

“Walking the Christian Walk”

(Ephesians 2:1-10)

Introduction

➤ Today begins our “Summer Sermon Series” on “The Christian Walk.” The plan is to preach on different verses/passages of Scripture that describes a unique aspect of the Christian walk. For example (in no particular order):

“Walking in Humility”	“Walking in Love”	“Walking in a New Life”
“Walking in Light of Eternity”	“Walking in the Spirit”	“Walking in Truth”
“Walking in the Power of God”	“Walking by Faith”	“Walking in Wisdom”
“Walking in Obedience”	“Walking in a Manner Worthy of Christ”	

➤ In the New Testament, the Greek word translated “walk” (*peripateō*) literally and figuratively means to walk around. This is one of many biblical metaphors used to describe the Christian life. For example, we see the Christian life compared to a runner in a race (1Cor.9:24-27; Heb.12:1), highlight the need for discipline and perseverance. Much more frequently, however, we find in the Bible the metaphor of walking to describe the Christian life. This “walk” is the Christian’s the daily – moment by moment and step by step – living for Jesus. It is the Christian’s behavior; the Christian’s life journey; the Christian’s practical conduct.

1 John 2:6 ~ “whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”

➤ By way of introduction to this series, I thought it necessary to first preach on what it means to walk the Christian walk. For each aspect of the Christian’s walk is first and foremost dependent upon the fact that the person is actually a Christian. To put it another way, it is impossible for a non-Christian to truly walk the Christian walk. Until a person has been truly saved *by* Christ they cannot live *for* Christ. Without the enabling power and indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit – which comes only to those who truly receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior – no one can truly live the Christian life.

Isa 64:6 ~ We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. ...”

Rom 8:7-8 ~ “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

John 15:4-5 ~ “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

➤ A person cannot truly “walk by faith”, “walk in wisdom”, “walk in truth”, etc., unless he/she is truly saved. This is extremely evident in the passage before us this morning. The non-Christian (unsaved) is walking in sin (“*in which you once walked*”; vs.2), and the Christian (saved) is walking in “*good works*” (vs.10).

Eph 2:1-10 ~ “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked [*peripateō*], 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 – ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk [*peripateō*] in them.”

- In the passage, the apostle Paul – writing words inspired by the Holy Spirit of God (2Tim.3:16; 2Pet.1:21) – outlined the chronology of every Christian: 1) Who we were before we were in Christ, 2) How we came to be in Christ, and 3) What it means to walk in Christ.

1. Who we were before we were in Christ (vs.1-3)

- Contrary to popular opinion, people are not basically or naturally good (Rom.3:10-12, 23; Jer.17:9). No matter how moral or religious a person may be, apart from Christ they are justly condemned by God. Any rejection of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (as God’s one and only Son) results in hypocrisy, self-righteousness, and idolatry.

Eph 2:1-3 ~ “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in 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 – ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

- From these verses, we see the true spiritual condition of every unbeliever.

A. Dead

- The first truth that we are confronted with is that the unbeliever is spiritually “*dead*” (*nekros*; vs.1). That is, apart from a saving faith in Jesus Christ, the sinner has no spiritual vitality. In and of themselves, unbelievers have no inclination toward God or godly things (Rom.3:10-18, 23). They do “*not accept the things of the Spirit of God*” (1Cor.2:14); they do not desire God or godliness; they are unable to live according to God’s commands. Just as a dead person cannot raise himself to life physically, so too a person who is dead spiritually cannot raise himself to spiritual life. The unbeliever is completely dependent upon God’s sovereign love and saving grace to be “*made ... alive ... with Christ*” (Eph.2:5).
- It is important to note at this point (as we will see again in verse three) that man does not become spiritually dead but is spiritually dead. Every person, with the only exception being Jesus Christ, is born into sin and therefore born spiritually dead (i.e., spiritual stillborn).

