



**Title:** Created to Relate

**Text:** Genesis 1:26; Ephesians 2:11-22

**Connection to Unit Theme:** God created us for relationships. Our fall into sin fractured our relationships with God and with one another. God has mended what we have broken by reconciling our relationships with Him through Christ.

### **Introduction Idea**

Who of us has not stayed awake at night, tossing and turning, because of a broken relationship? There is something within us that continues to crave relationship even though we so often fail in them. Despite our struggles, there is a glimmer of hope in the prospect of true, lasting community.

### **Sermon Division I – We are relationship breakers (Gen. 1:26-28, 2:18)**

Everything in Genesis 1 and 2 is said to be good, until you get to 2:18. Here we read, "It is not good that the man should be alone." God declares a man without a companion to be "not good." There is more to this truth than Adam simply needing a wife. Even more vital than Adam's physical, emotional, and psychological needs is Adam's mandate to bear God's image. What was not good about man being alone was his inability to fully carry out God's commands to rule over and subdue the earth. God supplied this need for Adam by creating for him a "suitable helper," with whom He could do the work God assigned to mankind, multiplying into a family and then a community of image-bearing servants.

God made people for relationship: relationship with Himself and with the rest of creation. Yet as you are painfully aware, you and I do not live in a community that perfectly reflects and brings glory to God. Our society, our families, our marriages, and even our churches are often devastated by shattered community. The first effect of the fall was a broken relationship between God and man, followed closely by fractured relationship between the first couple.

God created us for relationship, but our sin has rendered us perpetual relationship breakers.

**Application:** Relationships are messy, but they are not optional. You cannot fulfill God's call on your life without being in a relationship with Him and other people. Repent of the damage you have caused in your relationships, and pursue reconciliation with others.

### **Sermon Division II – Jesus mends what we have broken (Eph. 2:11-22)**

The Hatfields and the McCoys, Hamilton and Burr, the Montagues and the Capulets couldn't hold a candle to the feud between Jews and Gentiles. As William Barclay notes:



"... the Jew had an immense contempt for the Gentile. The Gentiles, said the Jews, were created by God to be fuel for the fires of hell. God, they said, loves only Israel of all the nations that he had made . . . It was not even lawful to render help to a Gentile mother in her hour of sorest need, for that would simply be to bring another Gentile into the world. Until Christ came, the Gentiles were an object of contempt to the Jews. The barrier between them was absolute. If a Jewish boy married a Gentile girl, or if a Jewish girl married a Gentile boy, the funeral of that Jewish boy or girl was carried out. Such contact with a Gentile was the equivalent of death."<sup>1</sup>

This divide was evident even in the Jerusalem temple. Much like the Berlin Wall of the 20th century, there was a wall dividing the Jewish people from the Gentiles. A white limestone slab, housed in a museum in Istanbul, Turkey, believed to be from this temple was uncovered in the early 20th century. It was a warning sign to Gentiles, reading: "No foreigner may enter within the barrier and enclosure around the temple. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death."<sup>2</sup>

It is likely this is the "dividing wall of hostility" Paul references here. The division that sin has erected has been obliterated by Jesus Christ. He has broken the divide between us and God and He has shattered the walls that separate men from one another. We have been brought near to God and as such we have also been brought near to one another. Jesus mends the relationships we have broken.

**Application:** Because of the reconciling work of Jesus Christ we must pursue relationships with one another and with the Lord. To be a lone ranger Christian is to live in rebellion instead of redemption. You cannot live the Christian life as outlined in the New Testament apart from living in a vital relationship with other believers in a local body. Living in a gospel-saturated community is God's will for your life, therefore we must pursue relationships with one another, no matter how messy they can be.

### **Conclusion Idea**

We accurately reflect the triune God when we live in a loving relationship with Him and with the rest of creation. Some need to respond by being reconciled to God through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ. Others need to be reconciled to one another.

Mark Dever has rightly said:

We demonstrate to the world that we have been changed not primarily because we memorize Bible verses, pray before meals, tithe a portion of our income, and listen to Christian radio stations, but because we increasingly show a willingness to put up with, to forgive, and even to love a bunch of fellow sinners.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Cited from: <http://adonaldmacleod.com/sermons/amazing-grace-ephesians/>

<sup>3</sup> Mark Dever, *What is a Healthy Church?*, p. 28.