

“Unforsaken” - Sermon for July 22, 2018

Sermon Text: Ephesians 2:13-14.

But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups, (Jew and Gentile) and has broken down the dwindling wall, that is, the hostility between us.

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When the Berlin Wall was destroyed by the demand of the German people, the people from both sides-east and west Berlin, picked up pieces and took them home. The Wall was in Berlin, a city itself located in East Germany, but it symbolized the division of two nations, established after World War II. The wall had in fact surrounded West Berlin, separating it from East Berlin on one sides and from the German Democratic Republic on three sides. They thought they were all alone, that no one cared what happened to them, because of their great

crimes sins against humanity. But on June 26, 1963, 22 months after Soviet East Germany had erected a wall around West Berlin, President John F.

Kennedy, stood before the wall and declared, “Ich bin ein Berliner”—“I, am a citizen of Berlin.” The message was aimed at West Germany’s people.

You are not alone. Don’t let this wall deceive you.

You are not forsaken. You are not forgotten.

On November 9, 1989, the people of Berlin, having protested and demanded freedom, inspired with the belief that they were not alone, forced the leaders of the German Democratic Republic to bring the wall down forever.

For those who gathered the broken pieces of the wall, it was a symbol what seemed indestructible and intractable could be brought down. All of us have a “Berlin Wall.” We have our human nature, our genetic makeup, our socialization process, our cultural mores and folkways, our familial traditions.

So often, these are a Berlin Wall around our faith and our ability to act as agents of God's kingdom. It is intangible yet seemingly indestructible. But we know from the experience of the German people that there is no such thing. The power to remove the aforementioned barrier is a promise guaranteed by God and witnessed to at Pentecost.

As the prophet Nathan explained to King David, we, human beings, are not the ones to build God's new reality. God is the one who must break the barriers, so that we will take on the character, the will power, and the power as God's people. Sooner or later we forget what God has done for us and settle for being surrounded by the old wall. Sooner or later we get angry or disappointed and blame God, and run behind the cold broken walls. We will cool. That's the nature of human beings. "Sometimey."

We forget that that which we seek refuge in apart from God has already been destroyed, crucified with

Christ on his cross, and we are called to allow God to raise us up to new heights in our resurrection life. We can't build a house for God. We can make ourselves into the people God wants us to be. We cannot tame our human nature. But God can make us his house. How is that possible?

God will never forsake us. God will never abandon us. God will not get bored with us. We, are the object of God's desire. We whose walls have kept us far away have been brought near through the priestly advocacy of Jesus Christ. We are no longer locked into our history and that of our ancestors, their sins, their mistakes, their cultural and political biases. We have a new agenda, revealed by Christ in his great "Sermon on the Mount." Through the power of God's gift, we break free and enter the new Jerusalem, the spiritual, political and ethical realm of God in human affairs, where all walls come down. It is possible, because we are unforsaken. Amen.