



4/2/26

Today is Maundy Thursday. It's the day of the Passover; the day Jesus ate the last supper with His disciples. It's the day He broke the bread and said, "This is My body broken for you." It's the day He washed the disciples' feet. It's the day He told Judas, "Go quickly and do what you're going to do." It's the day He was arrested, beaten, and illegally tried. Such a dark day... and yet, such a day that led to hope. I can't help but thank the Lord for His incredible sacrifice on this day.

*Easter blessings,
Jonna*

Ephesians 2:1-10

In my recent Biblical Counseling Conference, I learned something that has really impacted my heart and mind when I'm struggling... Flip the narrative. My natural tendency is to say something like, "I know God loves me and forgives me, BUT I feel like such a loser!" I think everyone understands that "the rules of communication" reveal that anything said after the "but" is negated. So, to flip the narrative, I would say, "I feel like such a loser, BUT I know God loves me and forgives me. When I flip the narrative, I focus on the hope of God rather than my failure. And the truth is... God is bigger than my failure!"

In today's passage I see that God has put the narrative in the right place. The passage COULD say, "God, being rich in mercy, gave me life in Christ, BUT I was dead and living for my sinful passions." If He had put it in that order, I would easily negate the hope of His loving mercy. Praise God for putting things in the right order!!!

I see in this passage that the gospel changes everything... my destiny, my mindset, my hope, my purpose... What God has for me is much greater than what I would have for myself... because He loves me more than I can imagine. He knows what I need. He has the power to do what I need. He wants to take care of me. He does take care of me... as I will see.

Vs. 1-3 ~ "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work

in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

I WAS dead. A dead person cannot bring itself back to life. Death came in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve rebelled against God. Eve was deceived. Adam's choice was deliberate. They THOUGHT that by pursuing the passions of their own flesh, they would be master of their own destiny... in charge and in control of their own lives.

That's NOT what happened. They became servants of sin... of the Prince of the power of the air, who is Satan. They followed him who is now working in the lives of "the sons of disobedience", the walking dead. This is confusing to my physical mind because it's speaking of a spiritual death. The person doesn't know that he's dead. It's like a chicken that continues to run around after its head has been cut off, or like a snake that continues to slither after it's been beheaded. The death is IN trespasses and sins... rebellion against God and falling short of His glory.

What are the behaviors of one who is spiritually dead and following the devil? This is where it gets confusing. The devil has no problem with anyone thinking that they're master of their own destiny. One day he will come out and demand that people fall down and worship him... but right now, he lets people believe they're in control of the passions of their flesh... that they decide to carry out the desires of their flesh and mind. They have no idea that by nature they are children of wrath. But think about it. When am I ever in control of my sin? The moment I give in to it, sin tries to take my mind captive... even as a believer who has the Holy Spirit dwelling in me! How much more a person who doesn't know God at all???

Here's where I get to see the hope of the narrative...

Vs. 4-5 ~ "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—"

BUT GOD... If all I had was vs. 1-3, I would be absolutely hopeless. BUT GOD made me alive together with Christ. Why??? If I was dead and completely going after sinful, corrupt passions to self-indulge and only care if I got caught... Why would God, first of all, send His Son to pay my penalty with His own blood... and secondly, give me life without me doing anything to make it better???

BUT GOD... made me alive with Christ BECAUSE He is the God of mercy! He does not give me the wrath and condemnation I deserve. How much mercy? Total mercy. Psalm 103:4 says He CROWNS me with mercy. Lamentations 3:22-23 says that His mercy is new every morning. Hebrews 4:16 says I can confidently draw near to His throne of grace to receive His mercy!!!

Why would God be so merciful as to bring me to life when I was dead and had no desire for

Him at all??? Because of His steadfast, undying, untainted, unconditional love for me! Micah 7:18 says He doesn't stay angry with me because He DELIGHTS in steadfast love. I can't go very far in any scripture without reading about how much He loves me... so much that He sent His Son to die for me while I was still a dead, weak, ungodly sinner.

In His mercy, God has saved me by His grace. His grace is the generosity of His love poured out on me even though I don't deserve it. But there's more!!!

Vs. 6-7 ~ "and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

God has given me a whole new destiny and future. Where I would have gone down into the depths of hell, I now have a seat with Him in heaven. I'm not there yet, but if God has said it... it's as good as done. All His promises are yes and amen. My citizenship is now in heaven... this world is not my home.

What's God's purpose for giving me a place with Him in heaven? When He takes me home, He is going to make His beyond imagination abundant wealth of grace abound toward me in His gentle, wonderful goodness and kindness because I am IN Christ Jesus... saved by His sacrifice and resurrection. I have died with Him and now I walk with Him in new life. Jesus paid my entrance fee... and the Holy Spirit has sealed me with the royal seal of God so that my inheritance and my seat in heaven are absolutely absolute.

Right now I am experiencing the grace of God on this earth. But I'm experiencing it without the fullness of God's glory and majesty and splendor before my eyes. 1 Corinthians 13:12 says, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known." Just as I can't look directly into the sun and have to cover my eyes, right now I can't look directly into the face of Jesus. But someday I will... while I'm sitting with my Savior. I can't wait!

Vs. 8-9 ~ "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Just in case I missed the statement in vs. 5, "by grace you have been saved", I get to see it in more detail now. If I could get this through my head to my heart in every aspect of my life, I would save myself a lot of shame!!!

Here are my flipping the narrative statements from these verses ~

- *I fall short of God's glory in every way, BUT I have been saved by His grace!*
- *I cannot do enough to earn my way to God, BUT the only thing I bring to the table is my faith... which is also a gift from Him.*

- *I did not get this salvation by anything I did, BUT as John 1:12-13 says, because I BELIEVED in His name He gave me the right to become His child... not through a special bloodline that I was born into, not through the will of my flesh, not through manmade rules, BUT through God Himself.*
- *I cannot pay for my seat in heaven, BUT it is mine because God has given me salvation through Jesus as a free gift. What would a birthday gift to my child be if I made her buy it? That's not a gift! God has given me His amazing, priceless GIFT!*

I was dead, BUT now I have so much more than anything I could have bought or imagined for myself.

Vs. 10 ~ "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

The Greek word for workmanship is "poiéma". I am His poem. I WAS a pile of ashes, BUT now I am His poetry. HIS poetry. I am created IN Christ Jesus for a purpose... to work in the family business. I don't choose my job. He does. He prepared me for good works before the foundation of the world. He made these works ready for me... the way the craft people make the crafts ready for the kids to do at VBS. My job is not to take His craft and make a whole new thing. But He designed me to use the unique gifts and talents He gave me to accomplish His work. O Lord, my job is to walk and live doing the works You gave me to do.

No matter who I am or what I was, God has a beautiful purpose for my life. He thought my purpose out. He planned it. He prepared the works for me to do and He prepares my heart to do them for His glory. I may FEEL like I have nothing to offer or that God is missing what I SHOULD be doing, BUT God knows exactly what will help me to glorify Him and satisfy my soul. O Lord, You're in charge. You have given me life. I will serve at the pleasure of my King. Praise You for bringing me into the family business!!!