with King.
- **That's not what this is.** This is access to the Father, as a child in a Family with other children.
- **THIS is a Kingdom Family Access**
- **Ephesians 2:18a NLT: "Now all of us can come to the Father".**
  - 1. God is not just Holy and Infinite. He is present and personal. He is just God. What Paul says here is that he is FATHER.
  - 2. **"Now ALL OF US".**
- Yes, the Father knows YOUR SPECIFIC name, and saw YOUR face, and is intimately acquainted with YOU.
- **BUT... we cannot escape the reality that Jesus didn't come just to save you, and you, and me. He came to save US.**
- **He came to save us, as one in Himself. And we are all brought into the same Jesus, together.**
- **Worship was always the end goal. But...**
- **Worship was designed, primarily, to be a communal experience.**
- Every time God called His people to worship Him in the OT, He called them as a CONGREGATION, and pretty much every time we see believers worshipping in the new testament, they are doing it TOGETHER.
- We were created IN community, not in solitude (it was NOT GOOD for Adam to be alone).
- We were designed to experience God best IN community. God is a communal being. He is Father Son and Holy Spirit — three in one.
- We were created in the image of God, and part of what it means to be an image bearer of God is live in community with other people in God's family.

- **Because God exists in community, for us to live in community is to exist like God exists.**
- **“Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.” (Ephesians 2:18 NLT)**
- **God exists in community and for us to live in community is to exist like God exists.**
- **But it’s not just about “existing”. And it’s not just about having relationships with people.**
- When God set us free from the slave market of sin, and adopted us as children and brought us into intimate personal relationship with him, he also united with other people who were being saved in the same way were were.
- And all kinds of people...
- IN ALL of our brokenness, as much as God saw YOU, as a broken **individual** who needed to be saved. He saw US, as a broken people who He was making His own.
- **Jesus came for ME. But He didn’t just come for me. He came for US.**
- We live in a radically individualist society where everything is only about me. I’ve got mine, and you’ve got yours. And if yours is better than mine, I don’t expect you to share it. I’ll just work harder to get my own. And I certainly won’t offer to share with you what is mine.
- We live with barriers around our lives, our love, our hearts and certainly around our stuff.
- We are born and bread in this individualistic society, so then NO WONDER that when you came to faith in Jesus, you thought it was STILL ALL ABOUT YOU.
- What we see in places like Acts 4, is that YOUR stuff is not your stuff, and MY stuff is not MY stuff. Your stuff is OUR stuff. My stuff is OUR stuff.
- We have lost what it means to be family because as a society, we don’t even treat our BLOOD family like family compared to how most cultures operate around the world.
- **What’s mine is not mine. What’s mine is ours. What’s yours is ours.**
- And access into intimate worshipful relationship with God has not been granted to me. It has been granted to us.
- **The Christian life was not designed to be lived out in solitude, and neither was the worship of God.**
- **Psalms 95:6-7 O Come, let US worship and bow down; let US kneel before the LORD OUR Maker. For He is OUR God, and WE are the people of His pasture.**
- Of course I pray, I need to worship, etc
  - Jesus did this.
  - We need this.
  - But I can’t LIVE my whole life like that, nor was the whole of my worship life intended to be lived like that. **I was adopted into a family.**

- We are not John on an Island of exile. And yet, that is how so many of us live — like we've been exiled to island (Alone. Isolated. Fending for self. Self sufficient. Worshipping God when I want. HOW I want. Taking full advantage of this access to intimacy, but doing it primarily outside of community.
- Not the way God intended it.
- After the writer of Hebrew goes off for chapters about Jesus being our heavenly high priest, giving us unrestricted access to the Father, WITHOUT skipping a beat, what is the very next thing He says?
- **Hebrews 10:25 NLT** "And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."
- **You cannot separate what the writer of Hebrews was just talking about in giving us access to the Father, from the corporate gathering of the saints.**
- **You cannot disconnect the finished redemptive work of Jesus, and our access to intimacy with the Father from the community of believers.**
- **Worship was designed to happen in community.** This is why we do church like this — with each other. Because we weren't designed to worship God in isolation.
- God designed worship to happen in a community, and in **a community of diversity.**
- And I don't necessarily mean ethnic diversity, although that's part of it. But life stage diversity, political view diversity, gender diversity. That's how God designed church. And the redemptive power of Jesus is actually put on display when we worship in diversity.
- What we see in the Old and New Testaments is that large groups of diverse people were gatherings together.
- You see in the OT God calling the ENTIRE congregation of Israel to worship. You see in the NT rooms so packed that people are sitting on the window sills.
- Yes they were going from house to house, and we should do that, but they were doing BOTH.
- When Paul wrote this letter, he wrote it to the entire church in Ephesus, a massive cosmopolitan city. He didn't write to this small group at this house or that house.
- He wrote to THE CHURCH Ephesus. The early church was not trying to avoid the big gatherings. They were looking for opportunity for it.
- Now, the big diverse gathering is not EVERYTHING, but this is A THING. There is power in what we do here in our Sunday morning gatherings.
- God designed worship to happen in community.
- And **that's** where we will get what God intended us to get in our worship life as a Christian.

- I'm not asking you to force anything, or to suddenly like strangers, or suddenly try to make yourself an extrovert. That's not what this is about, but here's what I AM asking you to do.
- 1. Recognize that you have been brought into a family of believers.
- 2. Start seeing the gathering of believers as an invitation to dine with the Father at a family meal.
- 3. Be open to God using people in your life that you would never expect Him to use.
- 4. Be open to God using you in people's lives that you would normally avoid.

### **This is what Christ has done for us.**

- We were the strangers (strange ones)
- Foreigners
- Nothing like him.
- Living lies offensive to Him

He came to us.

- Invited us into His house
- Dine with Him
- Served us
- Enter into relationship with us.
- He has given us access to Himself, when we had no right to be there.

This is what He has done. And so now we're going to worship Him for it.