John 3:18 ~ “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

John 3:36 ~ “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”

- ✓ **Illust:** “Man never starts on ground level, as it were. We do not start neutral, we do not start in a kind of indeterminate state, neither good nor bad. No, we start down in the depths of a pit. We are first raised up from that; and then we are raised right up into the very heavens themselves. So the apostle starts where we must start. Salvation comes to us where we are; not where we would like to be, not as we would like to think of ourselves idealistically. The gospel of Jesus Christ is thoroughly realistic and it starts with us exactly where we are, and that is, at the bottom of a pit of corruption” (D. Martyn

Lloyd-Jones; *An Exposition of Ephesians* [vol.2]; p.14).

- Those who are not “*in Christ*” remain “*dead in the trespasses and sins*” (vs.1). Notice the two near-synonymous words Paul used to describe the spiritual condition of the unbeliever. The Greek word translated “*trespasses*” (*paraptōma*; vs.1; see 1:7; 2:5) means to slip, to stumble, or to fall. Whether intentional or unintentional, this describes the person who goes outside the bounds of God’s law. This is illustrated in our English word “trespass”, as the “trespasser” has violated the “no trespassing” order of our boundaries. All those who trespass the law of God will be prosecuted under God’s law.
- A second way Paul described those who are spiritually dead is “*dead in ... sins*” (vs.1). This word (*hamartia*) is the general, most-common, word for sin. This refers to any and every wrongdoing. The word literally means “to miss the mark”, as in hunting or target practice. Every sin misses the mark, or the standard, of God’s holiness (see Jms.2:10-11; Gal.3:10).

Rom 3:23 ~ “for all have sinned [*hamartanō*] and fall short of the glory of God”

✓ **Illust:** “Sin is falling short of God’s glory, and falling short of God’s glory is sin” (John MacArthur; *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians*; 2:1-3).

- This does not result in spiritual deadness, but is the result of spiritual deadness. The unbeliever is not “mostly dead”, or even terminally ill, but totally dead – with no spiritual life. Those who are “*dead in ... trespasses and sins*” (vs.1) have no love for God in their hearts. They are deaf to the voice of God, foolish concerning the will of God, and blind to their need for God. They are “*haters of God*” (Rom.1:30), “*enemies of the cross of Christ*” (Phil.3:18), and “*hostile to God*” (Rom.8:7).

B. Depraved

- The unbeliever is a spiritual zombie walking in opposition to and hostility toward God – wallowing in the mire of sin. They are under demonic influence; governed by evil and godlessness; reveling in pride, immorality, and false worship. Having not the Spirit of God, they are enslaved to sin and incapable of righteousness (Jn.8:34).
- The apostle Paul outlined these corruptions into three categories: “*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 – ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind*” (vs.2-3).

1. The world ~ “*following the course of this world*”

- First, unbelievers are “*following the course of this world*” (vs.2; *kata aiōn kosmos*). That is, they are living according to the system of this ungodly world – e.g. atheistic ideologies, secular psychologies, humanistic/satanic religions, unbiblical political paradigms, sexual immoralities, and idolatries. They are not walking on the narrow road that leads to God, but on the wide road that leads to destruction (Matt.7:13-14). Here “*this world*” (vs.2) refers to that which is opposed to God; not the earth, but the ungodly system and values that govern all unbelievers (Jn.15:19; 17:14; 18:36).

As Christians, we are called to be in the world but not of the world. To live in this world without being corrupted by worldliness or worldly things – godlessness or ungodliness. Unbelievers are utterly helpless against the seductive and deceptive schemes of the devil. They are not only in the world, but they are also of the world – worldly and not godly.

Rom 12:2 ~ “Do not be conformed [*syschēmatizō*] to this world [*aiōn*] ...”

James 4:4 ~ “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

1 John 2:15-17 ~ “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life – is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever”

1 John 5:19 ~ “We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”

2. The devil ~ “*following the prince of the power of the air*”

- The second way unbelievers live out their depravity is by “*following the prince of the power of the air*” (vs.2). This refers to “Satan” (*Satanas*; adversary) or “the devil” (*diabolos*; accuser or slanderer). He is described in the Bible as “*the ruler of this world*” (Jn.12:31; 14:30; 16:11), “*the god of this world*” (2Cor.4:4), “*the prince of demons*” (Matt.12:24), and here as “*the prince of the power of the air*” (vs.2). While Satan is no threat to, and no match for God, he is a formidable (unbeatable) foe for humans (see 1Jn.4:4; 5:18).

