

LESSON 64

From Death to Life

EPHESIANS 2:1-13



BIBLE TRUTH

SALVATION IS ALL BY GOD'S GRACE

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Ephesians 2:1–13 from the Scriptures or read story 142, “From Death to Life,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Dead Means Dead

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ fishbowl and accessories such as gravel, plants, and rocks
- ✓ can of sardines
- ✓ can of anchovies
- ✓ pitcher of water
- ✓ adult helper to participate in the skit

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Dead Men Lie

SUPPLIES

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Together in God's House

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

All Mystery Gone

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

TOTAL 75 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Apart from grace, men are dead in their sins—Paul makes it perfectly clear that sinners cannot reach out to God—they are dead (Ephesians 2:1). A dead man cannot help himself; he is powerless. He can't move or do anything about his lifeless condition. Likewise with us in our sin; we cannot save ourselves and we don't want to save ourselves. We drift in our own independent direction, satisfying our sinful cravings and desires (Ephesians 2:2–3). This is true of everyone, Gentiles and Jews alike. As a result, we are by nature objects of God's wrath (Ephesians 2:3). Any thought that mankind is intrinsically good is shattered by Paul's words. Apart from God breathing life into us, we are hopelessly dead in sin, mired in rebellion against God.

Salvation is by grace alone—After establishing that mankind is dead in sin, Paul introduces the mercy of God, which can bring the dead back to life. While we were dead in our sins, God made us alive in Christ. This amazing miracle takes place by grace, the free gift of God (Ephesians 2:5). We bring nothing to our salvation; it is all by grace through faith alone (Ephesians 2:8). No one can boast that he or she sought after God (Ephesians 2:9). As Christians, “we are [Christ's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,” which God prepared for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).

Those who are saved join the family of God—God makes us alive, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us of our sin, satisfying the wrath of God (Ephesians 2:13). All men, Jews and Gentiles alike, receive the same salvation and are given the Spirit of God and brought into the family of God. Not only are we restored to God, but sharing in the same Spirit of God we are restored to one another (Ephesians 2:14–16). Since all men who are saved receive the Spirit of God (Ephesians 2:18), we are all members of the same family of God (Ephesians 2:19). We call that family the church. Christ is the cornerstone of the church, and all together we are the temple of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:21). In the Old Testament, God dwelt in a temple made by human hands, where only the high priest had access to the presence of God. Now all Christians, both Jew and Gentile, are filled with the Spirit of God like living stones built into a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5).

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Living Temple

The church is referred to as God's temple. All believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and are God's house. Jesus is the cornerstone of that temple. 1 Peter 2:4-5 describes it this way, "As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

In Christ, God made his dwelling place among men (John 1:14). Now, through the Holy Spirit, God dwells in every believer. Together we all form the new temple of God. Now that we are all part of God's temple we are to live obedient lives to honor the Spirit of God dwelling in us (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

This second chapter of Ephesians is full of gospel truth. Paul summarizes the gospel message as follows: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). Paul also refers back to the gospel when he tells us in Ephesians 2:5 that God made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Jesus died on the cross for sinners—his enemies.

The work of Christ on the cross to save sinners is the key to Paul's message here in Ephesians 2. We were objects of God's wrath, but Jesus took on himself the wrath of the Father in order that we, who deserved death, might be made alive in Christ! It is the work of Christ that saves us. This removes all boasting. There is nothing we can do to make ourselves perfect. We can only accept the perfect work of Jesus on the cross.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW **5 MIN**

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY **10 MIN**

Read Ephesians 2:1–13 from the Scriptures or read story 142, “From Death to Life,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 **15 MIN****Dead Means Dead****SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ fishbowl and accessories such as gravel, plants, and rocks
- ✓ can of sardines
- ✓ can of anchovies
- ✓ pitcher of water
- ✓ adult helper to participate in the skit

Before class place the fishbowl and accessories in a bag along with the canned fish. Set the pitcher of water on a table in the room. This skit is designed to get across the point that when something is dead it can no longer come back to life unless God were to bring it back to life. Memorize the following script or just ad-lib as you go.

- JOE:** (removing the fishbowl from the bag) Hey, Bob. Can you give me a hand?
- BOB:** Sure, Joe. What do you need?
- JOE:** Can you fill up this fishbowl with water?
- BOB:** There is some water in that pitcher over there. Will that do?
- JOE:** Yeah, that should be fine. Only shake it up some to get a lot of oxygen in the water.
- BOB:** You look like you are setting up a fishbowl.
- JOE:** You guessed it! I picked this up at a garage sale yesterday. I thought I would set it up so the kids could watch the fish swim around.
- BOB:** Where did you get the fish?
- JOE:** Acme (name of a local grocery store).
- BOB:** Acme? They sell fish?

