Sermon Summary | Sunday 8th November 2026 | Ephesians 2.11–22

The names on a war memorial remind us that conflict is never just lines on a map. Each name belongs to someone loved, someone missed. On Remembrance Sunday, we face the cost of human hostility and our longing for peace.

Paul is writing about a particular division: the separation between Jews and Gentiles. His message is that Christ has made peace, bringing people near to God and to one another, and building them into a new community.

First, we were far apart (2.11–12). Paul asks the Gentile Christians to remember their position before Christ. They had been outside Israel's covenant history, strangers to God's promises, *"without hope and without God in the world"*. They may have had religious beliefs, but they did not know the true God or share the hope of his promises. Paul tells them to remember so that they can recognise the grace they have received. Their belonging is a gift. There is no room for boasting or looking down on others.

That helps us remember our own past honestly. We need not minimise our sin or pretend we could have saved ourselves. But neither need we remain trapped in shame. Where we have come from is part of our story; in Christ, it does not have to define our future.

Second, Christ has brought us near (2.13–18). *"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."* Jesus has done what we could never do for ourselves. Through his death, he deals with sin, reconciles people to God and breaks down the hostility between Jew and Gentile. Gentiles do not have to become Jews to belong. Both come to the Father through the same Saviour, by the same Spirit.

This peace cost Jesus his life. His cross is where reconciliation is accomplished. Our confidence before God rests in the Saviour who has opened the way to the Father.

That changes our relationships too. At St Peter's, nobody matters more because they have been here longer, know the routines or contribute more. Our common ground is grace. Learning someone's name, inviting them to join us, listening, noticing an absence or accepting help can express the welcome Christ has given us.

Third, God is building us together (2.19–22). Those who were strangers are now fellow citizens and members of God's household. Paul then pictures a building, founded on the apostles and prophets, with Christ as its cornerstone. Everything takes its shape from him. Together, his people become a dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

That encourages us while our meeting arrangements are changing. Our buildings matter, but God is building people together. And God himself is the builder. We take part without having to carry everything alone. In his household, people belong before they are useful. Care is shared; needs can be named; people give and receive.

If you trust Christ, you are not merely tolerated as a guest. You belong to God's household because Jesus has brought you near. And the people around you belong to that household too. Christ is our peace; together, we are the people he is building.

Questions for personal reflection

1. Where do I need to rest in Christ's welcome rather than trying to prove that I deserve a place?
2. Who could I help to know they belong this week — through a conversation, an invitation, practical care or a willingness to receive their help?