Satan is a fallen archangel who opposes God and seeks to tempt (Matt.4:1; 1Thess.3:5) and deceive (Jn.8:44; 2Cor.4:4) people away from God, and even to destroy them (1Pet.5:8). God is allowing Satan “*the power*” (*exousia*; vs.2) to temporarily reign and have limited rule in this world (“*the air*”; i.e., his realm) – all under the sovereign authority of God, and only for as long as God will allow (Rev.20:10).

- Satan is further described in this passage as “*the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience*” (vs.2). Through his minions (demons), Satan oppresses and possesses unbelievers to do his bidding. They are regarded here as “*the sons of disobedience*” (vs.2) because their lives are consumed and characterized by disobedience to God. This is true of everyone who rejects Jesus Christ as God’s Son, and refuses to receive Him as their Lord and Savior – from the most militant atheist to the most moral false-worshiper.

Eph 5:6 ~ “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”

3. The flesh ~ “*in the passions of our flesh*”

- A third way in which unbelievers live out their depravity is “*in the passions of [their] flesh*” (vs.3). That is, they live not according to the word or will of God but giving in to their fleshly (sinful) “*passions*” (*epithymia*; vs.3). While this word can refer to positive or godly desires (Lk.22:15; Phil.1:23), here it is in reference to sinful lusts that come from the flesh and not from the Spirit of God.

John 8:44 ~ “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires [*epithymia*]. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Gal 5:16-17 ~ “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires [*epithymia*] of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires [*epithymeō*] of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires [*epithymeō*] of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ... ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions [*pathēma*] and desires [*epithymia*].”

- Since they do not have the Spirit of God – unable to “*submit to God’s law*” and unable to “*please God*” (Rom.8:7-8) – they cannot help “*carrying out the desires of the body and the mind*” (vs.3). Whereas “*passions*” (*epithymia*) refers to “lusts”, “*desires*” (*thelēma*) refers to the “will” (Eph.1:1, 5, 9, 11). Enslaved to sin, the unbeliever is captive to fulfill the sinful desires of their “*body*” (*sarx*; flesh) and their “*mind*” (*dianoia*; thoughts).

While unbelievers are not as sinful as they could possibly be, they are totally corrupt as sin pervades their minds, bodies, desires, affections, and actions. They are, therefore, justly condemned by God as sinners.

Eph 4:17-19 ~ “Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.”

C. Damned

- Unbelievers are spiritually dead, morally depraved, and (as we see at the end of verse three) justly damned: “*and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind*” (vs.3). The unbeliever is under the condemnation of God’s just “*wrath*” (*orgē*; vs.3). Because of their rejection of God, and His Son Jesus Christ, they are not children of God but remain “*children of [God’s] wrath*” (vs.3). The consequence of sin is physical and spiritual death (Rom.6:23), and separation from God (Is.59:2).

John 3:18-19, 36 ~ “Whoever believes in [the Son] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And 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. ... ³⁶Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” (see Col.3:6)

- Notice that the unbeliever is *“by nature”* (*physis*; vs.3) a sinner. Simply put, everyone (other than Jesus) is born into sin (Ps.51:5). This resulted as a consequence of Adam’s sin, which resulted in every human being having a sin nature. Every human, being *“in Adam”* (Rom.5:12; 1Cor.15:22), inherited his sin and guilt. “We sin because we are sinners.”

This is true of every person (other than Jesus Christ): *“like the rest of mankind”* (vs.3). Being fully/truly God and fully/truly man, Jesus was born without sin (2Cor.5:21; Heb.4:15; 1Jn.3:5). Everyone else is justly and eternally condemned by God, unless they receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Titus 3:3 ~ “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.”

- Every person is in desperate need of God’s saving grace. This is the “bad news” of the Gospel (which is the “Good News)! No one is good enough – no one can do enough good – to warrant salvation (Rom.3:10-18, 23). Salvation comes through God’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

2. How we came to be in Christ (vs.4-9)

- Now for the Good News of the Gospel – how every Christian came to be in Christ! Every Christian has essentially the same testimony. Every Christian’s testimony is equally powerful, effective, and beautiful. No Christian is “more saved” than any other Christian, and no one deserves to be saved more than anyone else. Whether you are saved wretchedly sinful life or saved from an idolatrously self-righteous life, God’s saving grace is without merit and without measure.

