

Sermon: July 12, 2020
Ephesians 2: 4-10

Introduction:

- Good morning. For visitors who may think “this guy is way better looking than the picture of the pastor we saw online, I know. For those of you who don’t know me, my name is Cole Maupin. I am not the pastor but am speaking in his place today. We will be continuing our sermon series through Ephesians chapter 2.
- Pray
- So, if you’ll get way louder than you do for Joel, turn in your bibles to Ephesians 2 and we will read verses 1-10.

Ephesians 2:1-10

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

Review:

Don’t you hate cliffhangers? I absolutely hate them. It’ll be 10:00 and I will sit down with Sarah to watch an episode or two of a series. Then, right when we’re about to get to the climax of the show, the screen goes to black and says the dreaded words: “To be continued”. Like any sane person, you can’t quit on an episode like that, so before you know it, it’s 4:00 AM and we’ve watched 10 episodes.

1. Last week we left off on a major cliffhanger.
2. Joel preached on v.1-3.
3. To rejoy your memory, it was not a very uplifting message.
4. Some words in those verses included: dead, trespasses, sins, disobedience, passions of our flesh, and wrath
5. This is not limited to a few, but rather includes all humanity.
6. We were forced to reckon with who we truly are in the eyes of God: Guilty sinners deserving death and hell.

Verse 4-5:

- As the Apostle Paul writes this letter to the Ephesian church, it doesn't take him long to resolve his cliffhanger.
- To understand the cliffhanger's resolution in v. 4, we have to understand the cliffhanger.
- Reread v. 1-3.
- The first word in v. 4 may not look like much, but it is vital to understanding the verses that follow v. 3.

The word "but" makes a huge difference. It nullifies everything that was previously stated:

Ex. The interview

- I am a reliable employee... but I will be late every day.
- I will do assignments... but only the ones I feel like.
- I will work any time you need me... but not on Mondays-Wednesdays or Fridays-Sundays or before 11:00 AM on Thursdays.
- I will be nice to and respect all my co-workers... but not anyone in accounting.

Do you think this guy is going to get the job? Absolutely not! All the good things were completely cancelled out by the word "But".

That's exactly what we see at the beginning of verse 4.

We were dead in our trespasses and sins, following the spirit of disobedience, fulfilling the desires of our flesh, unable to seek the way of God, and destined for eternal damnation to hell... BUT God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.

*This is a passage talking about people who have already been justified by Christ.

It is essential that we know who is responsible for our conversion. If you look over the phrases in between the commas it reads "But God made us alive together with Christ."

It is God who is solely responsible for our salvation. It was The Father who sent The Son to die for your and my sin and it is the work of the Holy Spirit that draws us from death to life. It is work God and God alone who brings our dead, sinful, wretched heart to life.

Notice what Paul didn't say:

- Paul didn't say "God and your parents"
- Paul didn't say "God and your church membership"
- Paul didn't say "God and your baptism"
- Paul didn't say "God and your tithe"
- Paul didn't say "God and your good works"
- Paul didn't say "God and you"

According to verse 5, humanity is spiritually dead because of sin.

A lot of people make the mistake of believing that humanity is spiritually indifferent to the Gospel and the ways of God, but according to verse 5, we are spiritually dead. What does “Spiritually Dead” mean? Due to the original sin of Adam and Eve, the human race is totally depraved of God. Because of this, our will is skewed by sin to sin. Spiritually dead people have no desire to come to God.

John 3:19-20

¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

According to John, when we are dead in our trespasses, we love the darkness and have no desire to come to the light. It takes God’s power to pull us to the light.

John 6:44

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Why would a holy and righteous God, call out and save naturally wicked, sinful people?

It is the same question David asked in Psalm 8

Psalm 8:3-4

**³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him**

Knowing my:

- Sin
- Shortcomings
- When I haven’t loved God with all my heart, soul, mind, and, strength
- When I haven’t loved my neighbor as myself
- That I have done or thought things that are in direct conflict with Scripture.

