

message summary

When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day's pay for his time, that is wage. When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a prize. When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award. But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award-yet receives such a gift anyway-that is a good picture of God's unmerited favor. This is what we mean when we talk about the grace of God. In this passage Paul explains to the church of Ephesus why we needed to be saved and how God accomplished it. Imagine Ephesians 2:1-10 being read to the Gentiles new believers , struggling with their new identity because they are being told by Jews that they are not good enough, and thinking their sin is too great to be used by God.

observation

- What are the characteristics of those who are without Christ, and the new characteristics that Christ gives to us?

- What role does "the prince of the power of the air" play in this passage (verse 2)?

- How does Paul say we are saved and what are the means of that salvation in verse 8?

interpretation

- What is the meaning of "dead in trespasses and sins" in verse 1. In what ways do people try to earn their way to heaven?

- Why is it important to understand the contrast between the old life dominated by sin and the new life in Christ as described in verses 1-7?

- What does it mean that we are God's handiwork? What is the process that God uses to shape and mold us?

application

- How does understanding our state without Christ motivate us to appreciate and share the gospel with others?

- How can we actively express gratitude for God's grace and mercy in our lives, especially when considering our former state of spiritual deadness?

- How does a proper understanding of God's grace and our salvation through faith affect how we view and interact with others in our daily lives?
