

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Title: From Death to Life

Text: Ephesians 2:1-10

The A.I.M.: The believer’s redemption is a work of grace through faith. His condition solicited such a response by God, without which no one could or would be saved.

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2009

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

"For by grace," has mortal ear ever heard such soothing words.

"For by grace" a slave has been redeemed from the bondage of his debt.

"For by grace" a prodigal son has been reconciled to his father.

"For by grace" a wrathful judge has been propitiated, appeased, placated and satisfied.

"For by grace" a guilty sinner has been justified and thus pardoned and declared right.

"For by grace" a condemned criminal has been forgiven of all his crimes.

"For by grace" the sins of the believer have been imputed to the King's Son and His righteousness has been credited to their account.

"For by grace," the sole intent of timelessness will be for the unfolding of this eternal truth, "For by grace."

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Introduction:

"In chapter one Paul wrote of the great purposes and plan of God, culminating in the universal headship of Christ."¹ This purpose finds its inception in the redemption of man. Man's redemption is a piece moving us toward God's universal headship.

"In 2:1-10 Paul states how sinners, who deserve nothing but God's wrath, become trophies of his grace. These verses are a commentary on 1:19, in that the great power toward us has been demonstrated historically in Christ and is now being demonstrated by making sinners into saints."²

Like our earlier chapter, verses 1-9 form one sentence in the Greek language. From non-blessing to blessing: Who we once were and how we got to where we now are **in Christ**. Here are the "nuts and bolts" of the movement from non-Christ to Christ. The contrast from non-Christ (vv. 1-4) to in Christ is dramatic and all because God is rich in mercy. Just as Christ was raised and seated by the Father (1:20) so also are His people raised and seated with Christ (2:6).

"He begins with one construction and halfway through he glides into another. That is because this is far more a lyric of the love of God than a careful theological exposition. The song of the nightingale is not to be analyzed by the laws of musical composition. The lark sings for the joy of singing. That is what Paul is doing here. He is pouring out his heart, and the claims of grammar have to give way to the wonders of grace."³

The reason for this immeasurable manifestation is so that God might showcase His grace in the Church (2:7). Notice how with God everything is immeasurable (1:19; 2:7; 3:8). At the end of the day when a final assessment is made it will be all about God's working (2:10). The Church, His body, is His workmanship. He crafted, He created the Church.

The Storyline:

God has written a story whereby those whom He loved can be redeemed from sin's debt and adopted as sons and daughters. The provision is greater than the need. Because of humanity's condition there is nothing they can do to undo the curse. God grants the gift that would release them

from the curse by grace through faith. All anyone must do is believe that what God has done is enough. In this simple act God's story continues to unfold.

The Problem:

The world, the devil, and the flesh work against God's redemptive purpose. God, however, cannot and will not be thwarted from fulfilling the story He wrote.

Questions:

1. What is the backdrop to this passage as found in chapter 1?
2. What do we have happening in 2:1-10?
3. Why is this thought introduced, and what is Paul trying to accomplish with it?
4. What hope do the lost have apart from God's intervention?
5. What does verses 1-3 do as it relates to our understanding of what God did?
6. Who does verse four introduce into the picture?
7. How is He introduced?
8. How is He described?
9. Why is He introduced and described in this fashion?
10. Why has He done all this according to verse seven?
11. What is this suggesting?
12. What is this clump of verses (vv. 8-10) doing?
13. What is the bottom line in these verses?
14. What is the outcome of God's craftsmanship?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know He saves sinners and adopts them as sons and daughters.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose to receive His grace gift by faith.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in His person and work.

Outline:

I. THE BELIEVER'S PAST SIN: We were dead in trespasses and sins (2:1-3).

We are dead in trespasses and sins. This is the infallible record of He who sees the makeup of our very essence (Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13). His gaze "pierces to the dividing asunder of our soul and spirit. He is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of our heart" (Heb. 4:12). "There is no creature that is not manifest in his sight. All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). What is the divine sentence? We are *dead*. We are dead in our offences and sins. We have nothing to offer, no merit, and no ability. The divine sentence is such that "none are pronounced good, none are righteous, no one seeks Him and one understand Him (Rom. 3:10-12)." Such is the unending condition of all mankind (Pres. Act. Ptc.) You and I have no hope before a holy God of ever measuring up to His righteous standard.