Compared to God’s:

- Holiness
- Sinlessness
- Perfection
- Power

So why would God save sinful man? This answer lies within the commas of verse 4. It is because of God's rich and abundant mercy and the great love in which he loved us. It's that simple.

NOTE: If we want to have rock solid faith, it is essential to know that God is responsible for bringing us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

Verse 6-7

So just how amazing is this born-again experience? Let's dive a little deeper by looking at verses 6-7.

⁴ But^[c] God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Unfortunately, in this deep theological passage, verses 6-7 can get glanced over, but I believe these verses show us the shear glory that Christ has, is, and will bring us to.

I like to just imagine what was taking place the moment Christ raised from the dead. It was as if at one moment, the world was full of darkness and without hope, while in the next, holiness, light, and perfection overwhelmed the darkness.

Darkness:

What was Satan thinking?

What kind of fear gripped his heart?

What did his eyes see that ours couldn't?

How bad did it hurt when Jesus crushed his head once and for all?

Light:

What were the angels thinking?

What kind of joy gripped their hearts?

What did their eyes see that ours couldn't?

How good did it feel to see the God of the universe triumph over sin, evil, and death?

I can't imagine the joy that filled all of heaven when Jesus took His rightful spot in heaven.

Considering how magnificent the resurrection and glorification of Christ is, Paul is trying to show us just how magnificent our spiritual resurrection is. We have been raised up with Christ and are seated with Him in the heavenly places. Our souls were dead, lifeless in a dark, spiritual grave until God raised us to life with Christ and seated us in the heavenly places with Him.

*Personal Story about doubting salvation

The Greek verb behind the word seated is in something called the aorist tense. Paul is stating that, although we have not shared in Christ's glory in heaven yet, it is as sure as if it has already happened.

Not only does God make us spiritually alive, but he has guaranteed that we will share in Christ's glorification for all eternity.

Why is God doing all this? Why has he not only made us spiritually alive, but also given us eternal life? So that He can eternally display the richness of his Grace towards humanity.

NOTE: If we want to have rock solid faith, we must realize that when we were saved, our souls were eternally resurrected with Christ and we will share in His glory for eternity in Heaven.

Verse 8-9

These next couple verses are some of the most helpful and insightful verses in the entire new testament. They are essential when trying to understand the Gospel and explain it to others.

Nicaragua story:

1. Do you believe in God? Yes
2. Do you believe in Heaven and Hell? Yes
3. Where do you believe you will go when you die? Heaven
4. Why? Because I am a good person, I do good things, or I am not as bad as some people.

And this is not just a common Nicaragua thing. This is a common lie that Satan has put in the ear of man. If you ask people from the western world, they are likely to give you the same exact answer. In fact, I can almost guarantee that if you asked, a large portion of self-proclaimed Christians would say something similar.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Unfortunately, too many individuals and denominations have compromised this key truth: that Salvation is by grace through faith and not of yourself or your works.

I want to draw attention to a couple of words: Grace, Faith, and Works:

Grace: unmerited mercy

Faith: a belief or conviction with the complementary idea of trust

Works: legal performances by means of which men seek to be accepted by God; good deeds

Now that we have these key definitions down, let's go back through these two verses:

For by grace you have been saved through faith.