Every Christian’s testimony is found in the following verses:

Eph 2:4-9 ~ “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

- With a wonderfully abrupt change of course, we find the phrase *“But God”* (vs.4). This is a welcome transition because, as we have seen, the previous verses spiraled downward leaving us helplessly dead in sin and justly under God’s wrath. While verses one to three spiral down into greater and greater despair, the first two words of verse four give us hope.
 - ✓ **Illust:** “[Paul] says, ‘But God.’ He does not say, ‘But man, through his own efforts, pulled himself up by his bootstraps.’ He does not say, ‘But man, coming to his senses, inclined his heart and his will to the things of God and came to faith.’ No, it is ‘But God, being rich in mercy’, alluding to the wealth of divine grace” (R.C. Sproul; *Ephesians: An Expository Commentary*; 2:1-10).
- A person is saved by God, from God, and for God. No one can be saved if it were not for God’s gracious divine intervention (Jn.6:37, 44, 65). Paul outlined God’s saving grace in four ways.

A. God made us alive with Christ (vs.4-5)

- Every person is a sinner by nature and by choice. Left to ourselves, apart from God’s gracious intervention, we are helplessly and hopelessly spiritually dead. *“But God ... made us alive together with Christ”* (vs.4-5). This describes the spiritual resurrection (regeneration) of those who believe,

which comes only through the person and work of Jesus Christ. At the moment of genuine conversion, the believer is (for the first time) reconciled to God the Father, able to follow the Son of God, filled with and led by the Spirit of God, and able to understand and obey the Word of God (see Rom.8:7-8).

John 3:3 ~ “Jesus answered [Nicodemus], ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”

2 Cor 5:17 ~ “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

Ezek 36:26 ~ “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

Gal 2:20 ~ “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Col 2:13-14 ~ “And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

- As we saw in verse one, every person is spiritually “*dead in the trespasses and sins*” (vs.1) – without spiritual life or vitality (not terminally ill, kind-of dead, or mostly dead). Every person is a spiritual stillborn, having no innate goodness or righteousness. Those who are spiritually “*dead*” (*nekros*) have no way to earn God’s favor, no means in which to do good works, no merit of spiritual goodness. Furthermore, they have no way to raise themselves, or be raised by anyone (anything) other than God. In verse five, Paul repeats this sobering truth: “*we were dead in our trespasses*” (vs.5).
- Notice the numerous and glorious descriptive words used to describe the means by which God made us alive in Christ. Each of these are specific attributes (not the only ones) which God used to give us spiritual life.

First, we know spiritual life comes by God’s mercy: “*being rich in mercy*” (vs.4). The New Testament word for “*mercy*” (*eleos*) is defined as undeserved kindness and compassion. It is benevolently withholding just punishment or consequences. God shows us mercy by not giving us what we deserve. That is, as sinners we deserve God’s just and eternal condemnation. Guided by His mercy, he saves all who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior – saving them from His own wrath. Notice the all-important adjective here describing God’s mercy: “*rich*” (vs.4; *plousios*). God is neither impoverished (destitute, bankrupt) nor miserly (stingy, cheap) when it comes to being merciful to those whom He saves.

Second, we know that spiritual life comes by God’s love: “*because of the great love with which He loved us*” (vs.4). As with His mercy, and as an expression of His mercy, God’s “*love*” (*agapē*) is unmerited and undeserved. This means that God’s love toward us is not a response to our innate goodness or good works. God does not love us because we are so lovable, or because we first loved Him. God shows us love by loving us in spite of ourselves. Again, we need to notice the way in which God’s love is here described: “*great love*” (vs.4; “great” [*polys*]; many [quantity], long [time], greatness [magnitude]). God’s love is not a permissive love, or a pampering love, but a perfecting (sanctifying) love.

