

EPHESIANS

GOD'S PLAN FOR GOD'S CHURCH REVEALED

SERMON TITLE: Amazing Grace

DATE: September 12, 2021

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 2:1-10

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The Book of Ephesians is a beautiful picture of the spiritual blessings we have in Christ and as members together in Jesus' Church. When he arrived, Jesus revealed what was once hidden from us throughout the ages through the power of the Holy Spirit. As a result, we're introduced to something new—a life in Christ where we find THE answer to the brokenness of this world. But what should this look like? How should we, in the power of the Holy Spirit, live this new life? Jesus' church is meant to be a source of wholeness and life amidst a world of brokenness and death. What does this entail? What does it mean practically? In this letter to the Ephesians, Paul explains the mystery of the church and gives us practical insight into living as believers who have been raised from death to life by faith in Christ.

Can you remember the first time you felt the pressure to perform or act in such a way as to get recognized, noticed, or accepted? I'm sure it's at different times for different people, and the circumstances are unique, but you probably remember it or can remember when you started to become more aware of how things worked in this world...if you want to make it...you better earn it. And so we start earning at a young age...to find our value, worth, and significance. As a result, what happens is so many people bring that line of thinking into how they view God and how they think God views them. It's not hard to do when all of life is made up of paying your own way...earn your own way.

But did you know there isn't any Scripture that claims God's going to accept you into a relationship with him based on how good you are? No matter how much you attempt to earn his love and acceptance, you can't be good enough, try hard enough, or do enough to earn it. What does it look like to embrace God's amazing grace in an "earn your way" world?

Paul, in Ephesians 2:1-10, reminds the Church at Ephesus that God found them dead IN sin and made them alive IN Christ so that he would show his incomparable riches of GRACE and that they would walk in the fruit of his good works prepared for them by him. What was true for the Ephesians who had a relationship with Jesus is also true for all of us who have come to trust and follow Jesus. We have been saved by grace that we might display his grace through his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus, and all of this is a gift from God.

What keeps those who have not accepted God's grace from embracing God's grace? While there are many reasons, two that are pretty common would be that many people don't think they need God's grace because they see themselves as pretty good people...especially when they spend their days comparing themselves to others. While some who do know their life is a mess are determined to pay their own way out of their mess. They think they can earn their way into God's acceptance, and it is up to them to make things right from their perspective.

We are "dead" no matter how much we try to pay, earn, improve or compare ourselves to others. "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." Ephesians 2:4-5

Discussion Starters —

- Read Ephesians 2:1-10 together.
- When can you first recall the pressure to earn your way to fit into a group?
- Did you grow up in a home where “paying your own way/proving yourself” or “try harder to do better” was the primary motivation? If so, how did that or has that shaped your relationship with God?
- Why is grace beautiful to you?
- When do you remember first being motivated by grace as opposed to other people's expectations of you?
- In what practical/tangible ways are you walking in the good works that the Lord has prepared for you?