To be dead is more than mere separation. Oh to be sure separation is involved, but it is more than separation. To be dead is the absence of life. This is why we must be quickened. This is why we must be "born-again". The word 'dead' is the counterpart of being made alive.

It is our trespasses and sins that cause the deadness. This is what we must be forgiven of and redeemed from. To live like a dead man means you are following the ways of this world. To live like a dead man is to follow the ruler of this world (the devil). To live like a dead man is to gratify the cravings of the sinful nature by following its desires and thoughts. As believers, in whom Christ lives, we have been delivered from such a life.

A. Why are we dead (v. 1)?

We are dead because of our trespasses and sins. The idea of “trespasses” means “to cross over the boundary line in rebellion against God.” It is a violation of God's holy standard. Perhaps “trespass” accents the commission of sin. It speaks to our inability to stay within the lines of God’s holiness.

The word “sins” speaks to that of missing the mark of God's perfect standard. It is our human inability to satisfy the righteous demands of God. Perhaps “sin” accents the omission of righteous acts. Our inability to attain God’s standard of holiness. Being dead in our trespasses and sins can be seen as “a sepulcher of sins.” Why plural, perhaps to recall the multiplied aggravation of their guilt before God.

B. What does this look like (vv. 2, 3)?

Often the Christian speaks of the world, the devil, and the flesh as the villains within the story of God. Here is where such an idea originates.

1. We walked according to the course of this world (v. 2a)

The idea of “walked” (**parapateo** [Aorist Active Indicative]) speaks to a “course of life, manner or conduct of living. It denotes the notion of a continual, habitual action.” This walking speaks of deliberate progress in a particular direction.

The word ‘course’ speaks of an unbroken age, a human lifetime, a period of time. After the fall this has been the pattern of this world’s system. In our present passage world speaks of the ungodly multitude; the mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ (cf. I John 2:15-17).

2. We walked according to the prince of the power of the air . . . according to the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience (v. 2b)

The devil is the temporary ruler of this age or world. He is not an originator or creator but an instigator that provides ample opportunity for humanity to vent their rebellion against God. John 8:44 refers to the devil as being the father of the unsaved. It is his philosophy of life/death that shapes and molds the thinking of depraved humanity.

The word “working” is the Greek word **energeo**. We have transliterated it into English as *energize*. It is a present active participle. There is within us a spirit that rebels against God and those whom God places over us in our lives. We rage against the federal government, we rage against the state

government, we rage against the police officer who is simply doing his job. We rage at our children's teachers, we rage against our employers, we rage within our homes and we rage within the church. This thing that rebels is our fallen flesh and the prince of darkness feeds it through his control of this world system.

3. We lived in the lusts of the flesh (v. 3)

It is our fallen Adamic flesh that is empowering and influencing our choices and directing our actions. It is our fallen Adamic flesh that makes us anarchists. The unbelieving are in rebellion against God. The fallen world shaped by the prince of darkness appeals to our fallen flesh.

Paul's application is immediate and direct. This is what the spirit working within the sons of disobedience looks like. Notice the change from 'you' in verses one and two to 'we' of verse three. Why? It is for the purpose of identification. The unsaved person lives for sensual gratification. His focus is on the flesh and thus he lives by sight, for the flesh, in a temporal world declaring his autonomy from God. The unsaved person is flesh driven.

The word "lived" (Aorist Passive Indicative) speaks to one's conduct, behavior or manner of lifestyle. **anastrepho** TDNT - 7:715,1093; v; AV - return 2, have conversation 2, live 2, abide 1, overthrow 1, behave (one's) self 1, be used 1, pass 1; 11xNT; 1) to turn upside down, overturn, 2) to turn back, 3) to turn hither and thither, to turn one's self about, sojourn dwell in a place 4) metaphorically it speaks of "to conduct one's self, behave one's self, live"

"Indulging" (Present Active Participle) the craving, the desire for what is forbidden for the believer. For the unbeliever it is the enslavement of oneself to desires, cravings and passions.

4. We were children of wrath

What a man does can only be explained by what a man is. One's sinfulness is a result of one's inborn depravity. Our very nature demanded the wrath of God.

