

Series: What's the church?

"From Death to Life in Christ"

Ephesians 2:1 – 10

Big Idea – God gives me life so I can live it for Him.

Traits of dead men walking – they are:

Ephesians 2:1 In the past you were spiritually dead because of your sins and the things you did against God.

2 Yes, in the past you lived the way the world lives, following the ruler of the evil powers that are above the earth. That same spirit is now working in those who refuse to obey God.

3 In the past all of us lived like them, trying to please our sinful selves and doing all the things our bodies and minds wanted. We should have suffered God's anger because of the way we were. We were the same as all other people.

1. Dead

The unbeliever is not sick; he is dead!

He does not need resuscitation; he needs resurrection.

All lost sinners are dead, and the only difference between one sinner and another is the state of decay.

The lost derelict on skid row may be more decayed outwardly than the unsaved society leader, but both are dead in sin—and one corpse cannot be more dead than another!

Our world is one vast graveyard, filled with people who are dead while they live

2. Disobedient

the beginning of man's spiritual death—his disobedience to the will of God. God said, "In the day that you eat from it you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Satan lied and said, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4), because they believed this lie, the first man and woman sinned and experienced immediate spiritual death and ultimate physical death.

Since then, mankind has lived in disobedience to God – sin is simply man doing his own thing – saying no, to God's authority

3. Deceived by the devil

Satan is called the "prince of the power of the air, the ruler of the evil powers" – he is not omnipresent, so he can't personally influence each person, but through his demons, also called spirits or evil powers, he influences all that he's able to.

As a sinner, deceived by Satan, man lives for the lusts of his own flesh, doing his own thing!

4. Doomed

"The wages of sin is death..." eternal death, separation from God for eternity in a real place called Hell.

John 3:18 "People who believe in God's Son are not judged guilty. Those who do not believe have already been judged guilty, because they have not believed in God's one and only Son.

19 They are judged by this fact: The Light has come into the world, but they did not want light. They wanted darkness, because they were doing evil things.”

But God!

Ephesians 2:4 But God’s mercy is great, and he loved us very much.

5 Though we were spiritually dead because of the things we did against God, he gave us new life with Christ. You have been saved by God’s grace.

"Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9).

Saves us:

1. Loved us – vs. 4

By nature, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). love is one of God's attributes.

God has two kinds of attributes: those that He possesses of Himself (intrinsic attributes, such as life, love, holiness), and those by which He relates to His creation, especially to man (relative attributes).

For example, by nature God is truth; but when He relates to man, God's truth becomes faithfulness. God is by nature holy; and when He relates that holiness to man, it becomes justice.

Love is one of God's intrinsic attributes, but when this love is related to sinners, it becomes grace and mercy. God is "rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4) and in "grace" (Eph. 2:7), and these riches make it possible for sinners to be saved.

We are not saved "by God's love," but by God's mercy and grace.

In His mercy, He does not give us what we do deserve; and in His grace He gives us what we do not deserve.

All of this is possible because of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. At Calvary God displayed His hatred for sin and His love for sinners (Rom. 5:8; John 3:16).

2. Made us alive & united us with Christ – vs. 5

In the four Gospels, it is recorded that Jesus raised three people from the dead: the widow's son (Luke 7:11-17), Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:49-56), and Lazarus (John 11:41-46).

But our spiritual resurrection is much greater because it puts us in union with Christ: God "made us alive together with Christ." As members of His body we are united to Him (Eph. 1:22-23), so that we share His resurrection life and power (Eph. 1:19-20).

SO, eternal life is the life of God – the Spirit of God inside us.

3. Exalted/promoted/raised us – vs. 6

Ephesians 2:6 He raised us up with Christ and gave us a seat with him in the heavens. He did this for those in Christ Jesus...

not raised from the dead and left in the graveyard.

Since we are united to Christ, we are exalted with Him and we are sharing His throne in the heavenlies.

Physically, we’re here on earth, but our spiritual position is "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Like Lazarus, we have been called from the grave to sit with Christ and enjoy His fellowship (John 12:1-2).

4. Keeps us – vs. 7 - 9

Ephesians 2:7 so that for all future time he could show the very great riches of his grace by being kind to us in Christ Jesus.

8 I mean that you have been saved by grace through believing. You did not save yourselves; it was a gift from God.

9 It was not the result of your own efforts, so you cannot brag about it.

God's ultimate purpose in our salvation is that for all eternity the church might glorify God's grace (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). Since God has an eternal purpose for us to fulfill, He will keep us for all eternity.

Since we have not been saved by our good works, we cannot be lost by our bad works. Grace means salvation completely apart from any merit or works on our part. Grace means that God does it all for Jesus' sake! Our salvation is the gift of God not a reward.

Salvation cannot be "of works" because the work of salvation has already been finished on the cross. This is the work that God does for us, and it is a finished work (John 17:1-4; 19:30). We can add nothing to it (Heb. 10:1-14); we dare take nothing from it.

Remember when Jesus died, the veil of the temple was torn in two, from the top to the bottom, signifying that the way to God was now open. There is no more need for earthly sacrifices. One sacrifice—the Lamb of God—has finished the great work of salvation. God did it all, and He did it by His grace.

5. Re-creates us – vs. 10

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Salvation is not the end-all, it is the beginning. We are made new creations (2 Cor. 5:17), masterpieces of God's work.

How does He do this? By His Word, (2 Tim. 3:16) prayer, and suffering.

Why does He do this? for good works.

The "works" Paul writes about are "good" works, in contrast to "works of darkness" and "wicked works." If you contrast Ephesians 2:10 with Ephesians 2:2 you will see that the unbeliever has Satan working in him and therefore his works are not good.

the believer has God working in him, and his works are good.

It is too bad that many believers minimize the place of good works in the Christian life. Because we are not saved by good works, they have the idea that good works don't matter -this is a mistake.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

We do not perform good works to glorify ourselves, but to glorify God.

We should "abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8), and be "fruitful in every good work" (Col. 1:10).

One result of a knowledge of the Bible is that the believer is "thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17, nasb). As believers, we are to be "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Our good works are actually "spiritual sacrifices" that we offer to God (Heb. 13:16).

We do not make up these good works. They are the results of the work of God in our hearts.

"It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

Our good works are evidence that we have been born again. "Not everyone that says unto Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

Our good works are also testimonies to the lost (1 Peter 2:12). They win us the right to be heard.

A pastor friend told about a Christian lady who often visited a retirement home near her house. One day she noticed a lonely man sitting, staring at his dinner tray. In a kindly manner she asked, "Is something wrong?"

"Is something wrong!" replied the man in a heavy accent. "Yes, something is wrong! I am a Jew, and I cannot eat this food!"

"What would you like to have?" she asked.

"I would like a bowl of hot soup!"

She went home and prepared the soup and, after getting permission from the office, took it to the man. In the following weeks, she often visited him and brought him the kind of food he enjoyed and eventually led him to faith in Christ. Yes, preparing soup can be a spiritual sacrifice, a good work to the glory of God.

But these works are not only good; they are also "prepared." "Good works which God hath before ordained [prepared] that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

This is an amazing statement. It means that God has a plan for our lives and that we should walk in His will and fulfill His plan. Paul is not talking about "kismet"—an impersonal fate that controls your life no matter what you may do.

He is talking about the gracious plan of a loving Heavenly Father, who wills the very best for us. The will of God comes from the heart of God. "The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Ps. 33:11)

As a Christian, you have been raised and seated on the throne. Practice your position in Christ! He has worked for you; now let Him work in you and through you, that He might give you an exciting, creative life to the glory of God.