

Ephesians: Good News of the Church

Ephesians 2:1-10

"Raised to Life with Christ"—September 18, 2022



Introduction

If you or I struggle with sinful fear that paralyzes us, having someone come along and say, "stop it," is not enough. How do we as Christians change? How do we grow?

Sermon Outline

1. Wake up; the problem is worse than you thought. Vs. 1-3
2. Worship the God who raises the dead. Vs. 4-7
3. Walk in the good works God prepared for you. Vs. 8-10

Read & Discuss

1) Read vs. 1-3

If asked, most people would consider themselves a good person. They wouldn't say they were perfect, but they would see themselves as basically good. Verse 1 reminds us that "You were dead in trespasses and sins." Every person fits into one of two categories - you were dead or you are still dead. When sin entered the world, we were separated from a holy God. Every descendant of Adam is born into this world spiritually dead.

This death has consequences. It leads to spiritual bondage. (Vs. 2) The world looks for meaning, purpose, and value apart from God. We are pressured to conform to its values. How will a dead person respond to that pressure from the world to conform? They won't - they will go with the flow of the world. Our spiritual death leads us in a position of spiritual enslavement to the world's values, priorities, and thinking that are opposed to God. Do you feel the world's pressure to conform? How does that look for you?

Those who are spiritually dead not only follow the world, but also the "prince of the power of the air" - Satan. He wants to snatch up the seed of God's word before it takes root in your heart, to make us short-sighted, seeing only the temporary pleasures of sin. He wants us to believe that God is not good and that true freedom is the ability to do whatever we want. But he only comes to steal, kill and destroy. ([John 10:10](#)) Have there been recent circumstances in your life that tempt you to doubt God's goodness?

We can be tempted to think that our sin is all Satan's fault. But verse 3 tells us that we are in bondage to our own flesh. Satan tells us that God is holding out on us and the way to be happy is to put our self first. But, we are not made to be God. When we make ourselves God, we become enslaved. Outside of Christ, we were dead. We were enslaved to the world, our flesh and the Devil.

The world system is a strong current pulling us along the wrong path. Satan is cheering that on and our flesh is just coasting. The coming cliff is the righteous wrath of God. Paul wants to make it clear that we cannot fix this on our own.

Additional Reading: *Genesis 2 and 3; Mark 4; Galatians 5*

2) Read vs. 4-7

After Paul shows us our dire and hopeless situation, he reminds us that it doesn't end there. God has made us alive in Christ. Why does God do this? It is because of His great love.

When you first became a Christian, you may have been awestruck by God's love for you. But after 20-30 years of fighting sin, you may doubt that love. Are there times when you doubt God's love for you as you struggle with sin? Do you try to earn God's favor and love with good works? God's love is not something you can earn or determined by performance. It is based on His mercy. God has an exceeding amount of mercy, and His mercy is good.

How can God be merciful and not give us what we deserve without being unjust? Jesus' death on the cross satisfies the just demands of justice. God punishes sin on the cross. He is just and the justifier of the ungodly.

([Ephesians 1:7](#); [Romans 3:26](#))

You must put your trust in Jesus - believe and act on the Gospel. When you became a Christian, you are raised with Christ. That resurrection power is available to us NOW. It is hard to live without sinning. Are you tempted to give up? Do you think Jesus' power isn't enough? The sin that assaulted us yesterday can be overcome by the resurrection power of Jesus!

Much of the Christian life is living up to the reality of who we are in Christ - we are set free. Christ is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. To be seated with Him, means that you are seated with Christ on His throne - right now in the heavenly places. It's not just a reminder of freedom - it is a reminder of our status. God looks at us as if He is looking at His own Son. It is because of His grace.

Additional Reading: Isaiah 53

3) Read vs. 8-10

God's divine purpose in salvation was to put the riches of His grace on display. God's grace is when He gives us what we don't deserve - it is a gift. We are saved from the just judgement of God. Faith is our trust in God. It unites us to Christ. It is a gift of God. It can't be our own doing. We were dead. From start to finish, our salvation is not a result of works (vs. 9).

It's easy to forget that we were dead and presume upon God's grace. In our pride, we may be tempted to look down on others. As sinners saved by grace, there is no boasting. We should not be marked by pride, defensiveness, conceit, or envy. We should be marked by humility because we have been saved by grace. Are you marked by this humility? Would others say that you are marked by this humility?

Some people might see God's grace as an excuse to sin. But if you think that way, you don't get it. We are saved FOR good works. They are evidence that we have trusted in Christ. These good works are only possible by His power. What are some of the things that God has called you to do as a result of His grace? Did those things seem impossible? How were you able to do them?

We are God's work of art. We are his masterpiece - a new creation shaped by the Artist to look like His Son. What does this have to do with God's design for the church? We are his workmanship. The church is an art gallery filled with His workmanship, displaying His glory for all to see.

Additional Reading: Luke 18:9-14; Romans 6

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to confess? From what do I need to repent?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

*Next week's sermon text: we turn to <u>Ephesians 2:11-22</u> " Members of God's Family "