Third, we know spiritual life comes by God’s grace: “*by grace you have been saved*” (vs.5). God shows us grace in giving us what we do not deserve. That is, it is by God’s grace that we receive the forgiveness of sin (Eph.1:7) which results in us being able to inherit eternal life (i.e., salvation, heaven). While there is no adjective in this verse further describing God’s grace, we find it in the immediate context of this passage: “*the immeasurable riches of his grace*” (2:7; *hyperballō ploutos*; “surpassing wealth” [NET]; “exceeding riches” [KJV]), in addition to “*his glorious grace*” (1:6) and “*the riches of his grace*” (1:7). This is to say that God’s grace is infinite.

➤ No one can be saved apart from God's *"rich mercy"* (vs.4), *"great love"* (vs.4), and the "immeasurable riches" of His *"grace"* (vs.5). All of these are beyond merit and measure. However, in addition, no one can out-sin God's *"rich mercy"* (vs.4), *"great love"* (vs.4), and the "immeasurable riches" of His *"grace"* (vs.5). God's arm is never too short to save. God's power is never fragile or impotent. God's knowledge is never imperfect or misguided. His mercy is never small or lacking; His love is never impure or corruptible; His grace is never insufficient or fickle.

B. God raised us with Christ (vs.6-7)

➤ A second glorious aspect of the "good news" of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that God raised us with Christ: *"and raised us up with Him"* (vs.6). Those who have been *"made alive ... with Christ"* (vs.5) will also be *"raised ... up with [Christ]"* (vs.6). Whereas the previous truth is our regeneration (resurrection), this truth highlights our ascension. Here is the parallel: Jesus *"died for our sins"* (1Cor.15:3), was *"raised for our justification"* (Rom.4:25), and ascended *"into heaven"* (Lk24:51) where He is seated *"at the right hand of God"* (Rom.8:34). As Christians, we were dead in sin, raised to spiritual life, and will ascend into the glory of God in heaven.

Scripture refers to Christians as those who have been spiritually crucified with Christ (Rom.6:6; Gal.2:20), spiritually buried with Christ (Rom.6:4; Col.2:12), spiritually resurrected with Christ (Rom.6:4-5; Col.2:12), and spiritually ascended ("raised") with Christ. Christ died physically, we were dead spiritually; Christ was buried physically, we were buried spiritually; Christ was raised physically, we are raised spiritually; Christ ascended physically, we are ascended spiritually.

➤ Notice that this "ascension" is declared as a truth that has already occurred: *"and raised us up with him"* (vs.6). This is true of the following verbs: *"made us alive together with [Christ]"* (vs.5; *syzōopoieō*; aor., act., ind.), *"raised us up with him"* (vs.6; *synegeirō*; aor., act., ind.), *"seated us with him"* (vs.6; *synkathizō*; aor., act., ind.). Since these have not all happened (yet), they are clearly spiritual (not physical/literal) realities. This is referring to the believer's positional/spiritual resurrection and ascension, not their future bodily resurrection and ascension.

C. God seated us with Christ (vs.6-7)

➤ Thirdly, this spiritual ascension results in our being *"seated ... with [Christ/God] in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus"* (vs.6) – again, this is in the past tense (aor., act., ind.) indicating a current or certain reality. The true Christian is not only *"in"* Christ, but also *"with"* Christ. That is, they not only belong to Christ they are abiding with Christ (Gal.2:20; Jn.14:20; 15:1-5; 17:23) – from the first moment of genuine conversion and throughout all eternity.

➤ Furthermore, the Christian's union with Christ brings them spiritually to the very throne room of God: *"seated ... with [Christ/God] in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus"* (vs.6). As children of God – *"heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ"* (Rom.8:16-17; Tit.3:7) – Christians are in this world but not of this world (see Jn.15:19; 17:6, 9, 14, 15, 16, 18; Phil.3:20). As Christ ascended to the realm of heaven physically, Christians (at the moment of true conversion) ascend spiritually to the realm of heaven.

We are no longer of this world, but are *"[citizens] in heaven"* (Phil.3:20); we are no longer slaves of sin, but *"slaves of righteousness"* (Rom.6:18); we no longer live under Satan's reign, but *"live according to the Spirit"* (Rom.8:5); we no longer walk in darkness, but *"walk as children of light"* (Eph.5:8); we no longer love this world, or the things of this world (1Jn.2:15), but are those who *"overcome the world"* (1Jn.5:4); we are no longer loved by the world, but the world hates them (Jn.15:19; 17:14); and we are no longer *"conformed to this world"*, but are *"transformed"* by the renewing of their minds (Rom.12:2). True conversion is a radical transformation.

