

Ephesians 2:1–10 *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

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### **Announcements:**

1. Book Club: 6/23: 5:30pm
2. Book Club: 7/14 5:30 Gentle & Lowly

## **Ephesians 2:1-10 | Death to Life**

In these ten verses we find one of the greatest explanations of the gospel in all of scripture. The tag line for our church is “find your place in the story of redemption.” This is the heartbeat of our church, to help you locate your life story in the glorious redemptive narrative of scripture. When you understand your life story, then you discern your meaning and purpose and identity. If you’re life has no story, it has no meaning. But you must be careful which story you live in, because you are constantly being offered counterfeit stories that try and give you meaning. And you are an incredibly easy target for a counterfeit story, desperate to cling to any narrative offer.

Why so vulnerable to a false story? Because life as it shows itself to you is a tragedy. Whenever anyone shows up and pretends like it isn’t, you become easy prey. Many of you moved to Denver because of one of these hopeful stories. “Out there I won’t be stressed like I am back here. I’ll go to the mountains and be able to get perspective and recharge.” But then you learned something heartbreaking, you can be stressed on a hike.

Here is the simple reality of life, it is constantly hurtling towards death, and when the story ends in death it is a meaningless story. The story of the world, and your existence in it, is a story of life to death, it is a tragedy. But the story of the gospel is a story of death to life. You may be too invested to see this current story as one from life to death. Life is the ultimate sunk cost fallacy. But if you start by seeing the death, there is a glory on the other side you otherwise wouldn’t dare let yourself imagine. Here is the news, the story of Christ that we say weekly in the creed, that he was crucified, died and was buried, and on the third day rose again and is seated at the right hand of the Father. Paul says that is your story.

# 1. Death

*Ephesians 2:1-2 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—*

Speaking to Christians, Paul reminds them of their state before the work of Christ in their lives. You were dead. My wife's grandfather passed away in February and I spent this past week down in Florida with family for my Grandfather's funeral. Each of them were in their late 80s and leading up to their deaths were very sick. But there is a difference between sickness and death. The difference is hope. A sick person can recover, keep fighting, pull through. A dead person has no hope, they will never come back, they will remain dead.

Paul does not describe us as sick in our trespasses and sins. But oh how we tell ourselves we are merely sick. This marriage, this career, perhaps in this next book or learning to meditate, we're always so close to satisfaction, the experience of healing. You see you're just childhood wounded, once you get that sorted out... That's part of your vulnerability.

But here is where you are dead, in your trespasses and sins in which you once walked. Trespassing is crossing a known boundary, and sins are falling short of a standard. This is a breach and a failure. And it is in these places as rebellious and failures that we walk. This is the life path we are on, it is a trail of tears shaped by 3 complimentary forces: The world, the devil, and our flesh.

**The Course of this World:** Paul describes us in our death as following the course of this world. This is the structures of society that deny the existence of God. Secularism does not just mean "without God" it means "now-ism." It is a focus on this life as all there is and the whole meaning of life is satisfaction in the present. This is materialism which keeps you buying minute variations, and sexual revolution which celebrates the elimination of morality from our sexuality. This is racial discrimination which applauds the false distinctions we make among ourselves. This is treating the poor as objects to be removed.

**The Prince of the Power of the Air:** We are not free just because we chose for ourselves, because we are choosing to follow Satan. The world is not constructed in simple cause and effect interactions, but is undergirded by the personal and the spiritual. The supreme spiritual being enjoying our enslavement is Satan. There is a lion prowling around, deceiving and covering the eyes of the world, fostering dissension and accusation.

This creature upholds the *spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience*. Consider if you were in a tent, playing cards at night and heard a lion prowling outside. The spirit of the tent would change. We are in constant fear stalked by this evil creature.

**The Flesh:** But it is not simply the world that we are surrounded by and the evil principality upholding it. But we ourselves are active participants.

*Ephesians 2:3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

We all live among this world of corruption in agreement with it. The passions of our flesh are those immediate desires which promise ultimate satisfaction. But don't confuse these with mere bodily pleasures, they are mental as well. We justify ourselves with the mind so that we even celebrate evil as good. The corrupted world is outside of you. The Devil is upholding its corruption. Your own flesh is in agreement with it. You are a feature in a cosmology of death children of wrath to the God of life.

## 2. Life

*Ephesians 2:4-5 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—*

Two words insert themselves into this dreadful state, and they are the only two possible words of hope, *But God*. When the whole system is corrupted we need help from outside the system. But what is outside the system of all of creation? Only God. The only possible hope from this death is God. But isn't this impossible? We we're described in the verse before this one as "children of wrath." That means we are due the just punishment of God so that he would abolish the evil within his creation.

So how is it this "But God", might bring hope? It is this unthinkable good news of who God is, his very own character. God is (1) Rich in mercy! He does not simply have some mercy which might be apportioned out. No God is rich in mercy. This is his character. And (2) God himself loved us with a great love. The answer to our dreadful state is God himself, merciful and loving.

Do not be, it is not as though God witnessed some act of goodness in us which compelled him to rescue cut back to the thief's home and he is taking care of his sick mother so let's cut him some slack. There is no drawing out of God towards ourselves, there is only overflow of God's love from himself towards us. Because his grace is shown to us, when we were dead in our trespasses. And this God made us alive together with Christ.

Here is the summary of the Bible. *By grace you have been saved.* Paul will return to this phrase once again.

### 3. Future

*Ephesians 2:6-7 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

All that happened to Christ, becomes an accomplishment for us. Last week, we saw the power of God demonstrated in the resurrection of Christ. But this week those glories that are given to Christ are shown to be ours. We are raised, and seated with Christ in the heavenly places.

Paul is describing to us our union with Christ. Christ is our representative head. We are united to Christ, not because we have elected him, or risen to his status, but because he lowered himself to our level and united himself to us.

But why? So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Why does God rescue us towards an eternity with him? Because that's how long it will take to show us his kindness. It is an ocean.

*Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Again Paul returns to this summary phrase. But he is clear to show, this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God so that no one may boast before the Lord. This is the glorious and humble position of the saved. God receives all the glory. All we do is merely trust in him, and even our own faith is made possible only by him bringing us from death to life. Christ breaks into this story of death, dies himself, but then rises to new life. He unites himself to us and brings us into this new life along with him and this hope breaks into the world. Listen.

*Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

We are the handiwork of God. We are created by God in Christ Jesus, for good works, which God prepared beforehand for us to walk in. You see it is precisely the opposite of

our previous state. It is a cosmology of life. We are not dead but created, not for sin but good works which we walk in, not with Satan as the personal force pulling us to death, but with God as the personal absolute working all things towards life in Christ.