

WEEK THREE: SALVATION

Ephesians 2:1-10

Ephesians 1 laid the foundation of salvation and the spiritual blessings we have in Jesus. Paul also describes the tremendous power of God that is available to us. To ensure we understand that salvation, blessings and power all come from God, Paul gets very blunt. He tells us we are completely incapable of doing anything towards our salvation, and that God, in an act of total grace, accomplished this all in and through his Son Jesus.

****Read Ephesians 2:1-10****

APART FROM JESUS WHO ARE WE?

1. What does Paul say every human has in common?

- *Answer: Sinful, Before we were saved we were 'dead because of our sins. (Verses 2,5)*

'Dead' is a strong word! What do you think about when you hear that word? Dead is dead, gone, not breathing. It can do nothing, can't think, can't change; can't move, can't hear, can't see, can't feel. Paul says, we're dead in our sins. We must fully understand our spiritual deadness!

2. So we fully understand our "deadness" without Jesus, read and discuss each of the scriptures below:

- **Matthew 13:13-15**
- **Matthew 15:14**
- **John 6:44**
- **John 8:43**
- **John 14:17**
- **John 15:5 (key 'apart')**
- **Romans 1:21**
- **Romans 5:6**
- **Romans 5:16-18**
- **Romans 6:17-18 (key)**

- **2 Corinthians 4:4**
- **Colossians 1:13**
- **Hebrews 11:6**

So what is spiritual death?

- *Answer: Life apart from Jesus. Having 'knowledge' of God, but not submitting your life to Jesus. It's simply separation from God.*

3. Before you are saved, what or who do you follow?

- *Answer: Before we we are saved we 'follow the ways of this world and the devil (Verse 2) Before we were saved, not only did we follow ways of the world, we also lived according to the ways of the devil.*

4. What do the following verses say about the ways of this world?

- **Luke 12:29-30**
- **John 3:19**
- **John 7:7**
- **John 14:17**
- **John 17:25**
- **Galatians 4:3**
- **2 Peter 1:4**
- **1 John 2:16**
- **1 John 3:1**
- **2 John 7**

5. What do these verses teach about Satan's influence in the world?

- **John 12:31**

- **John 14:30**
- **John 16:11**
- **2 Corinthians 4:4**
- **1 John 4:3-4**
- **Revelation 12:9**
- **Revelation 13:3**

I will say we must not blame the devil for our sin. He may be the 'god' of this world, but he has not forced our following him. We have been fooled into following him, believing him over God. Trapped in sin and death.

But know this, we know how it ends. God will defeat the devil, but God holds each of us responsible for our own sin.

6. By our very nature, what are we subject to? (Verse 3)

- *Answer: By our very nature, we are subject to God's wrath.*

The Greek word translated 'sinful nature' is simply the word for flesh, and as Paul uses it, it does not refer only to 'bad' choices, but to all actions done outside of faith; he uses 'flesh' to describe man in his separation from God. They lived according to the flesh, not according to the Spirit, and as such were as spiritually dead and incapable of pleasing God as the vilest sinner (Romans 8:5-11)

Paul says we were just like the rest, living our lives in separated from God, objects of His wrath. All the judgement and condemnation that was due to sin weighed on us.

Paul in *Romans 3:23* says *"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."*

If we fail to understand this, then we will think we had something to do with salvation. Causing us to not fully appreciate the magnitude of His saving grace.

If we believe we earned our salvation, we will downplay our sin, we will minimize God's Grace, we will diminish God's love, we will ignore the work on the cross, we will underestimate salvation, and we will destroy our faith and peace with God.

Paul is clear, without Jesus...We were all just like the rest.

WHAT GOD DID FOR US IN JESUS

Paul describes how unqualified and undeserving we are of what God has done, goes on to tell us that God, nevertheless, saved us ... and he tells us why. We find both 'Why God save us' and 'What God save us for'.

