

The Before & After Shot

Ephesians 2:1-10

In this chapter Paul is going to show us **our before shot, of our past,**

- Who we were before Jesus
- And then he will show us what we look like now transformed by Jesus!
 - Its Like a before & After picture of a Druggie or Body Builder
 - Here is my before & After Picture

So here in Ch. 2 Paul looks back to our past & describes who we were before Jesus!

- And Its good to remember the pit & mess Jesus pulled us out of
 - As it will make you thankful for all Jesus has done for you!

David remembered his past in **Psalm 40:2** as he said, **He brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps.**

We will also see in this chapter how we are HANDMADE BY GOD FOR A PURPOSE

- A lot of people are confused about who they are today
 - And why they are on this earth
 - And what is Gods will for their life & what their purpose is
- **A man who lacks purpose, distracts himself with pleasure!**

in verses 1-3, we will see what we were saved from.

- And in verses 4-10, we will see what we're saved for & what our purpose is!

We will see what we were designed to be by God

- the life that God intended for us when he thought us up!
 - We will only know your true purpose by looking at our Creator!
- you have to read the owner's manual & you have to talk to the inventor
 - that's how you know the purpose of anything!

Paul first shows us our past here in vs. 1 what we were like before Christ

1And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

This verse here tells us **We were all spiritually dead before Jesus came into our life's!**

- And We need to be made alive from being dead spiritually!

I love how someone said that **Jesus didn't come to make bad men good or to even make good men better. Jesus came to make dead men alive.**

Being Spiritually dead means that we were not devoted to God.

You might be physically alive & fit but from Heaven's perspective, without Jesus in your life,

- without the Holy Spirit taking up residency within you,
 - you're spiritually dead & flatlining

That's why Jesus said you MUST be born again to get to heaven & be apart of His Family!

- We need a *second* birth—a spiritual birth—to make us children of God.

Paul says we **were dead in trespasses and sins**

The word **trespasses** Means to cross a line & deviate from the right path & to wander

- If you cross a fence that says: **DO NOT ENTER** your trespassing
 - It means to break a commandment
- Your doing what you want to do & it is a willful, deliberate act of rebellion
 - You know better, but you do it anyway.

God has drawn a line for us & said this is my holy standard & we've gone beyond it

trespasses speaks of man as *a rebel*

sin speaks of man as *a failure*

- And we've all done both

The word **sin** Means to miss the mark, It is an ancient Greek **archery term**

- like if your hunting & u got an opportunity to get an ELK & miss

All of us have missed the mark. Some have missed the mark more than others.

- That's what it means to sin. We have missed God's mark of perfection!
 - **Romans 3:23** "All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God."
- The target was perfection and none of us could nail it.

We all fail in some way to obey God's word, and so we are all sinners in need of a savior

So if we were dead in our sins then God had to make us alive

- which implies it is something we couldn't do on our own. God had to do it.

Not only does Paul tell us we were dead in trespasses & sin

- But Paul says even worse we were disobedient in sin
 - Look at verse 2

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,

When the Bible speaks of **walking**

- It means how a person lives their life = the way we live

Paul says we were walking in disobedience to God

- As we walked the same course that the rest of the world was walking
 - Which was leading to destruction & hell

There is one of 2 roads you can be traveling on right now

The Bible says your either on one or the other

- Jesus said following Him is the Narrow road that leads to life & few find it
- And the other road is wide & many people are on it & it leads to destruction

Paul is saying before Jesus we were on the wrong path & walking the wrong way

- And we were headed to destruction & eternal separation from God

We meandered through this world. We had no eternal purpose.

- We were caught up with the current of the world

But notice who's behind it all = Satan is orchestrating all these distractions in the world

- That people get caught up in, That derail us & distract us from our calling!
 - You know the old saying, **any dead fish can float downstream?**
 - **it takes a live one to go Upstream!**

We were dead, and we were floating with the current of this world downstream

- drifting along the stream of this world's idea of living
- Headed for a Waterfall of destruction!

I love how it says here how **you once walked!**

- that implies that you don't walk that way any longer!

Not only does Paul show us we were **disobedient & dead** in sin

- But we will also see in vs. 3 we were **dominated** by the flesh

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.