To walk away from the divine record still believing in our own innate goodness is to be blinded by the one who will snatch from us the life giving seed of God (2 Cor. 4:3, 4; Mark 4:15). In our natural condition we, like all mankind, are under the dreadful judgment of God (cf. Rom. 1:32). If the record stopped here, we would be consumed by our own despair, yet the record continues. As bleak as our depressing, depraved condition was God intervened, intruded or broke into our bleak situation.

II. THE BELIEVER'S PRESENT STANDING: We are made alive together with Christ (2:4-10)

"The main assertion of this section is that God has made sinners alive, raised them up, and seated them with Christ. All other clauses in these verses are subordinate to this main assertion." (Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 306).

"God is in essence what he manifests in action." (Markus Barth, *The Anchor Bible, Ephesians 1-3*, 219).

We must not allow ourselves to miss the strength of this powerful declaration. The fullness of grace can only be seen when laid against the backdrop of man's despair. This is the message of hope echoing through the corridors of holy write, "But God." Such a contrast brings hope to those consumed by despair. Such words are the relief we seek from our helplessness. Oh thank Him sinner and saint alike that He has not left us to ourselves. Praise His holy name – "But God."

"The main thing Paul wants to stress about all this is the sheer, almost unbelievable, magnificent kindness of God." (N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone*, 20).

This part provides the reason as to why Paul believes it is possible for us not to follow the ways of the world, not to follow the ruler of this world, and not to gratify the cravings of the sinful nature by following its desires and thoughts.

It is because He has made us alive. It is because through Spirit baptism that we have now been crucified, buried, raised and are now seated with Him. This is what redemption and forgiveness and adoption looks like.

A. The Mercy of God (4-6 [His Provision])

God's resources are rooted in His very character and thus are infinite and limitless. He draws from Himself. It is on account of His love that He loved us. Would any other platform or motive do? We love because He loved us (1 John 4:19). He is rich in mercy.

What does it mean when the text describes God as being "rich in mercy?" The word "rich" comes from **plousios**. It is used of those whose wealth exceeds that of those around them. It speaks of abundance, of having excess. God is rich in mercy. His mercy is abundant. It is excessive. It is greater than the need. This is what is spoken of in Titus 3:5, 6.

⁵"**He saved us**, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but **according to His mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶**whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior**, ⁷ so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7).

The mercy of God is His action of restraint. To show mercy is to withhold from the guilty the sentence against them. God does not deal with us according to our deserts. His motive for extending to us mercy is His love. His love is the "cause for this demonstration of mercy." (Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 327). God loves you. Romans 5:6, 8, 10 tell us –

- That God loved us when we were weak (v. 6)
- That God loved us when we were wicked (v. 8)
- That God loved us when we were at war with Him (v. 10).

Somehow in our twisted thinking we feel we deserve His love. That He ought to love the likes of you and me. Friend, we must marvel like the Psalmist who said, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him (Psalm 8:4)?"

Notice how the text states it, "He loves us even when we were dead in sins." "Paul shows that we being dead in transgressions was concurrent with God being rich in mercy. Hence, one is a state of deadness and the other is the action of mercy." (Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 329). Even, to this degree. How do we see mercy, how do we see love? Notice the union. In the following verses he shows the consequence of His mercy and love. He has withheld from us what we justly deserve and than grants to us what we can never merit.

1. He made us alive (v. 5)
2. He raised us up (v. 6)
3. He made us sit (v. 7)

It is because of His mercy and love that we are made alive, raised up and seated with Christ in heavenly places. These last two expressions reflect the believer's new position of being in Christ (cf. Col. 3:1-3; Phil. 3:20). Because of the same language employed in 1:20-23, I understand this to refer to our co-regent role with our Lord. We will reign with Him over all of the created order.

Colossians tells me that "my life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). And Christ "who is my life" guarantees my future glorification (3:4; Rom. 8:29, 30). What is this? This is grace!

In mercy He withheld wrath. In love He looks upon us favorably. In grace He gives us His life. Our identification with Christ is all an expression of grace. Why is it all of grace, so that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (v. 7). Here we see the motive of God as to why He did what was done.

- B. The Motive of God (7 [His Purpose]) "He might show the surpassing riches of HIS grace."

The purpose of the church being made alive, raised up and seated with Him is for this end. Verse seven gives us the reason as to why He did verses five through six. There are three guiding thoughts in verse 7. The Church will prove the immeasurable riches of His grace.

