

Ephesians 2:1-10

Verse 1:

--Having spoken about the spiritual blessings that are ours from the Father, in the Son, and through the Holy Spirit, and having prayed that God would give us revelation of the wonder of these heavenly gifts, Paul now takes the Ephesians back to what they were outside of Christ.

--Remembering who we are outside of God is part of how we come to see the greatness of His mighty power in connecting us to the risen Christ. It is almost as if someone asked Paul: *Where did God find these people He has so highly favored?*

--Paul's answer: ***dead in trespasses and sins***. Man, outside of the life of God, is totally dead to God but alive to sin. We lived to trespass (crossing known lines) and sin (falling short) but were lifeless to our Maker and Savior. There was no way we could get back to Him or be like Him in our own strength.

--What could Adam do to get back to God or regain his innocence after sinning? Nothing. And every human born from him is just as dead in sin.

Verse 2:

--Here Paul begins to describe what life dead to God but alive to sin looks like.

--First, ***in which you once walked***. . . the idea being this is how we lived ordinary life. This was our day-to-day reality. The unsaved walk on a broad and crowded path, agreeing with one another's sin and happy to be welcomed in the crowd, all the while headed to destruction.

--Second, they walked ***according to the course of this world***. . . the idea here being the particular sinful tastes and atmosphere of our current day and age. We have our own greed, our own covetousness, our own pride, our own envy, our own sexuality, our own violence, etc.

If we were not saved we would be just like every other unsaved person of our time.

--Third, this sinful walk and sinful atmosphere is ***according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience***.

--Paul is clearly stating that Satan—***the prince of the power of the air***—is the ultimate influencer of the sinful vibe of this world. That Satanic intelligence and personality stirs up sin in every nation, standing, and age of society—billionaires or barbarians—it doesn't matter.

--Satan is working energetically to twist good into evil and make what is bad worse.

--Now, humans don't like acknowledging a personal spirit of evil in the world but the Bible clearly teaches the truth of it.

****John 12:31: Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.****

****2 Corinthians 4:4: Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.****

--Our current world atmosphere is not neutral and we become fools when we forget that.

Heaven and hell are on the line. There are three wills at work in the world: Gods, ours, and Satans. Two are set and only ours is undecided.

--The reference to **the air** is our literal atmosphere. It is speaking of Satan and his minions working in this literal world as their sphere of existence and influence (Satan doesn't live in the current heaven).

--Also, Paul links this Satanic spirit with all disobedience! ***The spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience!***

--Satan is the leader—the very first—of all disobedient beings against God. All those living in disobedience to God have no excuse, they are not His sons or daughters, they are Satan's children.

John 8:44: *You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. . . When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

Verse 3:

--***Among whom we all once conducted ourselves. . .*** Paul makes it clear this life that is dead to God and alive to sin is what *we all* once lived. There are no exceptions save Christ. We all lived making decisions ***in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.***

--God is not looking at sinners as helplessly diseased objects of compassion. We were all sinners and rebels who ***were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.***

--We were all born sinners! It is our very nature. The world tries to convince us that if that one good part in each us just gets worked on, counseled, educated, or accepted that it will overcome the evil. Just give our nature another chance to show it's really good!

--God tells us the exact opposite.

John 3:3+7: *Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"*

--And all sinners are under God's wrath without this new birth!

John 3:36: *He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*

*Tozer (Man: The Dwelling Place of God): *"God's wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates iniquity as a mother hates the diphtheria or polio that would destroy the life of her child."**

--So if we ***were by nature children of wrath*** we were children of all those things that need to be destroyed by God for the health of His children and creation.

--It is important for us to understand that the Bible clearly teaches that we are sinners ***by nature*** and not born innocent—becoming sinners along the way. We sin because that is our nature. We have no other nature to live in. ***Mark 7:20-23: *from within, out of the heart...****

--Certainly, our individual type of sin nature unfolds as we grow and have opportunity. My personal sin nature will look different from the sin nature in others. Our sin nature matures but it does not change. Sin is *in us* because sin *is us*. *Important for defensive/protective parents to realize all sin is bound up in their child's heart and not their environment.*

Verses 4-6:

--(4) **But God!** Hope for sinful men and women is found in God alone. God is rich in mercy! He has so much to give and such a large heart to give it.

*Watson (A Divine Cordial): *"God is more willing to pardon than to punish. Mercy does more multiply in Him than sin in us. Mercy is His nature."**

--We know the riches of His mercy will continue to be given to poor sinners because His mercy is born from **His great love with which He loved us**. The love of God was expressed toward us while we were living dead to Him and alive to sin!

*Bernard of Clairvaux (On Loving God): *"I owe all that I am to Him who made me: but how can I pay my debt to Him who redeemed me, and in such wondrous wise? Creation was not so vast a work as redemption; for it is written of man and of all things that were made, He spoke the word, and they were made (Psalm 148:5). But to redeem that creation which sprang into being at His word, how much He spoke, what wonders He wrought, what hardships he endured, what shames He suffered! Therefore what reward shall I give unto the Lord for all the benefits which He hath done unto me? In the first creation He gave me myself; but in His new creation He gave me Himself, and by that gift restored to me the self that I had lost. Created first and then restored, I owe Him myself twice over in return for myself. But what have I to offer Him for the gift of Himself? Could I multiply myself a thousand-fold and then give Him all, what would that be in comparison with God?"**

--(5) Paul goes back to our state of deadness again to emphasize our helpless position. How can life come to a dead man? How did life come to Jairus' daughter, the widow of Nain's son, or to Lazarus in the tomb? Only from without. Only from another.

