

**Eph 2:1–10 (ESV)** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>(2)</sup> 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— <sup>(3)</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>(4)</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>(5)</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>(6)</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>(7)</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>(8)</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>(9)</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>(10)</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**We move into chapter 2 where we will quicken the pace**

### 1. Christians are big fans of grace

- A. Chapter 2 details why that is true – why grace is so amazing

### 2. What do we mean by grace? God’s undeserved kindness towards us

- A. In the passage before us we see how undeserving of this grace we were
  - 1). This passage paints a horrifying picture of who the sinner is before salvation  
Then thrills us with a verse that starts “But God...”
    - a). God has a rescue plan for rebels who love sin and have no desire for him

**Transition:** I think at this point it would be helpful to get some context – the flow of thought

### 3. In chapter 1 we were thrilled by the grace of God in our salvation

- A. We saw the gracious work of the Father in our salvation
  - 1). He chose us before the foundations of the world to be adopted into his family
  - 2). We are told this was to the praise of his *glorious grace*
- B. We saw the gracious work of the Son in our salvation
  - 1). In him we have redemption and forgiveness of our sin
  - 2). We are told this is in accordance with the *riches of God’s grace*
- C. We saw the work of the Spirit in our salvation
  - 1). He has marked us out as belonging to God – his possession
  - 2). He was placed into our life as a down payment  
God’s guarantee we will be with him to enjoy our future inheritance
    - a). This is God saying to us “I will finish the work I began”
- D. Paul finished the chapter praying that God would give his readers understanding
  - 1). He knew these truths were too deep for the unaided human mind to grasp  
Therefore he asks that the Spirit would do that work of illumination
    - a). So that we would know God better = intimacy
    - b). So that we would know the hope of our calling – know we know him = assurance
    - c). Then that we would know what is waiting for us = inheritance
    - d). And understand the power working in us – to get us to that inheritance in glory

**Thought:** We don’t deserve any of that – it is all erected upon the solid foundation of grace

- A. But to understand how amazing grace is – so that it turns into the celebration and worship it should
  - 1). Paul now reminds us of who we were when grace exploded into our life

**Question:** Why is this necessary?

- A. Because we tend to think too highly of ourselves – this reduces our amazement of grace
  - 1). Some Christians almost act like they deserved salvation  
**“I was always nice, sincere and honest.”**
    - a). I wasn’t out getting drunk all the time like a lot of people I know – wasn’t a partyer
    - b). I worked hard – I tried to treat people with respect

**“I always had a spiritual side. I always sought God.”**

- a). No you didn’t – you may have been somewhat religious – warm thoughts  
But you didn’t seek the true God – see more later

- B. I’ve heard Christians say – God chose me because he could use my giftings  
1). He saw who I was naturally and knew he could use me

**Point:** From I wasn’t that bad – I was actually pretty good - to I had talents God could use  
It all takes away the impact grace should have on us

- A. We can so deceive ourselves that we are not that impressed with grace at all

**4. This section rips away all that phony veneer we’ve deceived ourselves with**

- A. This section honestly exposes *who the believer was* before God saved us  
1). This section reduces us and exalts God’s grace – resulting in gratitude and worship  
B. This section also tells us who the *unbeliever still is* before God  
1). No matter how nice you may be – how helpful and sincere – even how religious you are  
a). This passage tells you how you stand before a holy God  
2). This passage is meant to expose how unrighteous you are  
Making you see how in need of God’s saving grace you really are

**Thought:** This passage works in a two-fold manner

- A. It reminds the believer of who they were and the amazing grace of God that rescued them  
1). When understood this should naturally result in a gratitude and worship  
B. For the unbeliever it exposes who they are – showing them their need of saving grace  
1). Hopefully this will drive them to Christ as their only hope of salvation  
2). It is an ugly portrayal – meant to shock and awaken – to create an urgency to correct it

**Transition:** We will be concentrating on the unbeliever

- A. As we do – if you are a believer let this remind you of who you were – so grace is exalted

**4. Outline**

- A. The unbeliever is dead in sin  
B. The unbeliever is enslaved to sin  
C. The unbeliever is a child of wrath not a child of God  
D. The unbeliever can be forgiven in Christ

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**I. THE UNBELIEVER IS DEAD IN SIN**

