

FROM DEATH TO LIFE

SESSION #3

Review: We saw Paul in chapter #1 move from theological declaration to a prayer to the “*Father of Glory*” for God’s people to personally experience the depth of these theological promises. Paul’s one general prayer here is that the Father would give His people increased understanding of the knowledge of God so that they would experience three expressions of His glory—To know the hope of His calling, the glory of being God’s inheritance, and walking in the power of God. 1). To walk in confident hope related to God’s calling—His “assignment” for our life. 2). To know who we are to God as His inheritance—how He sees us and feels about us. 3). To experience God’s power in our life—in our mind, heart, circumstances, and ministry.

Ephesians 2:1-10 *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

I. CHILDREN OF DARKNESS OR CHILDREN OF LIGHT

- A. Paul begins by painting a picture and by telling the truth of the reality of the human condition apart from Christ. Paul gives us this vast contrast between darkness and light, death and life. The dead need life and the blind need sight. We must first be convinced of our human condition and the path of destruction before we can value and desire the promise of life and restoration.
- B. Imagine these contrasts:
- **10 Most Beautiful World Destinations** (www.TripstoDiscover.com) *Molokai, Hawaii-- Zermatt, Switzerland-- Banff National Park, Alberta, Canada—Maldiv Islands-- Snaefellsnes Peninsula, Iceland-- Whitsunday Island, Australia-- Ubud, Bali--Fogo Island, Newfoundland, Canada-- Sedona, Arizona-- Cannon Beach, Oregon*
 - **10 Most Uninhabitable Places in the World** (www.thetoptens.com) *The Danakil Depression— Antarctica-- The North Pole— Chernobyl-- Death Valley-- Snake Island-- Valley of Death-- Atacama Desert-- Bouvet Island-- Mount Everest*
- C. In essence, Christ has delivered us from the most uninhabitable life and brought us into the most glorious and beautiful life. This is the theme and message of Paul in these first verses and in chapter #2.
- D. Our world tends to operate under the false thinking of, “*Well, overall I am a good person*” or “*I’m okay and you’re okay, so what’s the big deal*” mentality. Let’s look at 4 key questions that we must all consider if we are to truly understand salvation in Christ.

II. THE HUMAN CONDITION APART FROM CHRIST

- A. **Ephesians 2:1-3** *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*
- B. We see Paul presenting to us the theological concept called ‘total depravity’ which basically defines every human heart as sinful and deserving of the judgement of God and in need of the free gift of salvation and eternal life in Christ.
- C. Before Christ, we were all buried in sin and spiritual debt and incapable of choosing life apart from the enabling intervention of the grace of Christ. We were dead, enslaved and condemned. We followed a different Master and that Master was the self-destructive cravings of the lusts of the flesh. These lusts were encouraged and fueled by the Father of Lies, Satan and his demons.
- D. *“So potent is the power of Satan that he can get people to believe that truth is a lie and that a lie is the truth. He fills the world with temptations and traps, and he reigns over his kingdom of darkness like a malevolent dictator oppressing his powerless victims.” (Chuck Swindoll)*
- E. We were being spiritually trafficked by Satan. We were dead men and women walking blindly and aimlessly. This is who you were before Christ and who you are without Christ.
- F. **Verse #3-** Paul makes the point of saying that “*We All*” once conducted ourselves in the lifestyle of emotional, physical, and rational depravity/sin because that was our nature.
- Emotional Depravity-** (Desires- Gk. ‘*epithymia*’)- lusts; deep desires. We were led by sinful and destructive desires, rather than right and life-giving desires in Christ.
 - Physical Depravity-** (Desires- Gk. ‘*thelema*’)- physical desires; desires of the will.
 - We see the progression of the desires of the heart leading the desires of the will.
 - Rational Depravity-** We are self-deceived as we rationalize our self-destructive behaviors and choices.
- G. In summary, Paul makes the clear statement that we are all “*children of wrath*” (**Eph. 2:3**). Apart from Christ, we are enemies of the state or enemies against God.

III. GOD’S REMEDY TO THE HUMAN CONDITION

- A. **Ephesians 2:4-7** *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*
- B. **But God-** Could there be any greater statement in the Bible that so beautifully delivers the heart and will of God to intervene in the human condition of sin and destruction? Wow! It’s as if we hear Paul listing out a sentencing ruling from the Judge. We are guilty! We deserve what is coming to us! We made our own bed and now we must lie in it! BUT GOD! Wait, what?
- C. Paul starts by defining to us who God is and how wealthy He is. The “rich in mercy” God and the God who had great love and compassion for us determined to sovereignly step in and rescue us from death row.
- D. More than just being set free from the prison of sin and death, we have been given equal access and authority as that of His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. THIS IS GOOD NEWS!

- E. *“In the midst of our horrific condition, when we were destined for damnation, already condemned and suffering the effects in our own bodies and souls, God accomplished a decisive rescue mission. He sent Jesus Christ- full humanity and undiminished deity- to save sinners from their hopeless plight.” (Chuck Swindoll)*
- F. We are now made alive in Christ, carry around God’s Holy Spirit, and are now able to say no to sin and yes to righteous/right living. This is all because of the free gift of God’s grace.
- G. Why? What does He see in me? What does He see in you? These questions are best answered in the nature of God. Because God is, God does. God is love, therefore He loves. God loves out of the overflow of the wealth of Heaven. God is “rich in mercy”. He overflows with mercy, longing to extend it to all who would willingly receive it. This is His free gift.

IV. HOW TO RECEIVE THIS REMEDY AND GIFT

- A. **Ephesians 2:8-9** *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.*
- B. This is one of the clearest gospel presentations and clearest descriptions for receive God’s free gift of eternal life.
 - a. **Saved by Grace-** We are saved or delivered from the debt and death of sin by grace. In other words, God freely pardons us from the sentence of eternal life in prison for the crimes of the sin-nature and willing choices of sin.
 - b. **Jm. 4:17** *Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*
 - c. **Gal. 5:19-21** *When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures,²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division,²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these...anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (NLT)*
 - d. **Through Faith-** We receive this free gift of grace By Faith. In other words, God offers the miraculous gift to us, but we must believe that He wants to give it us and then receive it from us, knowing that He extends it because He loves us.
 - e. **Not of Yourselves-Not of Works-None But Christ Can Boast-** Paul makes the clear message more precise by pointing us all to the sovereign work of God in this process. We cannot take any credit for earning nor working for this FREE gift, lest the labor of Christ’ sacrifice become null.
 - f. Nobody can do what God does and nobody can choose what you choose.

V. THE FRUIT OF CHIST’S WORK IN HUMANITY

- A. **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.*
- B. **His Workmanship-** This is such a beautiful picture and celebration of God’s love and precise planning beforehand. We declare the praises of a loving God simply by living and loving and leaning into Him in this life. Our lives have become a sweet fragrance to those who are being saved, while at the same time a stench in the nostrils of those who willingly reject the beautiful Christ.
- C. **2 Corinthians 2:15** *For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.*
- D. **For Good Works-** You are the masterpiece and fine craftsmanship of Christ not simple to be a walking art-piece but as a majestic tool in the hands of our God. We were made to work for, with, and in Christ in this life.

- E. The works of man (**Eph. 2:9**) produce nothing of eternal value but the works of God produced in us and through us who are in Christ (**Eph. 2:10**) are the priceless works of art to be celebrated as Christ's eternal work.
- F. Christ deserves all the credit. We simply agree with His work while also participating with His plans to fulfill His work.
- G. Christ is the Artist/Craftsman and we are the canvas/sculptor. His name has been written on all who belong to Him.