Before Jesus we were all controlled by the flesh

- **What is our flesh?** Its our fallen sin nature that encourages us to disobey God
 - Our sinful appetites ran our life's before Jesus
 - **We are naturally selfish, greedy, unforgiving, prideful & lustful**

The Bible says **the flesh is constantly warring against our spirit**

What is awesome is there is power to over come the flesh by living Spirit Filled lives!

So far Paul has painted this ***black picture showing us the bad news*** that we were

- Dead, disobedient, dominated by sin & doomed to eternal separation
 - And destruction in hell & children of wrath
 - But I love the ***good news in*** vs. 4-5 As the light begins to shine
- We see a starburst in verse four = Its The Best part of the story.

- **Paul reveals the diamond in front of the dark black velvet backdrop**

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),

I love the first 2 words in vs. 4 **But God...**

Things are looking really bad here in the beginning of Ch. 2 for us

But I love the ***good news*** Here ***But God... who is merciful & loving saved us!***

It Reminds me of many stories in the Bible where things didn't look good

- But God intervened and saved the day!
 - **Remember Josephs life** = pit = slave = prison **But God...** intervened

Joseph told his brothers in **Gen. 50:20** You meant evil against me **but God** meant it for good, in order to save many people alive

Remember Paul was going to kill many Christians = **But God...** intervened

- And Saved him & used Paul to save many people

Remember the Demon possessed man in Mark 5

- **But God...** Intervened & put him in his right mind & he began to preach Jesus

Remember Moses was surrounded by the Egyptians at the red sea

- **But God...** Intervened & parted the waters & saved them!

Remember Goliath came against Israel & threatened David

- **But God...** Intervened and helped David defeat goliath

Remember Noah was living in a very wicked time & God sent the flood waters

- **But God...** Intervened & saved him & his family from the flood

Remember the enemy crucified Jesus & killed him

- **But God...** Intervened & raised Him from the Dead by the Holy Spirit
 - God loves us so much that he sent Jesus to die in our place,
 - to rescue & save us!

If things are going bad & your wondering if God will make things better

- And your experiencing some hardship that doesn't make sense
 - And there is trouble in your life & your wondering what's happening
 - There will be a **But God... moment for you!**
 - God will intervene!
 - just hold onto Jesus & His Word, have faith
 - And your **but God** moment will come!

don't forget to factor God into every situation and circumstance that you're facing

It says God is **rich in mercy**... mercy is not getting what we deserve.

- We deserve hell, but God made a way to save us!

The Greek word for rich means without measure or unlimited.

- Meaning that God's mercy is unlimited and it's without measure.

Lamentations 3:22-23 says **through the Lord's mercies we're not consumed because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is his faithfulness.**

- We get a fresh batch of God's mercies every morning. He's a merciful God.

It's like we got this dark canvas and Paul just takes out the brightest colors.

- He tells us about Gods Rich mercy and then the next color is Gods great love
 - **And he tells us here He loved us when we were at our worst!**
 - So Don't ever question or doubt God's love for you!

Titus 3:4-5 says but when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy he saved us

And it gets even better in vs. 6-7...

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.

God can't wait to show you how awesome heaven will be

- And to have us experience it w/ Him and he says

it's going to take God all of eternity to demonstrate to you how much He loves you.

- Heaven is going to be the constant never-ending, unfolding revelation,
 - proving and showing and revealing how much God loves you.

In John 17:24 Jesus said to His Father My desire is that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory

And that's not all folks... it gets even better...

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.

We as Christians were saved b/c of God's grace

- And it had nothing to do with our works & we can't earn or deserve it!

What is grace?

- Grace is getting what you don't deserve

A lot of people think they go to heaven by being a good person

- **But Heaven is not a place for good people but forgiven people**

It wasn't our work. It was Jesus' work on our behalf.

- which means I have nothing to boast in.

There is that tendency in the old nature to try to earn it, to be worthy of it,

- to somehow receive it based upon my merit,
 - but we will only get to heaven because of his grace.

Salvation comes by believing in what he has done, It's a gift.

- You can either receive this free Gift or you can reject it,

I love the acronym for Grace = God's riches at Christ's expense—

- salvation is a work of God alone.