**Eph 2:1 (ESV)** And you were *dead* in the trespasses and sins

**1. This is not saying they are dead because they sin**

- A. This is saying we were born spiritually dead to God  
1). We were lifeless when it came to him – we had no desire at all for him and his ways  
2). We might have had religious feelings – warm spiritual thoughts  
a). But religious feelings is not the same as desiring God – coming into a relationship with him  
b). Paul was zealous for religion and spiritually dead – as lost as can be  
1a). He rejected the thought of Christ – refused to bow to his authority  
Therefore he was zealous for religion but dead to God

**Question:** What is mere religion – it is man’s way of reaching God – not God’s way of reaching man

- A. It is designed to control God – I do what I THINK I should do and expect God to bless that  
1). Bless my life now and open the door to heaven on the other side of the grave

- B. Remember when Jesus was talking to that crowd in Matthew 7  
**Mt 7:21–23 (ESV)** “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>(22)</sup> *On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’* <sup>(23)</sup> And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

- 1). That is the religious lost – doing all these things on their own but in Jesus name
  - a). Then expect God to accept them on their terms and allow them into heaven
  - b). But they had no relationship with him – they never knew him
    - 1a). They never repented of their sin – bowed to his authority  
Placed their faith in him alone rather than in their own works
    - 2a). They just simply did their works and expected him to bless them

**Transition:** Our passage is speaking about those who are spiritually dead towards God

- A. They may not mind the thought of a god – but have no desire to bow to the true God
- B. Paul tells us what characterizes the spiritually dead

## 2. The spiritually dead will live lives characterized by sin

**Eph 2:1 (ESV)** And you were dead in the *trespasses* and *sins*

- A. The spiritually dead or not dead to everything – they are very alive to sin
- B. This is where the NLT gets this verse really wrong

**Eph 2:1 (NLT)** Once you were dead *because* of your disobedience and your many sins.

- 1). You weren’t dead *because* you sinned – you sinned *because* you were dead
- 2). Sin is the natural outcome of being controlled by a fallen nature that is wired for rebellion

**Transition:** The unbeliever is dead to God and dominated by sin

- A. Paul goes on to list three things that held the unbeliever in a state of bondage
  - 1). The World. The devil. The flesh.
- B. These three things keep the unbeliever hopelessly bound up by sin
  - 1). Unless God rescues them by grace they will remain this way until the grave

## II. THE UNBELIEVER IS ENSLAVED TO SIN

### The Unbeliever is Captive to The Ways of The World

**Eph 2:1–2 (ESV)** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>(2)</sup> *in which you once walked, following the course of this world...*

#### 1. What do we mean when we say world?

- A. It is not the physical world – there is nothing inherently evil in Yosemite, Grand Canyon
  - 1). God’s common grace has provided natural beauty for us to enjoy
- B. World here is talking about that anti-god mindset of the culture around us
  - 1). It is things like sexual immorality – drunkenness – wild parties  
It can be materialism – giving the devotion that belongs to God to the things of the world  
It could be a longing for position and power – doing whatever it takes to achieve it  
It may be education, career or family
    - a). It is simply a mindset that places other things above God in your affections  
“These cravings include our desperate appetites for exploitative pornography or selfish luxury as well as our incurably self-indulgent attention-seeking and proud self-glorification.”
  - 2). It might be mere religion – it’s just as worldly as anything else – *and much more dangerous*

- a). At least the drunkard knows he's a sinner  
The merely religious are so deceived by their own works they don't think they are

## 2. Worldliness is a mindset that seeks satisfaction apart from any thought of God

**David Wells:** "You can recognize 'the ways of this world' wherever sin seems acceptable and righteousness seems strange."

- A. But the truth about all the world has to offer – it can never truly satisfy – it always ends up boring us
  - 1). Why? Because God created man to primarily find their satisfaction and joy in him
    - a). Nothing the world has to offer is big enough to hold our attention  
We become bored with it and constantly need to find something else – something greater
- B. But until we are set free by Christ and given a nature that desires satisfaction from another source
  - 1). We will keep trying to be satisfied by that which cannot satisfy
  - 2). We will want nothing to do with the God who promised abundant life
    - a). We will keep believing the devil's lie that following God can't bring lasting satisfaction  
That we will be satisfied by the things of the world if we only get enough of them

**Transition:** So the unbeliever lives in a world custom designed to control them

To grab their attention and keep their focus off of God with the offer of substitute pleasures