1. The duration / "that in the ages to come"

Right now we are this, but there is more. God has written a story that has His redemptive work as the centerpiece. Oh friends I wish to tell you that I cannot wait for this moment when all this gives way to all of that.

2. The disclosure / "that He might show us as trophies of His grace"

I deem it impossible for me to fully comprehend the magnitude of what was described earlier in 1:3-14. In fact, my inability must be overridden by the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit (1:15-23). Yet there this coming moment when God will openly triumph and He will get all the glory. It is a day when we will lay down all of our strife and we will see Him alone.

The salvation of sinners and the adoption of sons and daughters are an expression of His overflowing grace. Paul uses the statement, “exceeding riches of His grace.” The word “exceeding” is **huperballo**. It is used five times in the New Testament and all are by Paul (2 Cor. 3:10; 9:14; Eph. 1:19; 2:7; 3:19). The idea is that of surpassing, of being above measure. It is incapable of being sounded out. That is why Paul says, “that in the ages to come.” Heaven will be an unfolding of His glorious grace.

The word “riches” is similar to but different than that found in 2:4. This word is found in 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:8, 16. The excessiveness of His grace is seen in His kindness toward us.

The word “kindness” is **chrastotas**. It is used ten times and all by Paul. It is often translated by the word “goodness” (Rom. 2:4; 3:12; 11:22) and is identified as a fruit of the Spirit with gentleness (Gal. 5:22). The same root word (**chrastos**) is used in Matthew 11:30, “for my yoke is *easy*” and in Ephesians 4:32, “Be ye *kind* one to another.” This goodness from God is something that can be “tasted” (1 Pet. 2:3). We can experience His kindness. Notice something from the text, this exceedingly rich display of grace in the extending of God’s goodness toward us is found in Christ Jesus.

Verse 7 speaks to 1:10. Jesus Christ is everything. He is mercy. He is love. He is grace. He is goodness. To have Him is to have all things. Jesus Christ is the embodiment of God’s love (John 3:16). Jesus Christ is the embodiment of grace and truth (John 1:17). To have seen Christ is to have seen the enfleshment of the Father’s essence (John 14:9).

“God purpose, therefore, is that in the eternal future, the future which opens with Christ’s *parousia*, and in all the continuing length of that future, the grace of His ways with those once dead in sins should be declared and understood in all the grandeur of its exceeding riches” (Salmond, 288).

3. The display / “for by grace . . .”

God shows grace by saving trespassers and sinners and transgressors. “God manifests ‘common grace’ toward all men because they are His creatures (Ps. 145:9, 15; Matt. 5:45), but the overriding exercise of His grace lies in the provision of salvation in Christ.” (*Criswell Study Bible*)

C. The Method Of God (vv. 8-10 [His Plan])

“‘By grace you are saved’ [in verse 5] is a parenthetical outburst that will be repeated in verse 8. It is to assure the reader, who has been made alive together with Christ, that his salvation is based on God’s grace. Paul is going to explain that salvation is totally of grace and nothing of human effort.” (Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 331, 339).

“We can, perhaps, only understand the force of what Paul is saying when we step firmly into the world he has sketched in the first three verses of the chapter.” (N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone*, 22).

1. Salvation is a gift from God (v. 8)

a. The reason for this display – grace (Rom. 3:24)

Romans 3:24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Why did God save you? There can be no earthly basis for the giving of the gift or it is no longer a gift, but a wage or earning (Rom. 9:11; 11:6). It is the gift nature of salvation that is contrasted with sin's wages (Romans 6:23). Paul makes it emphatically clear that whatever might be our attainment or acquisition it is definitely not of ourselves. "Even what can be called conditional grace is enablement given to us to meet the conditions." (Piper, *Future Grace* [James 4:8]). "No human effort can contribute to our salvation; it is the gift of God." (NIV Study Bible)

"Due to the dilemma of being dead in transgressions and sins, there was no hope of deliverance from God's wrath outside of God's grace." (Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 332).

b. The result of this display - salvation

"'Salvation' has to do with people being rescued from the fate they would otherwise have incurred. It answers the question as to how that rescue has taken place, and who is ultimately responsible for it." (N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone*, 22).

Salvation is the result of God's gracious dealings with us. Notice the wording of Romans 11:5 (the choice of grace) and 6.

