

Ephesians

Chapter 2:1-10

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

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,

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.

One of the most important things missing from modern evangelism is the understanding that before we were saved, we were in a state of death. Not simple ignorance or immaturity, but spiritual death. Although we could walk, talk and think physically, there was nothing in us that craved the righteousness of God and as a result, we were separated from Him. We were corpses and He brought us to life. When that occurred, we sprang to life and for the first time saw, we our sinfulness and we cried out for mercy. If God had not made us alive, we would have been lost in our existing state of death.

At one time we walked as the world does, but no longer. We were under the dominion of Satan and were enslaved to the desires of our flesh. But that state of affairs was crucified and buried in Christ. A crucifixion is not like a boxing match where the loser can demand rematch after rematch; our old self was put to death; our flesh was not.

We didn't walk in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desire of the flesh because at some point in time we decided to do so; we did so in accordance with our nature. That was who we were, but God has made us a new creation. (2 Cor. 5:17)

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),

It was God's tremendous love that compelled Him to save us.

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.

Not only did He make us alive in Christ, not only did He bestow to us an eternal inheritance, not only did He forgive our sins, but He also exalted us and seated us at His right hand in Christ.

God is making known to the world at least two of His divine attributes: His wrath and His mercy. Many people will ask Christians, "If there is an all-powerful God in heaven who is good, then why is there pain, suffering and evil in the world?" Although many will demand a "better" answer, God could not make either of these two attributes known if sin did not exist. cf. Romans 9:19-24

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.

Once again, Paul emphatically teaches our salvation by the grace of God through faith. Although this is a commonly quoted and memorized verse it must be understood in the context of this book. As we do so, another dimension of understanding can be achieved: not only does Paul tell us that we are saved by grace through faith, but just in case anyone might think that he was contradicting himself by asserting that the believer was responsible for providing faith in order to be saved, Paul teaches the irony of the fact that even the faith necessary for salvation was a gift from God. Clearly Paul is teaching in such a way as to protect the purity of grace because grace by definition must be 100% free from works. This concept of faith as a gift is not limited to this book: cf. Philipians 1:29

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

As a source of tremendous encouragement, Paul teaches us here that we are not saved by our good works but that we are saved to good works and that these works were prepared for us by God.