- A. The world is a powerful force – but it doesn't work alone to control us  
We also contend with a powerful supernatural enemy who uses the things of the world to tempt us

## The Unbeliever Is Held Captive by the god of This World

**Eph 2:1–2 (ESV)** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>(2)</sup> 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—*

### 1. In Hebrew thinking Satan exists "in the air" – spiritual realm between heaven and earth

- A. Satan actively works to tempt those who are dead in sin – why? To keep them from God
  - 1). He brings the things of the world and whispers  
"This is what you need to be happy. This will satisfy you."
    - a). James tells us we are lured into sin – Satan uses the things of this world as bait
  - 2). He works hard tempting them to believe lies about the existence of God = *Evolution*
  - 3). If they insist on believing there is a God he will lie to distort his character = *Eve*
    - a). God is a liar – he didn't mean what he said
    - b). God is a cosmic killjoy holding back all the good stuff from you
    - c). He doesn't love you – want what's best for you – if he did you could eat from that tree
    - d). He's not loving – he's unfair – following him could never bring happiness
- B. He's got a million different types of bait to keep the unbeliever wrapped up in sin

**Transition:** He uses these same tactics on the believer – watch out for all this

- A. The unbeliever willingly takes this bait – why?
  - 1). Because his ways – line up perfectly with how we are wired
    - a). The unbeliever wants those things of the world that he tempts us with  
They want to believe the lies he tells us about God
    - b). The next point tells us why

## The Unbeliever Is Held Captive to Their Cravings

**Eph 2:1–3 (ESV)** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>(2)</sup> 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— <sup>(3)</sup> *among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind...*

### 1. **Flesh is not just our physical body = it is that whole fallen human nature**

- A. Here is why Satan tempting us with the things of the world was so powerful
  - 1). We wanted sin – we loved those substitutes for God – that is how we were wired
  - 2). We didn't want God – we had no desire for holiness – we loved the sinful things of the world
- B. Talk to an unbeliever about being in bondage to sin – they'll laugh at you
  - 1). They sin because they want too – they don't want to change
    - a). The unbeliever thinks sin is something to brag about – not repent of – remember!  
"You think you were wasted last night – you should have seen me!"
  - 2). The unbeliever thinks the Christian is the one who is in bondage
    - a). They've believed the lie of the devil – God is a cosmic killjoy who always says "NO"
    - b). Rather than dominated they believe they are free

**Transition:** This is man outside of Christ – living to satisfy their sinful cravings

- A. Guilty before God and couldn't care less – this is who I was – judgment...so what!
  - 1). But the rejection of God and judgment doesn't change the reality of who they are
- B. Next point shows the future for those who have rejected Christ

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## III. THE UNBELIEVER IS A CHILD OF WRATH NOT A CHILD OF GOD

**Eph 2:1–3 (ESV)** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>(2)</sup> 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— <sup>(3)</sup> *among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

### 1. **We have seen that the child of God is waiting for a glorious inheritance**

- A. Here we see that the Christ rejecter looks forward only to an eternity of punishment
  - 1). They take sin lightly – God doesn't – every sin will be judged by a holy, just, righteous judge
  - 2). This wrath is simply a holy God being consistent with who he is

### 2. **Notice who will be judged**

- A. Is it just the worst of the worst – the Hitler's – the rapists – drug dealers - traffickers
  - 1). No! It says we were by nature children of wrath *like the rest of mankind*
    - a). So the educated and cultured – as well as those living in the basest debauchery  
The pimp as well as the prince – the merely religious as well as the staunchest atheist
  - 2). The terrifying reality - all who have rejected Christ as Lord and Savior are in this group
    - a). They are not children of God – who will enjoy him and his blessings forever  
They are children of wrath who will experience the unending agony of his wrath
      - 1a). Cast away from God into outer darkness – isolated – tormented with pain
- B. Jesus gave some very sober warnings about this – just a sampling

**Mat 13:40-43 (NIV)** "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. (41) The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. (42) They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (43) Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. *He who has ears, let him hear.*

**Mt 18:8 (ESV)** And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet *to be thrown into the eternal fire.*

- 1). He's not saying actually cut off a hand or foot – you can still sin with the other

- a). He is saying – “This is so serious – don’t cling to anything that would keep you away from God. Nothing here is worth it!”

