

Ephesians 2

Ephesians 2:1-10

At the beginning of chapter 2 Paul returns to the topic of election. Last week we discussed how understanding election is essential to understanding our calling in Christ.

I. The How of Election (2:1-10)

A. The nature and ability of the unbeliever (2:1-3)

1. In Ephesians 2:1-3 Paul will explain the natural human condition apart from Christ. He will do this in order to show that neither our election nor our faith is rooted in some inherent virtue we possess.
2. "And you were..."
 - a. Paul is placing this in the past tense – he is speaking to saints and explaining to them what was once true of them.
 - b. He also uses the word "you" in this section of the epistle; he is speaking to the Gentiles in Ephesus particularly and Gentiles generally.
3. The condition of those who are not in Christ – unbelievers are spiritually DEAD
 - a. They are physically born without spiritual life – a shocking but accurate term is to say that they are stillborn.
 - b. They are incapable of any spiritual good.
 - c. Those who are spiritually dead can perform benevolent good deeds – this is not because of inherent righteousness in them, but rather it is because of the common grace of God.
 - d. Unbelievers are not as bad as they could possibly be but they are utterly unable to do anything to please God or overcome the fact that they are spiritually dead.
4. What is the reason unbelievers are spiritually dead? They are dead in their "trespasses and sins." From what we have seen thus far in Ephesians we see that one is either alive "in" Christ or dead "in" trespasses and sin."
5. What does it mean to be dead in trespasses and sins?
 - a. It means to follow the course of this world.
 - b. It means to follow prince of the power of the air.

- c. It entails living according to the passions of the flesh. Paul says it means indulging the desires of the flesh and the mind.
- d. Unbelievers are by nature children of wrath - "wrath" is the Greek word *orge* and it refers to opposition to what is good; it is not a violent outburst. Paul is also indicating that it means deserving of the wrath of God

B. Moving from death to life (2:4-7)

- 1. The work of God (2:4a, 6)
 - a. But God...(2:4a) God is working independently, we do not have a part in our transformation.
 - b. God the Father made us alive together with Christ (2:6)
 - c. He raised us up with Christ and we are seated with Him in His reign (2:6)
- 2. The motivation for God's work. Why did he do this? Did he sense some goodness in us or did he determine that we would be a good choice for salvation? No, he did it because he is(2:4b-5a)
 - a. Rich in mercy
 - b. Because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead...
- 3. The goal of God's work (2:7) - to show forth the riches of his grace.

C. By grace you have been saved (2:8-10)

- 1. Grace - unmerited favor
- 2. Faith as the gift of God
- 3. Not of works
- 4. Created in Christ Jesus for good works - notice how this harkens us back to Genesis

Ephesians 2:11-22

Verse 11 begins with the word "therefore." This indicates that Paul is applying his previous teaching concerning election. This is part of the mystery that is revealed in Christ and it is an exposition of how God has and is making us His people to the world. The point that Paul is making in this section is that the unity of God's people is an essential component of our calling to the world.

II. Jew and Gentile – Built Together as One (2:11-22)

The book of Ephesians was written to Gentile believers. One thing Paul is making clear in this section of the epistle is that the Gentiles have not displaced the Jews by their election. Another reason these verses are important is because the Jews and the Gentiles were profoundly divided; even in the church. Through election God has united Jews and Gentiles together in Christ. If God can and has united these two then he can certainly unify all believers in Christ; unity in the church is an essential component of the gospel.

A. The Gentiles have been integrated into the people of God (2:11-16)

1. The Gentiles before they were united to Christ (2:11-12)

a. Called “the uncircumcised” by the circumcised (2:11)

- The Jews that labeled the Gentiles with this moniker clearly intended it as a pejorative. They were saying that the Gentiles did not have a claim to the promises of God.
- Paul indicates there is a difference between physical circumcision and true circumcision. Paul does not accept the claim of the Jews that disregarded the believing Gentiles.
- Not all Jews were guilty of this, only those that put their confidence in the flesh instead of resting on the promises of Christ were guilty; many Jews had come to faith in Christ.

b. But circumcision (putting confidence in the flesh) is not the issue that identifies one as being in Christ; faith in Christ is the issue. (2:12) Apart from faith in Christ Gentiles (and Jews for that matter) are:

- Separated from Christ
- Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
- Strangers to the covenants of promise
- Having no hope
- Without God in the world

2. But now, in Christ, believers have been transformed (2:13-16)

a. Those who were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

b. Christ has made peace and broken-down hostilities. By way of application we can say that in Christ all true believers are united as one.

- c. Christ abolished the law of commandments. He has fulfilled the law and provided the way for us to be reconciled to God.
 - d. He has reconciled all believers and united them together in one body.
- B. Believers have been built together for God (2:17-22) All believers:
1. Have had Christ's peace preached to them.
 2. Have access in one Spirit to God the Father.
 3. Are members of the same household, fellow citizens with the saints, and members of the household of God.
 4. This household is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ as the cornerstone.
 5. Are joined together as a temple as a dwelling place for the Spirit of God.

Application

1. God chose us we did not choose him.
2. He chose us to make us his people to the world that we might:
 - Live holy and blameless lives.
 - Give glory to God.
 - Fight the spiritual battle in the heavenly place.
 - Understand the mystery of His will
 - Be united together with all other believers as a dwelling place for the Spirit of God.
3. As American Christians, we are much more comfortable thinking in terms of our individual spiritual disciplines; our election means that we must work much more diligently toward unity.