Romans 11:5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

In our larger context the idea of salvation refers to the redemption from sin's debt, the forgiveness of our trespasses, the adoption of sons and daughters, the sealing by the Holy Spirit and much more. This is what those within the body of Christ, the Church enjoy because of God's great love with which He loved us.

Yet how did we become the recipients of this free bestowal and lavish dispensing? It is through faith on our part that we receive the gift of God.

c. The route of this display - faith

The salvation purchased by Christ's death is universal in its sufficiency, but it is not universal in its application. "One is not automatically saved because Christ died, but one is saved when one puts trust in God's gracious provision."⁴

The only action we contribute is the exercising of faith. And, I believe that even the faith we exercise in the receiving of His gift is a gift of God (Romans 3:10, 11; Phil. 1:29; Acts 11:18; 13:48). If God's

electing grace is based on us choosing Him, could we then boast that we chose Him or that we somehow initiated the whole process? Absolutely not, if left to myself, would I choose God?

What is meant by 'faith'? What is a faith that enables and appropriates the gift of God? Faith is an act of the volition. There is an objective side to faith whereby we can speak of saving faith as the knowledge of, assent to, and unreserved trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ. long before we get to the objective side of faith there is, however, a subjective side whereby we simply believe in the person and work of Jesus Christ long before we begin to comprehend the lavish nature of what happened.

2. Salvation leaves no room for boasting (v. 9)

Because it is a gift the result is that no one should boast.

"One of the purposes in God saving us by grace is to preclude man from boasting." No one can boast. On what basis can we boast? On what ground do we stand to make such an appeal?

3. Salvation is the good work of God (v. 10)

All this is placed in and through the church which is His body. "Ecclesiology - so often scoffed at by those who see it as merely 'horizontal' rather than the really important thing, the 'vertical' dimension of soteriology - is non-negotiable."⁵

"But what are these 'good works'? [They are] the public face of the church in the world, about Christians shining in the world as lights in a dark place. This will involve Christians behaving according to radically different standards than the world's."⁶

What these good works look like will become apparent in chapters 4-6. The redemption of His people by His means is His triumph and culmination of His story (2:7; 3:10).

"The emphasis throughout these verses is on the contrast between the state of the human race as described in verses 1-3 and the state of the human race as God in his generous love has decided to remake it. Verse 10 is one of Paul's central statements of how Christians are at the centre of God's new creation."⁷

Everything the church enjoys is a result of a freely bestowed gift (v. 8-10). This gift as such was incapable of being earned through works thus no one can boast. The Church is the work of His hands and through which He works His good work. This is the story God wrote beforehand and it is in this story we are to walk. "God himself has made us what we are."⁸

My wife and I enjoy viewing art. I find art beautiful and shadows of the greater craftsman. But when I view the art, I do not simply think the art is beautiful. I also marvel at the gifting that produced such work.

The Church is the redeemed people of God. We are trophies of grace, and it is as we live as the redeemed that this good work of redemption is showcased in our community. God has called us out

from the world and into His church. The local church is a microcosm of the larger macrocosm, the church universal. To be at odds with either one is a blight on the redemptive work of the triune God.

“The work of God done in Christ or by Christ is not only the first and final work of God. It is, as the Gospel of John and the epistle to the Hebrews explicitly state, a perfect work, i.e. God’s masterpiece.”⁹

The good work of God is to show itself mightily through the church local. We are trophies of His grace and we are the work of His hand and those without are to see us and marvel at the good work God has done.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What’s the NEXT STEP?)

1. As with any passage of Scripture, we need to ask ourselves why Paul wrote this paragraph. What is his intended meaning?
2. If you are unsaved, you are still the object of God’s wrath (vv. 1-3).
3. If you are saved, you are now a trophy of His grace (vv. 4-7).
4. Do you understand how God’s abundant provision meets the deepest needs within the human condition?
5. You should apply God’s provision to your own need and thus live in accordance to God’s ultimate design for you. You should no longer live as a dead man.

¹ NIV Study Bible.

² Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 305.

³ William Barclay, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 95.

⁴ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 341.

⁵ N.T. Wright, *Justification*, 169.

⁶ N.T. Wright, *Justification*, 171.

⁷ N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone*, 23.

⁸ Markus Barth, *The Anchor Bible, Ephesians 1-3*, 226.

⁹ Markus Barth, *The Anchor Bible, Ephesians 1-3*, 226.