--Do we question God's love? Did He love you in your sin? Did He make you alive with Christ? Has He connected you to all that Christ has inherited? We too easily forget what our eternal blessings are. We too easily doubt the love of God.

--The way Paul is speaking here is in the past tense because this has already been accomplished in Christ Jesus. Paul is seeing us again as the Living Head's Body—connected to the resurrected and exalted Jesus Christ upon a throne of glory.

--Where were you when Christ found you? We were dead to all these things: to mercy, to love, to grace, to life, to heaven, to the fellowship of the saints, to a predestined adoption and inheritance, etc.

--But now, because of God's rich mercy, love, and grace we are alive to them in Christ. Alive to them forever!

Verse 7:

--God's intention is to take all of eternity to show us how much He loves us through Jesus Christ. Eternity will be an eternal revelation of the things Paul has just begun to talk about and to understand himself.

--Notice, continued learning in heaven presupposes limited knowledge and understanding.

--The perfection of the eternal state does not preclude the progress of the saints. We will still have limitations. We will be perfect creations made in God's image and likeness but we will never be the Creator. He alone is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. We will eternally grow in the light of the revelation of all that God is.

--All of that said, our eternal perfection does include one area of limitlessness: Growth.

--The Almighty and Eternal God, in the deep counsels of the timeless past, overflowing with divine love, decided to create a being in His own image and likeness that could know, worship, and share in His love and glory forever.

--God as infinite, so that no created thing could ever know Him fully, created a being that could forever progress into all that He is. A being of limitless growth. This is in fact, the ultimate end of redemption. God has perfected us in Christ Jesus that we might come to know and please Him for all eternity.

--With the removal of our sin, we have the chief obstacle of our perfection—and therefore our eternal growth—removed. Brothers and sisters, we have only begun to scratch the surface of what it means to be made in His image and likeness.

Verses 8-9:

--Here Paul's point is that this eternal salvation will clearly be an act of God's grace and is in no sense a result of human works. No human, born by nature a child of wrath, could ever earn or deserve so rich and gracious an eternal gift. **If you could work you could boast!**

--Why would God do this? The only answer is because He is gracious—it is His nature—He wants to share the highest and best of Himself with us.

--Now, people want to camp here and argue. Is Paul saying salvation or faith is the gift of God? It should be clear what Paul is saying: that the spiritual riches that come to us from heaven, the depths of which God will be revealing to us for all eternity, could in no possible way come from the works of those dead in sins and under the wrath of God!

--(I think it is worth noting that the Greek word for *gift (doron)* is never used anywhere else in the NT in reference to faith. Every other attempt to make faith a direct gift in the sense that the Greek word *doron* is used is totally theological inference and not Biblical interpretation. Paul is speaking of something larger here in which faith is included.)

--Salvation is the gift of God and so is faith! No one chose this great salvation and no one chose the path of faith! Only God in His love and grace brought both to us. Why is faith our path and not works? Why does faith save at all? Because God so wills it.

****John 6:44: No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.****

--If you are trying to work your way to a new nature and God's salvation you are deceived! ***Not of yourselves. . . not of works, lest anyone should boast!***

*--Not the labors of my hands; Can fulfill Thy law's demands; Could my zeal no respite know;
Could my tears forever flow; All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone.*

Verse 10:

--The Greek word for **workmanship** is *poiema* and is only used one other time in the NT in **Romans 1:20** where it is translated **things that are made**; in reference to the creation and what we see of God's eternal power and Godhead. The word speaks of God's character as seen through His work.

--The theme from **8-9** can sometimes be left out here and the verse isolated but it is not. Paul is saying that our works having nothing to do with this salvation because *we are His work*. And the fact that we are created *for* good works show that good works are not the way we receive this divine life that allows us to live out His works.

Titus 2:14: Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous of good works.

--His work of salvation *in us* comes before any work that comes *from us*.

--Paul is seeing our works here as those done by members of the Body of Christ, directed by the command and energy of the Head. This is why they have their special character as good in his foreknowledge and Person.

--Again, we are **His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus**. We have become more "in Christ" than we ever were "in Adam."

2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Galatians 6:15: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

--Our future glory and life in Christ is so much greater than Adam's life and glory was in creation. Adam was God's starting point to get us to Christ—the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

*Talmage (New Tabernacle Sermons): *"But how often it is that men with physical strength do not serve Christ! They are like a ship full manned and full rigged, capable of vast tonnage, able to endure all stress of weather, yet swinging idly at the docks, when these men ought to be crossing and recrossing the great ocean of human suffering and sin with God's supplies of mercy. How often it is that physical strength is used in doing positive damage, or in luxurious ease, when, with sleeves rolled up and bronzed bosom, fearless of the shafts of the opposition, it ought to be laying hold with all its might, and tugging away to lift up this sunken wreck of a world. . . Oh, how often it is that men with great physical endurance are not as great in moral and spiritual stature! While there are achievements for those who are bent all their days with sickness—achievements of patience, achievements of Christian endurance—I call upon men of health today, men of muscle, men of nerve, men of physical power, to devote themselves to the Lord. Giants in body, you ought to be giants in soul."*

2 Corinthians 5:15: And He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.