There is no amount of good works or good deeds or effort on our part

- by which we ever could obtain eternal life
 - God's not going to let us into heaven based on our performance

- it's based on the grace of God
- that is what separates every other religious belief system on the face of the earth today
- from biblical Christianity b/c every other religious system is based on man's works
 - man's effort, good works or good deeds = they say u need to DO to be saved
 - But Christianity says the work is DONE u just need to believe in Jesus!

in the final verse we will look at Paul wants us to know

#1. You are Handmade by God

#2. God has a purpose for your life

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Paul starts this verse off by saying we are Gods workmanship,

Workmanship in the Greek: ***Poiema***

- So we are His Poem, His work of art & His masterpiece!

Mankind is Gods greatest creation!

- Think how complex the human body is
 - Nose = smell 10,000 aromas
 - Tongue = 6,000 tastebuds
 - Brain = 10 billion nerve cells,
 - And our Memory can store 1 million billion bits of information

If you have given your life to Jesus You're a work in progress (Under Construction)

- Your life is like a canvas
 - With the greatest artist of all time
 - Making a masterpiece out of you

God is the Greatest Builder & Artist of all time

- He created the earth
 - He created us & He is seeking to express Himself through your life!

When Jesus came to this earth He was a carpenter

- **He would make or creates things by hand**
 - We were handmade by God

Did you know you are God's favorite creation?

- **You are the Crown of His creation!**

Genesis 1:27 “**God created man in His own image**; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them”

Genesis 2:7 “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

Psalms 139:13-14 “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am **Fearfully and wonderfully made**; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.”

Created in Christ Jesus

Paul is talking about when you give your life to Jesus

- You become a brand new creation as the Holy Spirit comes into your life

2 Corinthians 5:17 “If anyone is **in Christ**, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

We need to Beware of going back to what we once were,

- When God wants you to be something that you have never been.

We are Clay in the hands of the potter Take us as we are & makes us something new

I Love how it says we are **Created in Christ Jesus for good works**, God wants to use us!

God has given each of us life & a voice

- **As long as there is breathe in our lungs & our hearts are still beating**
 - God has called us & wants to use us to impact this world for Jesus

You were born to do MORE than just go to work, pay bills, and die!

What kind of good work does God want us to do while we are on earth?

One work we can’t do in heaven is evangelize

- God wants us to bring the good news, the life saving message of Jesus to others
 - And help them follow Jesus!

Jesus said to Go into all the world = **Preach the Gospel & Make Disciples**

The Lost people we come in contact with **matter to God & He has compassion 4 them**

- And He wants us to be His Hands & Feet to minister to them & point them to Jesus!

Ravenhill “The most precious thing we will ever handle is the human soul.”

- We are to go into the world like Jesus = He’s our example
 - He would have compassion on sinners, talked with them, he fed them
 - Jesus would engage, teach & influenced them & met there needs!

Jesus said in **John 20:21** “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

Jesus said in Matthew 5:13-16 ““You are the **salt** of the earth; “You are the **light** of the world. **16 Let your light** so shine before men, that they may see your **good works** and **glorify your Father in heaven.**”

- We are to be the Salt & Light of this world talking about our witness & lifestyle

Salt = Preserves from decay, Purifies & causes thirst = its good Seasoning

Light = Leads the way & illuminates the true path & we need to lead people to Jesus

- God has NOT made us to stay inside our homes & churches were it is safe
 - But to Go out into all the world to bring the good news to everyone
 - So they might find everlasting life in Jesus

There are 8 Billion People in the world today & an estimated 2 Billion Christians

- **Its estimated that 83 people die every minute = Go to Hell**
 - **That's 119,520 people die every day = Go to Hell**

People are going to hell all around us & **It's an Emergency!**

- **Emergency** = serious dangerous situation that requires immediate action!

Jesus said, in Matthew 9:37 “**the harvest truly is plentiful, but the labors are few.**”

Our purpose in this life is to

- Know God
- And make Him known

Paul said, in Philippians 1:21 “**To live is Christ, and to die is gain.**”

Jesus said in John 9:4, “**I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.**”

- we don't do good works to be saved
 - we do good works because we are saved

God has a plan for your life & he has good works he wants you to do 4 His Glory!

- which God prepared in advance what he wanted you to do with your life ‘

But he gives you the choice...

- and most people never connect with God's plan and purpose for their life

And they miss the good things that they were prepared to do in this world

- they totally miss the life they were meant to live

most people do not fulfill God's purpose for their lives

Share the Gospel & Pray