

## BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE | Ephesians 2:1-10

Suppose I were to hand you two mirrors. Each mirror offers a vision of reality that is bit jarring. The first image would be far more horrendous than you ever imagined. When you saw it, you would shrink back in horror. It reveals who you are apart from Christ. It wipes away any illusion that you were a pretty good person or reasonably respectable. The second image is far more beautiful than you might have imagined. It reveals who you are in Christ. You see yourself as God created you to be and redeemed you to be, and indeed, as he sees you in Christ. You are a true reflection of his image and glory.

Paul wants us to face the bitter reality of who we were in order to more fully appreciate who we are, who we are becoming, and who we ultimately will be in Christ Jesus.

### OUR LIFE APART FROM CHRIST (vv. 1-3)

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh <sup>m</sup> and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.*

1. How does Paul describe our life apart from Christ?
2. What does it mean for us to be dead in our transgressions and sins?
3. Paul describes three pervasive influences that enslave us and rendered us spiritually dead. What are they?
  - a. How would you describe the influence of the world?
  - b. How would you describe the influence of the “ruler of the kingdom of the air?”
  - c. How would you describe the influence of our own sinful cravings?
  - d. How would you describe the dynamic of all three operating together?
4. How would you describe God’s wrath?
5. Why is God’s wrath an essential attribute of a Holy God?
6. Why are we “by nature deserving of wrath?”
7. What makes this portrait far worse than most of us imagine?

### OUR LIFE IN CHRIST (vv. 4-7)

*<sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

1. While verses 1-3 introduce to the horrifying prospect of deserving God’s wrath, verses 4-7 introduces to the kindness and mercy of God. What are some of the words and phrases Paul uses to describe the heart and character of God?
2. What motivates God to rescue us from our bondage to sin and death?
3. What has God done to release us from our bondage to sin and death?
  - a. What does it mean to be alive in Christ?
  - b. What do you think it means to be raised with Christ?
  - c. What do you think it means to be seated with Christ?
  - d. How do each of these realities strengthen our resolve to follow Christ?

4. Notice that everything God has done, he has done “with” or “in” Christ. What does it mean for us to be united “with” Christ, and live our lives “in” Christ?
5. What makes this portrait far more compelling than we often imagine?

#### **THE DYNAMICS OF LIFE IN CHRIST (vv. 8-10)**

*<sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

1. When Paul tells us we have been saved “by grace” “through faith.” He quickly follows with four qualifying statements. What are they?
2. According to Paul what part of our salvation originates with us?
3. What are some of the things we might be tempted to think we bring to our salvation, and therefore have a reason to boast?
4. While our works in no way contribute to our salvation, they are a natural and necessary result of our salvation.
  - a. Where did these works originate?
  - b. When were they created?
  - c. What does it mean for us to walk in them?