6. Why did He save us? (Verses 2:4-10)

- **Verse 4**
 - Rich in mercy, loved us
- **Verse 5**
 - His grace
- **Verse 7**
 - Kindness
- **Verse 8**
 - A gift
- **Verse 9**
 - Not earned, can't boast
- **Verse 10**
 - His plan

What did God save us for?

- *Answer: God saved us to show the incomparable riches of his grace. God saved us to do the good works which he planned for us to do. The purpose and intention of God's saving us in Christ is that, having been restored to a right relationship with himself, we will live genuine human lives ... lives lived to his glory, lives that express his image.*
- Thus our salvation in Christ is a reversal of the Genesis 3 rebellion, a restoration of a face-to-face relationship with God in which the reflection of his nature is again possible.

7. What God did for us? (2:4-10)

- **Answer: Gave us life (2:5).** This did not happen after we managed to improve ourselves, or to reach out to him: it happened when we were dead in transgressions. God, in an act of overwhelming love and grace, reached into our deadness and made us live. This is why the conversion experience is sometimes referred to as being 'born again' or 'regenerated.' We cannot generate new life for our selves: it takes the action of God. We were dead: he made us alive in Christ.
- **Answer: Saved by his grace (2:5,7-9).** God knew there was only one way out for us: a massive and costly action of grace on his part. Paul describes this grace as 'the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus' (7) Are our sins big? Yes they are, but God's grace is bigger. Is our rebellion against him of long

standing? Yes it is, but God's grace is eternal. Is our self-focus, self-opinion, self-conceit, self-glorying enormous? Yes it is, but God's grace is more extensive. In our spiritual deadness are we totally lifeless, immobilized, blind, darkened, hardened? Yes, in ourselves, we are, but God's grace is able to overcome even that. The phrase 'by grace you have been saved' is written twice. Both times it is in the perfect tense, which refers to a completed action in the past with effects that continue to the present: in other words: you have been saved, and you still are saved; it was by grace when it first happened, and it is by grace right now.

- **Answer: Raised us up (2:6).** Paul returns here to what has been in his mind all along - the power of God that raised Christ up from the dead. Not only did God raise Christ up from the dead after he had paid the death penalty for our sins - after he had died for us: he also raised us up with Christ. This fact that God has raised us up with Christ affirms that our sin has indeed been paid for. Christ bore our sins; he took our guilt; he took our condemnation; he experienced the wrath of God that was upon us; he suffered rejection by God on our behalf. He did all of this as our substitute: and then God raised him up, validating that it all did actually happen. Just as his death was our death, so his resurrection is our resurrection, it is a restoration to life beyond the reach of the judgement, condemnation and wrath of God.
- God seated us with Christ and in Christ in the heavenly realms. We learned in chapter one that Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Here we learn that believers are right there in Christ and with Christ. The Greek text makes it quite clear: made alive together with Christ [verse 5], raised together with Christ, and seated together with Christ [verse 6] in the heavenly realms in Christ. While we would not be so foolish as to think that because of this we have the power and authority that are his by divine right, we can nevertheless understand from this that:
- **Answer: Created us anew In Jesus (2:10).** What Paul has written so far in Ephesians has assumed the existence of a powerful reality: the reality that the believer we are made new. We saw in 1:3-14 that the spiritual blessings of salvation are ours 'in Christ'. We have now seen in 2:1-10 that this 'in Christ' does not teach us only about the place where salvation is to be found: it also teaches us that we ourselves now exist only 'in Christ' in God's sight, in God's economy.

Because Jesus Christ stood completely in our place as our substitute, God treated him as us. We have, in Christ our substitute, died, as far as God and his law is concerned. The record of our sin has been deleted. We have a new name and a new identity: from the point of faith onwards God never again sees us apart from Christ.

Yes, God knows that we are sinners: but, as we have already seen in Ephesians 1, it is his pleasure, his will, his choice, to deal with our guilt and make us his own.

-How does it make you feel knowing that God chose you?

-What stood out most to you about today's study?

