

EPHESIANS

2 : 1 - 7

GOD'S POWER & PRAISE

(Ephesians 2:1-7)

When you buy a new car, the dealer gives you an owner's manual that explains what the vehicle is and how the thing works. That's sort of the way we can view the Bible book of Ephesians. It is like an "owner's manual" for the Christian life, given to us by God through the Apostle Paul. Now, as we learned when we initially began our studies in Ephesians, the first half of this Divinely inspired owner's manual (chapters 1-3) is the doctrinal part. It tells us what the Christian life is by clearly identifying the *foundational belief principles of our faith*. The back half of the owner's manual (chapters 4-6) is the lifestyle section. It explains how the Christian life works by identifying the *framework behavioral practices* of our faith. As we begin studying Ephesians 2, our attention is directed to the doctrine of our God-provided gift of **salvation**. Today we'll discover what God can do when **His mercy** comes in direct contact with **our mess**. Let me start us out with this encouragement: **His love** is at the very core of the salvation His mercy provides!

OUR MESS

(vv. 1-3)

1. (v. 1) Sin causes ...
2. (v. 2) Sin does life the ...
3. (v. 2) Sin does life following ...
4. (v. 3) Sin perverts our ...
5. (v. 3) Sin is why ...

GOD'S MERCY

(vv. 4-6)

1. (v. 4) When it comes to showing mercy ...

2. (v. 4) Salvation happens because ...
3. (v. 5) God loves us despite ...
4. (v. 5) Salvation gives us the ...
5. (v. 6) Salvation guarantees us a ...
6. (v. 6) Salvation will take us ...
7. (v. 7) Salvation means God's kindness will forever be ...

FOR THOUGHT & TALK

In your small group take 5-10 minutes to review the main points of this week's message. Discuss the following questions, taking your time as the Spirit leads, realizing you don't have to cover them all.

1. Read aloud **Ephesians 2:1-10**. By the way, we'll study verses 8-10 next Sunday. After reading the passage and listening to Pastor John's message, can you sense the intense contrast that Paul is communicating between our **sinful mess** and **God's salvation mercy**? PJ said, "Passages of the Bible like this (that tell us we're a mess) are why many people don't come to church." Do you think that is true? If so, why? What would you say to someone to convince them to come and listen, even though they may not want to hear this part of the Bible?
2. Focus in on the "mess" part of **Ephesians 2:1-3**. What is physical death? What is spiritual death? What does sin have to do with them both? What are *sins and trespasses*? How does being spiritually dead impact every aspect of one's life? Why is it important to realize that the way the world is going is directly related to Satan's plan and strategizing? What are some of Satan's larger, more obvious strategies? What are some of his more subtle plays? How do we best protect ourselves from the Devil?
3. Focus in on the "mercy" part of **Ephesians 2:4-7**. When it comes to mercy, God is #1! He is the "mercy hero." What are some of the ways you've personally experienced God's mercy recently? We were challenged to step into God's mercy on a daily basis. Why does that need to be our mindset? How exactly does one "step into" the mercies of God?
4. As you heard about the 7 different ways that Paul describes the mercy of God, which one or two meant the most to you? Why? And how does it make you feel that according to **Ephesians 2:7** ... "*In the ages to come God will continually show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*" Think about this and discuss it together: Throughout eternity, our merciful Jesus will be showing us more and more of God's kindness, which will only become bigger and better to us.