➤ As glorious is the result of our spiritual ascension, equally glorious is the reason for our spiritual ascension: *"so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus"* (vs.7). While salvation is clearly for our benefit, it is – first and foremost – for God's glory. Our salvation showcases God's divine attributes. Specifically, as we have seen, His

attributes of “grace” and kindness” or “*the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus*” (vs.7).

As always, God desires to glorify Himself – His nature, character, and attributes – in all that He does (see Is.42:8; 43:7; 48:11; Ex.9:6). In verse seven, Paul described this in that God “*might show*” (*endeiknymi*; vs.7) “*the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus*” (vs.7).

- This began “*before the foundation of the world*” (1:4), as God “*chose us in Him*” (1:4), and *predestined us for adoption ... according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace*” (1:5-6; see 1:11-12). So, from before the foundation of the world God chose to save all those who would believe so that He would be glorified forever. The phrase, “*in the coming ages*” (*en ho eperchomai aiōn*), points to an unspecified future time. This clearly refers to a period of time between Christ’s first coming and second coming, and may also refer to eternity (after Christ’s second coming).

D. God saved us in Christ (vs.8-9)

- Fourthly, it is God alone who saves. To be “*saved*” (*sōzō*) means to be rescued from ruin, destruction, or death (see “*perish*”, Jn.3:16). In terms of our salvation in Christ, “*saved*” refers to being saved “*from ... sins*” (Matt.1:21), saved “*from the wrath of God*” (Rom.5:9; cf. 1Thess.1:10), and saved from God’s just and eternal condemnation (Jn.3:17). To put it another way, a person is saved by God (Eph.2:8; Tit.3:5), from God (Rom.1:18; 5:9; 1Thess.1:10), and for God (Eph.1:6; 2:10; 1Pet.2:9).
- Salvation is by God’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone: “*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast*” (vs.8-9). This could not be more clear:

Negative

“*not your own doing*” (vs.8)

“*not a result of works*” (vs.9)

Positive

“*it is the gift of God*” (vs.8)

“*so that no one may boast*” (vs.9)

- The “*gift of God*” (*dōron theos*) is certainly His “*grace*” (*charis*; which means free gift” or “unmerited favor”), but the grammar of this sentence may also indicate that our “*faith*” (*pistis*) is also a free gift from God; as God enables us to believe (Jn.6:44; 65). For, as we have seen, is the one who raises the believer from spiritual death and grants them spiritual life (Eph.2:1, 5).
- Notice how often Christ is mentioned in Ephesians 2:4-10 [“Christ” (4x); “Jesus” (3x); “him” (2x)]. The Bible is emphatically and repetitively clear, that Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ (Jn.3:16, 36; 14:6; 1Jn.5:11-12; Acts 4:12). God’s saving grace is received by those who put their faith in Jesus as the Christ, the one and only Son of God and the one and only Savior from God. All of the salvific blessings Christians have come to them in Christ and are forever guaranteed in Christ!

Rom 5:1 ~ “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Rom 11:6 ~ “But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.” (Gal.2:16; 2Tim.1:9; Tit.3:5)

- God’s saving grace is “*immeasurable*” (vs.7; Rom.5:20-21). It bridges the seemingly infinite chasm that our sin has made between us and God. This chasm is so wide and so deep – so treacherous – that no one can cross. To minimize our sin is to minimize God’s grace. When we elevate man to being basically good, or even well-intended, we blasphemously reduce God to merely “helping” or “rewarding” us – not saving us. To make this chasm crossable by our own goodness or good works, is to disparage substitutionary death of Christ on the cross. To put it bluntly, if our sin is really no big deal than what Jesus did on the cross is really no big deal (or massive overkill).

But our sin made it impossible for us to cross the chasm between us and God. The only way is by the bridge of the cross of Christ.

