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United in Christ, Ephesians 2:15-16

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Introduction

- We are going to look at what Christ did to accomplish our unity in him.
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Abolishing

- Christ tore down the wall of hostility. But how did he do that?
 - By abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances.
 - Jesus stated that he came to fulfill the law. How do we reconcile these statements?
 - Paul is referring to the *ceremonial* law filled with rules and regulations to make the people presentable before God.
 - Jesus Christ indeed fulfilled these rules *in his flesh* by accomplishing what they were pointing forward to.
 - He also took the condemnation of the moral law upon himself.
 - **Point:** Jesus abolished the curse of the law.
 - He sets aside the regulations of the ceremonial law and the condemnation of the moral law.
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Creating

- Paul moves on from the absolution of something old (the law) to the creation of something new (united humanity).
- **Point:** Jesus created a new mankind.

- "What Paul is referring to, in fact, is not a 'new man' but a 'new human race', united by Jesus Christ in himself. For although potentially the single new humanity was created when Jesus abolished the divisive law on the cross, actually it comes into existence and grows only by personal union with himself."¹
- Any previous inequalities or social barriers based on race, class, etc. are removed in the new humanity in Christ (Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28).
 - Not that human differences are removed or that there are no hierarchies in society; rather, there is no inequality before God.

Reconciling

- In creating the new man, Christ ended a mutual hostility between Jews and Gentiles. In his reconciliation between God and man, he does the same.
 - Mankind rebelled against God and is hostile to him. Yet, God is also wrathful toward rebellious humanity.
 - How does Jesus reconcile God and man? In the same way that he abolished the law in his flesh, he "abolished" God's wrath *in his flesh*.
- **Point:** Jesus reconciled God and man through his death on the cross.
 - His resurrection is proof of that reconciliation. Resurrection power is reconciliation power.
 - If resurrection power is at work in us, where do we see the power for reconciliation?

End Notes

¹ John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 101.