- JOE:** (pouring gravel into the fishbowl.) Of course they sell fish. Every grocery store sells fish. Hand me the plants in the bag.
- BOB:** (rummaging around in the bag for the plants, which he hands to Joe) I know every grocery store sells fish. But not every store sells goldfish.
- JOE:** Do you think I'm stupid or something? Of course you can't buy goldfish in a grocery store.
- BOB:** What then, did you get a lobster out of the tank?
- JOE:** (extracting the can of sardines from the bag) No, sardines.
- BOB:** Sardines! They are dead!
- JOE:** Of course they are dead. You would be dead too if somebody stuffed you in a can for a few years.
- BOB:** (sarcastic and condescending) So, how do you plan to bring them back to life?
- JOE:** Water, of course. Go ahead, open them up and drop them in.
- BOB:** These sardines won't come back to life when you put them in the water! They are dead. D-E-A-D, dead! They will not swim; they will float and stink up this whole room. You are not going to put these in that bowl!
- JOE:** Huh, I thought once they got out of the can and could stretch out a bit, you know, loosen up...I thought they would do fine swimming around.
- BOB:** Listen to me, Joe. How many times do I have to tell you? They are dead. They can't stretch out. They can do nothing at all; they are dead.
- JOE:** (extracting can of anchovies from the bag) What about these anchovies? Will they swim?

Skit ends.

Use this skit to talk about how just as the canned fish are dead, we are dead in our sin. Apart from Christ making us alive we can do nothing to draw near to God.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Dead Men Lie

SUPPLIES

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

Ask your class to rate their “goodness” on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = evil; 5 = pretty good; 10 = perfect). Tell them that apart from the saving work of Christ, we are all evil and dead in our sins. Our sinful nature tries to fool us into thinking we are actually much better off than we are. We think that we can get to God without God’s help.

Ask the class if they can think of ways people fool themselves into believing they are Christians, when in fact, they are not. In what ways do people try to work their way to eternal life?

They try to be good.

They go to church.

They pray.

They are sorry when they hurt someone.

All these are good things, but none of them can take away their deadness.

Use multiplication with zero as another illustration. Ask the class to calculate the following equations:

$$3 \times 0 = ?$$

$$43 \times 0 = ?$$

$$42,368 \times 0 = ?$$

No matter how big a number you multiply by zero, you get zero. We are sinners who cannot become righteous no matter how many good works we try to do.

Read through Ephesians 2:1–10 and ask the following questions:

- **Why is the picture of being dead a good one for describing us in our sins?**
(Like a dead person, we can do nothing to save ourselves. A dead person will never be able climb a flight of stairs, no matter how forcefully or nicely you ask. Similarly we are spiritually dead in our sins and cannot get to God by ourselves.)

- **If all people are dead in sin, how is anyone saved?**
(God makes us alive in Christ, and then we are able to believe. Some think that God saves us after we believe on our own. However, this passage makes it clear that we come to saving faith as a result of God making us alive, not the other way around.)

■ **How does God saving us remove all possibility for boasting?**

(If it is God's work alone, we cannot boast that we have done anything to contribute to our salvation. Although we might have prayed to God, the Bible tells us that no one comes to Christ unless the Father draws him. Read John 6:44 and 6:65.)

WORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the WORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Together in God's House

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Draw a line of people holding hands. Under the line of people write "We are God's house."

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

All Mystery Gone

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

Prior to class write Isaiah 53:6 on the whiteboard. In class, explain that the words on the board were written by the prophet Isaiah hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Back when Isaiah was writing he didn't know who the "him" represented. That was a mystery to Isaiah and the other prophets. But now, looking back, it is no longer a mystery.

Ask the following questions:

- How does Isaiah’s prophecy match what Paul is telling the Ephesians in Ephesians 2?

(Isaiah says that all have turned away from God. Paul says that all are dead in their sins, following their own desires. Isaiah says that we are saved by God’s plan to punish Jesus in our place. Paul says that we were saved by the blood of Jesus.)

- What does Scripture mean when it says “the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all”?

(Jesus took all our sins upon himself and received the wrath of God, the punishment for our sins. In 2 Corinthians 5:21 we read, God “made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”)

Isaiah announced that we all have turned to our own way. All people are sinners, having rejected God and rebelled against him. Isaiah doesn’t say that *some* have turned away, nor does he say that *many* have turned away. Isaiah tells us that *all* have turned away. Paul says it like this: “Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind” (Ephesians 2:3). Isaiah doesn’t leave us hopeless in our sin though. In Isaiah 53:6, we read the good news: “The LORD has laid on him the iniquity (the sin) of us all.” Jesus took the punishment for all of us who turned away that we might be “brought near by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13).