➤ To say it another way, to elevate man to being good in and of himself is to diminish the praise that is due God; it enables us to “boast” (vs.9; *kauchaomai*) in ourselves or what we have done, and not boast in God and Christ alone. The Bible exhorts us to give God all the praise and glory for our salvation because He has raised us up from the pit of spiritual death and damnation, and raised us to be seated with Christ in the heavens!

1 Cor 1:29-31 ~ “so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹so that, as it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’” (Tit.3:5; 2Tim.1:9)

Gal 6:14 ~ “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

3. What it means to walk in Christ (vs.10)

➤ As we saw last week (in our study of Luke 6:43-49), the one who is truly saved will pursue a life that reflects that salvation. While not perfect, the Christian seeks to live by and for Christ. True Christianity is not merely professing Jesus as Savior, but also following Him as Lord. To be a Christian is to walk in Christ.

Eph 2:10 ~ “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

➤ While no one is saved by good works, everyone who is saved is saved unto good works. Good works are the fruit that come from the root of salvation – the effect that stems from the cause. This reality is outlined with three incredible exhortations.

A. To live according to God’s design

➤ First, every Christian is saved to live according to God’s design: “*For we are his workmanship*” (vs.10). To be God’s “*workmanship*” (*poiēma*; see Rom.1:20; 2Cor.5:17) not only identifies God as our Creator, but recalls the biblical analogy of God as “the Potter” and we as His clay (Jer.18:1-6).

✓ Illust: “The Greek word for “workmanship” is *pōiēma*, from which we get poem. Our lives are like a divinely written sonnet, a literary masterpiece. From eternity past, God designed us to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom.8:29). All of us are still imperfect, unfinished works of art being carefully crafted by the divine Master. He is not finished with us yet, and His work will not cease until He has made us into the perfect likeness of His Son (1Jn.3:2). The energy He uses to accomplish His work is grace. Sometimes the process is slow and arduous; sometimes it is immediately triumphant. Either way, *‘I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus’* (Phil.1:6)” (John MacArthur; *The Gospel According to the Apostles*; ch.4, “By Grace You Have Been Saved”).

➤ Christians have been designed by God with a special – sacred – purpose. As His redeemed, we are God’s “masterpiece.” Not to continue in sin (Rom.6:1-2), or to live unholy lives (1Jn.2:15-17, 1Pet.1:15-16), but to showcase God’s attributes to the world.

1 Cor 10:31 ~ “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

Matt 5:16 ~ “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

B. To live according to God's plan

➤ Christians are also called to live according to God's plan: *"created in Christ Jesus for good works"* (vs.10). This is to live as we have been designed to live – the reason why we were saved. To do *"good works"* (*agathos ergon*) is part of the reason why we were created, and why we have been saved. These *"good works"* represent anything and everything we do out of sincere and humble obedience to Christ – obeying His commands, living according to His will, walking by His Spirit; glorifying His name.

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

James 2:17, 26 ~ "So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ... ²⁶For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead."

Phil 2:12-13 ~ "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

Titus 2:14 ~ "who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."

➤ Notice that we were *"created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand"* (vs.10). God has foreordained that His children walk in faithful obedience to Him.

Rom 8:29-30 ~ "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."

C. To live according to God's will

➤ This naturally leads to the third exhortation: we are to live according to God's will – *"that we should walk in them"* (vs.10). For the Christian, to walk in disobedience is to walk contrary to God's design, contrary to God's plan, and contrary to God's will. This is why the "carnal Christian" – the professing Christian who continues in sin without repentance – is not truly a Christian (Rom.6:1-2; 1Jn.3:4-9).

Ezek 36:26-27 ~ "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."

Col 1:10 ~ "so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Eph.4:1)

➤ True Christians do not live in unrepentant sin. They do not chronically walk contrary to God's ordained and salvific work. They will not live in continual rebellion to God's sovereign will for their lives.

Conclusion

➤ Christians are created and saved and ordained to walk the Christian walk! This "walk" is the Christian's the daily – moment by moment and step by step – living for Jesus. It is the Christian's behavior; the Christian's life journey; the Christian's practical conduct.

1 John 2:6 ~ "whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."

➤ God has created us to walk in Christ; God has saved us to walk in Christ; God has sanctified us to walk in Christ; has ordained us to walk in Christ. Therefore, the true Christian is one who truly walks the Christian walk.