1. By the unmerited mercy God has towards us, we are saved.
 - Imagine yourself in court where you have been caught red-handed in a crime. You look the judge in the eye knowing that you deserve the punishment that you are about to receive. Whether that's a \$100 speeding ticket or the electric chair, you deserve it based on your past action. You deserve the punishment, but yet the judge looks you in the eye and says your free to go. That is the same unmerited grace that God has given us in our salvation.
2. But here's the kicker, if we just view God as the judge who lets guilty people go free, He becomes unjust. A just God can't just allow sin to go unpunished. This is where faith comes into play.
 - Let's go back to our court room scene where we are standing on trial. And right before the judge's gavel strikes the table and your sentence is given, someone bursts through the courtroom doors and proclaims that He will pay your penalty. You are free to go, because someone took your place.
 - **Romans 10:9-10** ⁹because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
 - You see, God is a sovereign, just judge, and has every right to eternally punish us, but in his great grace He has given us the His own Son as a substitute. He took the punishment that we so rightfully earned.
 - Our faith has to be an exclusive faith. It's not a faith in our goodness, or in positivity, or good vibes, or in health and wealth, but it is a faith that the blood of the resurrected Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God that was shed on the cross is sufficient to cover our sins.
3. So, is this grace or faith anything that we are a part of? Is this grace and faith something we can work for? No! Our salvation is a gift from God, not because of something we did or are doing. Our works have no part in our salvation.
 - **In the words of John MacArthur "Our response in Salvation is faith, but even that is not of ourselves but is the gift of God. Faith is nothing that we do in our own power or by our own resources. In the first place we do not have adequate powers or resources. More than that, God would not want us to rely on them even if we had them. Otherwise Salvation would be in part by our own works and we would have some ground to boast in ourselves. Paul intends to emphasize that even faith is not from us apart from God's giving it."**
 - Our salvation is not of us or our works. Every aspect of our salvation has the Grace of God written all over it. This is what separates Biblical Christianity from every other religion. Ever other religion relies on the works of man for salvation, while we rely on God for our salvation wholeheartedly.

- If your salvation comes from your own works, then you can boast in yourself, but if our salvation comes from the sovereign work of God, we can only boast in Him and in Him alone.

Romans 3: 27-28: ²⁷ Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

As we were doing sermon planning, Drew Dennison made one of the most profound statements I have ever heard. Too many people have Jesus+. If we believe our salvation is Jesus plus anything, we have it completely wrong.

NOTE: If we want to have rock solid faith, we must know that our salvation comes by Grace though Faith in Jesus, not ourselves or our works.

Verse 10

Unfortunately, this magnificent grace that God has given us is often taken for granted and can result in a type of “Hyper-grace” mentality. Which means that because our salvation doesn’t rely on our works, we can basically say the sinner’s prayer and then go back to living the sinful lifestyle that we were living before. Paul quickly puts this idea to rest in verse 10 by saying “¹⁰ **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**”

Although good works are not what brings about our salvation, if our salvation is genuine, it will produce good works.

John 15:8 “⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

So, if our salvation is genuine, our outward works will be proof of and inward change. It’s just that simple! Or is it?

- Catholic Answers story

James 2:24

You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

This verse sounds like a direct contradiction from Paul’s teaching in Ephesians, Galatians, and Romans and this verse is the Roman Catholic evidence for salvation by faith and works.

As English speakers, we have the tendency to read past the key first two words of this verse. When we read the words “You See” we often read that as similarly to how we would read other introductory phrases such as, therefore or however, but that not what James is doing here.

James is saying, if your heart is justified, it will be visibly seen by our works not just by saying we have faith.

So, what some enemies of the scriptures would say is a biblical contradiction is actually one of the most resounding agreements across scripture. Paul, James, and John all proclaim that faith is the saving agent, and that if that faith is true, it will indefinitely cause true, visible life change.

NOTE: If we want to have rock solid faith, we must know that true faith causes true life change. If our faith is real, it should be visible through our works.

Conclusion:

So, in conclusion, if we want our faith to be unshakable, it must be rooted in the firm foundation that God, the sovereign creator, is due all the credit for our salvation. He made you alive, He called you out of the darkness, He has eternally seated you in the heavenly places, and He is conforming your life and actions to His will.

Pray:

1. 4-5: Thank God for the richness of his love, mercy, and grace.
2. 6-7: Thank God for allowing us into his eternal family and welcoming us into his eternal presence.
3. 8-9: If you have been born again, take the time to praise God for your salvation and for his willingness to save you despite your sin.
If you have never put your faith in Christ, but today you have heard the message of the good news of the Gospel and you feel led to respond, take the time right now to put your faith in Jesus and ask the Lord to apply the blood of his Son to your heart.
4. 10: If you say that you have faith, pray that God would show you and the rest of the church how to put invisible faith into visible action so that the world can see our faith.
5. Ask God to make your faith unshakable and enduring.