**Thought:** So He who has ears let him hear the warning - But the unbeliever doesn’t want to hear  
The devil has done a masterful job to remove the terror of an eternity in hell

- A. We lighten the terror of hell by using it as a description  
1). It hurts like hell – wrong – nothing you can experience here hurts like hell will  
B. My life on earth is a living hell – he made the lives of his workers a living hell – WRONG!  
C. The world speaks of hell like it’s going to be a party – me and my friends  
1). Isn’t that what AC-DC said “Highway to hell”

Don't need reason, don't need rhyme

Ain't nothing I would rather do

Going down, party time

I'm on the highway to hell

Hey Satan, paid my dues

Playing in a rocking band

Hey Momma, look at me

I'm on my way to the promised land

I'm on the highway to hell

- D. Movies like bedazzled – devil a beautiful woman who gets outsmarted in the end

- 1). She becomes friends with the victim who outsmarts her

- E. We can also remove sin so there is nothing to judge

**Hunter S. Thompson:** In a closed society where everybody's guilty, the only crime is getting caught. In a world of thieves, *the only final sin is stupidity.*

- 1). No! The final sin is rejecting Christ

**Malcolm Bradbury:** Only the old are innocent. That is what the Victorians understood, and the Christians. Original sin is a property of the young. *The old grow beyond corruption very quickly.*

- 1). You get to a point where you stop sinning. Wrong.

- 2). That is probably believing that sin is only the external action

- a). Sin is the internal attitude of a heart that refuses to bow to Christ as Lord

**Dolly Parton:** I feel that sin and evil are the negative part of you, and I think it's like a battery: you've got to have the negative and the positive in order to be a complete person.

- 1). Don’t worry about sin – it is necessary to make you whole – embrace it

- F. We can remove hell through eastern religion – reincarnation – always get another shot

- G. We can also create a god who would never throw anybody into hell – all love – no wrath

- 1). Not the God of the Bible but a god we’re comfortable with

- H. I think the devil has done a masterful job in causing the church to be quiet about hell and wrath

**J. I. Packer:** The fact is that the subject of divine wrath has become taboo in modern society, and Christians by and large have accepted the taboo and conditioned themselves never to raise the matter.

- 1). I think this is why the church doesn’t evangelize more – we have pushed hell to the side

### 3. The truth is – hell is real and eternal

- A. The God who cannot lie was extremely clear on the end of all who choose sin over God

- 1). The one who choose to have nothing to do with God – will get their wish for all of eternity

God will let them have their way – they will live apart from his love and his blessing

**Transition:** I don’t want to end here though – with man in hell

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- A. Let's close with the good news – that will lead into communion
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## IV. THE UNBELIEVER CAN BE FORGIVEN IN CHRIST

### 1. George Carlin once said a very foolish thing

**George Carlin:** I would never want to be a member of a group whose symbol was a guy nailed to two pieces of wood.

- A. I hope he changed his mind – because our only hope of forgiveness is found at that cross
- 1). The horrifying thing is – if he died in that state – his theology has now been corrected
  - 2). He would give anything now to be connected to that man nailed to those two pieces of wood

### 2. I said that God must judge sin – none can be overlooked

- A. The truth is – your sin will be judged
- 1). If you have lied to yourself and think God takes sin lightly – look at the cross
    - a). He poured out his wrath on his Son for you and me  
He painted a horrifying picture of how his holiness must respond to sin
- B. As horrifying as that is – there is also beauty there – because it was an act driven by love
- 1). The Father sent his Son to die for your sin  
The Son willing came to be your substitute – to take the wrath you deserved
  - 2). For everyone who will turn from their sin in repentance and embrace Christ by faith
    - a). God will take what Christ did on the cross and consider the penalty for your sin to be paid in full
    - b). You will move from being a child of wrath to being a child of God
      - 1a). You will look into eternity with an excited anticipation of incredible blessing
      - 2a). Hell is real but God has done what is necessary to keep you from that horrible place
- C. That is why we take communion isn't it – to remember what was done to rescue us
- Tim Keller:** Here's the gospel: you're more sinful than you ever dared believe; you're more loved than you ever dared hope.
- 1). Because your sinful – you need rescue – you need to be forgiven  
Because he is love – he has offered you a way of escape – he has sent his Son

## COMMUNION

### 1. Pass out the elements – song

- A. Pray for bread – pray for cup
- B. Song