

Ephesians 2:1-10

Week 3 - By Grace, Through Faith: God's Work of Salvation

Introduction

? What was the best gift you've ever received? How did you respond?

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NIV)

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,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.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 not by works, so that no one can boast.¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Key Terms

***Flesh:** the nature of humanity apart from divine influence, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God

****Wrath:** under the sentence of divine punishment for rebellion/opposition to God

***Mercy:** Pity, compassion, covenant-loyalty, covenant-love, kindness & help to the undeserving

****Grace:** unmerited favor, kindness

***Handiwork:** that which has been made, of the works of God as creator

***Transgression:** a lapse or deviation from truth or uprightness; a sin, misdeed

**Definitions adapted from BibleWebApp.com*

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It is important to remember the 'bad news' of who we were without Christ before we get to the good news. Even though we may be physically alive, this passage refers to our spiritual state of deadness. In this section, the goal is to set up a stark contrast between being dead and being made alive.

Questions for Discussion: Spiritual Deadness (Ephesians 2:1-3)

- ? Who were we according to this passage?

- ? What do you think about when you hear Paul describe “spiritual deadness” (dead in sins, walking in the ways of the world, following the prince of the power of the air)?

- ? How do you react to this news of being ‘by nature, deserving of wrath’?

- ? How do we still struggle with our earthly nature, or ‘passions of our flesh’?

Questions for Discussion: God’s Mercy (Ephesians 2:4-9)

- ? What has God done for us according to this passage and why?

- ? What strikes you about the difference between these verses and verses 1-3?

The Greek word for “handiwork” here in the passage is *poiéma*, which means a work of God and is similar to our word, poem. It refers to the work of God as Creator. It is also used in Romans 1:20, where Paul speaks of God as clearly displaying His glory in the “things that have been made.” In this context, we are new people, God’s own workmanship in Christ, called to clearly display His glory by walking in the good works He has prepared for us to do beforehand.
-Strong’s Concordance, 4161

- ? When have you experienced God’s kindness?

- ? Why does this matter? How do you respond when you hear this news?

- ? Who are we now according to this passage?

Questions for Discussion: Walking in Good Works (Ephesians 2:10)

- ? What are we saved to do according to this passage?

- ? How are we called to show the mercy of God to others?

- ? In what ways can we use the gifts and strengths has God blessed us with in order to bless others?

For Discussion and Accountability

- ? What ways are you feeling called to respond to God's great mercy?

- ? What is one practical way that you can 'walk in good works' in your spheres of influence this week?