

Ephesians 2

Title: "From Death to Life by Grace"

I. Our Former State: Dead in Sin (Ephesians 2:1-3)

II. God's Intervention: Rich in Mercy and Love (Ephesians 2:4-7)

III. The Basis of Salvation: By Grace through Faith (Ephesians 2:8-9)

IV. Our New Identity: Created for Good Works (Ephesians 2:10)

Application:

1. Remember Your Past, but Live in Your New Identity (Verses 1-3)

Application: Remind the congregation to reflect on their past lives without Christ, not as a source of shame, but as a testimony of God's grace. We were once spiritually dead, enslaved by sin, but through Christ, we have been made alive. Encourage believers to live in the freedom of their new identity, no longer bound by sin or guilt, but as redeemed children of God.

Illustration: tell the story of Jacob DeShazer

2. Embrace God's Grace and Reject Works-Based Salvation (Verses 8-9)

Application: Emphasize that salvation is a gift of grace, not earned by human effort or good works. This truth combats the cultural idea of earning our way into God's favor. Encourage the congregation to rest in the assurance of God's grace, recognizing that their worth and identity come from His love, not their achievements. This freedom allows believers to serve God out of gratitude rather than obligation.

Illustration: Contrast the idea of working for approval (whether in family or professional settings) with the unconditional grace God offers.

3. Live Out Your Purpose as God's Workmanship (Verse 10)

Application: God has created each believer for good works, prepared in advance. Challenge the congregation to live with intentionality and purpose, understanding that they are God's workmanship, uniquely designed to reflect His glory. Encourage them to seek out the good works God has placed before them, whether in their families, workplaces, or communities, and to serve others with the gifts they've been given.

Illustration: Share stories of individuals discovering their God-given purpose and impacting others through acts of service or ministry.

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Verse	Observations
V1: As for you,	You, accusative. Like Peter calling out the Jews for killing Jesus, Paul is about to accuse the reader of two things. In 3-4 reminds them, or accuses them of their past life (or is it still life), and then in v5 “accuses” them of being saved
V1: You were dead	<p>Uses accusative You again here, Almost as if he was going to skip this part but with his first you, but comes right back on it saying nope, we are going here.</p> <p>Dead is a metaphor for spiritual death, a sense of alienation from God. Dead in Sins. Which leads to death of the soul.</p>
V1: in your transgressions and sins,	<p>No distinction between T and S. This is a Hendiadys, which is a rhetorical device in which two words connected by a conjunction (usually "and") are used to express a single idea or concept. In essence, it is repeated for emphasis</p> <p>Also is saying you were dead in your sins and because of your sins (dative case, past and present if you continue to sin).</p>
V2: in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world	<p>Another translation “in which you once walked” with walk a common metaphor in Jewish life for everyday living in relation to obedience/disobedience towards the covenant.</p> <p>You followed may be better said “under the control of”. This goes beyond conformity but to a normal habit/way of life.</p> <p>Ways of this world is referring to the devil – an ideology or doctrine of him who controls the world. Which then highlights or enhances vs 5 with Christ now their guide in contrast. By viewing this as the world being the devil, it really exposes the lie that we live outside of Christ – and that is we remove the devil from the source of evil and instead make the sin of the world our choosing/doing. Reality it is both</p>

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	<p>ours and the devils – but we can choose to side with Christ instead of the devil.</p> <p>Ways of this world also refers back to 1:21 “present age”. Also see Gal 1:4 where Jesus is the rescuer and “gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age”</p> <p>World here is also not a creation sense, but a spiritual/theological sense – people organized by the devil against God. How does the devil organize us against God – every way, false religions (Islam, Mormon etc), culture and society such as peer pressure, fashion, the media.</p>
<p>V2: and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.</p>	<p>It is not enough of an emphasis to just say the devil or rule of the kingdom of the air. Paul provides, to make no doubt, a series of descriptive comments about who this is. He has no problem calling a spade a spade for the second time in two verses – first accusing us, now calling satan what he really is.</p> <p>“ruler of the kingdom of the air” is also used by John and also the Theodian translation of Daniel where terms is used to describe government powers controlled by demonic authority (apocalyptic – Prince of Persia, Prince of Greece). Where some “princes of” wield power of a specific realm, the reference here is to the “prince of the air” thus over all of the function that surrounds the earth.</p> <p>This is the only place “(kingdom of the) air” is used in scripture. It was commonly believed by Jews that demons hung around and floated in the air. That is one explanation. However, another plausible reason in Ephesus was a central point of magic happenings (Acts 19). In magical practices were commonly believed to be associated with “aerial spirits” or “aerial powers”. Thus, he may be making a culturally relevant statement to the people of Ephesus that what they used to believe in, magic, and how they believed that occurred, by aerial spirits, was of satanic or devil origin. Another thought process on why there are aerial spirits is because another word for spirit is wind. The</p>

