

BUT GOD

What Salvation Really Means

EPHESIANS 2:1-10 | SERMON NOTES

Salvation is not self-improvement. It is resurrection life in Christ.

THE BIG PICTURE

Paul shows us the full movement of salvation: **what we were, what God did, who we are now, and what we were created for.**

SAVED FROM	SAVED INTO	SAVED FOR
Death, bondage, sin, wrath and the rebellious old age.	Life with Christ: made alive, raised and seated with Him.	The glory of God: His character put on display through us.

1. THE PROBLEM: HUMANITY OUTSIDE CHRIST | VV. 1-3

- **The world around us** - the present rebellious age presses its values, desires and definitions of success upon us.
- **The powers against us** - evil is not merely social or cultural; there is a real spiritual rebellion at work.
- **The desires within us** - the flesh does not merely suffer sin; apart from Christ, it also wants what is opposed to God.

There is something around me, something against me, and something within me.

The point: humanity cannot educate, legislate, therapize, moralize or religiously improve itself into resurrection life. The dead need to be made alive.

2. THE TURN: "BUT GOD" | VV. 4-7

Paul builds the darkness of verses 1-3 until everything turns on two words: **BUT GOD**.

- **He acted because** of His great love and because He is rich in mercy.
- **He made us alive** with Christ.
- **He raised us** with Christ.
- **He seated us** with Christ in the heavenly places.

Christ's story has become our story - not because we imitate Him from a distance, but because we are in Him.

Our position has changed, even though opposition remains. We do not live trying to earn a place in Christ; we live from the place grace has already given us in Christ.

3. THE GIFT: BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH | VV. 8-9

- **Salvation is entirely** the gift of God - not the reward for spiritual effort.
- **Faith receives** what grace gives; it does not manufacture salvation.
- **There is no room** for boasting, comparison, spiritual superiority or competition.

You did not bring your goodness to the table. You brought the sin that required salvation - and God brought the grace.

4. THE PURPOSE: HIS WORKMANSHIP | V. 10

We are His workmanship - His handiwork - created in Christ Jesus for good works. **Good works do not earn salvation; they put salvation on display.**

- **Your ordinary life matters:** home, work, conversations, generosity, prayer and righteousness.
- **The church is meant** to become an exhibition of the mercy, kindness, love, forgiveness and power of God.
- **We live** the life of God's coming new creation in the middle of the present age.

We are saved not so we can earn the glory of God, but so we can put the glory of God on display.

TAKE IT WITH YOU

- Where am I still trying to earn what Christ has already given by grace?
- Which voice is shaping my desires most: the present age or my new life in Christ?
- What would it look like this week for my life to put the character of God on display?