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	<p>wind, like the spirits cannot be seen, but it can be felt and known to be real.</p> <p>Greek word here for “at work” is ἐνεργοῦντος (energoúntos – producing energy). This is meant to imply a powerful way. Not just busy work or work that is accomplishing something, but work that is deliberate, directed, powerful and with a definitive result, or work that is produced through a force or power. Basically, Paul is accusing those, again, of not being in Christ to not only be controlled by the devil but also that they are being his worker bees and they are doing so powerfully. This should spur us on to be that opposite and equal force.</p>
<p>V3: All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^[a] and following its desires and thoughts.</p>	<p>“All of us” now is not accusative towards them, but includes all – him, them, we. Unlike beginning in 2:11, this is actually including himself. 2:11 begins a focus on we/you ethnically (Jew / Gentile).</p> <p>“at one time” reflects the pre-Christian life. The resolution to this problem exists in 2:4-10.</p> <p>The evil impulse inclined people to engage in every manner of sin. For the rabbis, the only way to battle the evil inclination was to study Torah. For Paul, however, it is the new covenant blessing of the Holy Spirit, which is God’s empowering presence to overcome this tendency. Clinton E. Arnold, Ephesians, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 133.</p>
<p>V3: Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.</p>	<p>The literary here is genitive, meaning possession. Paul is saying here that we own this; we possess this wrath of God when we are apart from God.</p> <p>“Like the rest” is indicative of the entire human race outside of God.</p> <p>This mention of God’s wrath is in contrast to his love (1:4-6). It is a necessary and appropriate response to the rebellion described in 2:1-3. The wrath is not in spite, but responsive to. This is in contrast to the god’s of Ephesus where</p>

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	<p>they, like children, would lash out in anger and spite at their subjects.</p> <p>“by nature” = by birth. Paul also uses this term in referencing ethnicity.</p> <p>Paul also may choose this “by nature” description to be contrast to stoicism that emphasized living according to natures calling to please the god’s. In other words, the pagans believed that if it feels right, then it must be right so go do it. This is not God’s way and living “by nature” is contrary to God and leads to his judgement or wrath.</p>
<p>V4-5: But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,</p>	<p>“But God” is a brilliant ray of hope</p> <p>God is not only just, but he is merciful – like standing in front of a judge who proclaims you guilty of the most vial of crimes and then releases you to live a life of repentance.</p> <p>Grace (CHAREES) “unmerited favor or kindness that God extends to humanity” is about God giving us what we <i>do not deserve</i>—His blessings, salvation, and eternal life.</p> <p>Mercy (eleos) “God’s compassion and pity towards human suffering and sin” is about God <i>not giving us what we deserve</i>—the punishment and condemnation for sin.</p>
<p>2:5: made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.</p>	<p>“made us alive” is the main action – a verb. This ties us back to 1:19-20 and then emphasized by another verb of “dead.”</p> <p>Paul is so excited by this hope that he injects in between these three verbs “it is by grace you have been saved.” It reflects God’s excitement when a person comes to the saving knowledge of Jesus, comes forward and publicly declares him as King and is immersed into his Kingdom.</p>
<p>2:6: And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,</p>	<p>“Raised us up” is another verb “Seated us” third verb</p>

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	<p>These three verbs are important for us, and the imagery is important for us, as we contemplate the first portion of this passage. If we have been made a live in Christ, then we have dominion over the old way, the sinful way of our lives. Paul is saying, look, all though you still live amongst all of this filth, your house can be and is clean if you accept and use the mercy and grace of God. You can win over the evil! You are victorious because of Chris – so live like it!</p>
<p>2:7: 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.</p>	<p>We lament over the lack of visible miracles in the world today. But here, in each one of us, we have one. The purpose of a miracle is to display the power of God in order to draw others to him. Every miracle Jesus, Peter, and others did was to show the power of God. And here we live, each one of us who believes, has accepted, and has been immersed into Jesus is a miracle, and we have a purpose – Matt 28 is to go into all the world displaying this miracle by making more disciples. Here Paul echoes that sentiment – all of this grace and mercy on our lives exists for one purpose, so that we can work alongside God to draw others to him – and He continues to show us this grace and mercy. When we selfishly look at God’s grace and mercy on our lives as for us, we are looking at it all so wrong. It is there to glorify him -</p>
<p>2:8: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹</p>	<p>Same above</p>
<p>2:9: not by works, so that no one can boast.</p>	
<p>2:10: For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.</p>	

⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.