

## Ephesians Chapter 2 continued - Verses 5 thru 10

Paul wants us to know that spiritual deadness is a condition which finds its source in Satan. He was the first to fall, and his deceptive influence contributed to the fall of Man in the Garden. Today, he rules the hearts of those bound in spiritual deadness, and he exerts his controlling influence through the fear of death (see Heb 2:14-15). In short, all unbelievers are spiritually dead sons and slaves of the devil.

*Question...why do we not work harder at spreading the gospel to those who are unbelievers - do we not believe they are actually spiritually dead?*

*Question...do you have to hear the word to come to Christ/salvation?*

Verse 5 - Paul moves to explaining how we were rescued from our dead spiritual state. Notice Paul begins by reminding us that "even when we were dead..." God made us (spiritually) alive in Christ. The Bible is utterly clear on the sequence of events that lead to our salvation: God must act first, because men do not naturally seek God (see Romans 3:10-11). By Himself and according to His own purpose and while we were still yet unaware of Him, He made us alive. Our salvation—our rescue—from spiritual death is God's work done for the undeserving.

Verse 6- Paul completes the discussion of how we were saved by adding that our new spiritual life resulted in us being raised with Christ to be seated in heavenly places. Though we are presently located on earth physically, nevertheless we have been assigned a place spiritually at the right hand of the Father in Christ. Paul's point is that our salvation should not be appreciated as merely a change in status or intellectual thought (i.e., being saved isn't merely a matter of agreeing with the Gospel).

Rather, salvation it is a change of spiritual position before God. By His work, we have been moved, spiritually speaking, from our prior position as sons of the devil dead in sin to our new state as sons of God alive in Christ. According to this truth we

must conclude that our new spiritual state is not reversible, because nothing can tear us away from Christ (and Paul says we are now seated "with Christ").

Biblically, to sit implies to have finished working. So, Christ sat because His work of redemption was complete. And, spiritually, we too have been seated with Christ, because we don't work for our salvation either. When the bible speaks of working out your own salvation (Philippians 2:12), it is referring to the ongoing sanctification process.

The sense in which we are to work out our salvation in fear and trembling is twofold. First, the Greek verb rendered "work out" means "to continually work to bring something to completion or fruition." We do this by actively pursuing obedience in the process of sanctification. The "trembling" he experiences is the attitude Christians are to have in pursuing this goal—a healthy fear of offending God through disobedience and an awe and respect for His majesty and holiness. We work out our salvation by going to the very source of our salvation—the Word of God—wherein we renew our hearts and minds ([Romans 12:1-2](#)), coming into His presence with a spirit of reverence and awe.

This is a reminder that a true Christian cannot lose their salvation as they are redeemed, a new creature, sealed with the Holy Spirit, justified, and guaranteed glorification. This is Good News!

Verse 7 -- The "ages to come" is eternity. In eternity God is going to make such a spectacle of His grace and kindness toward the redeemed in Christ that all the heavenly hosts and saints will glorify Him. God will never stop dealing with us on the basis of grace and will forever continue to unfold its riches to us through eternity.

Verse 8...If they were Jews, these Ephesians had not been saved by their perfect keeping of the Law of Moses, and if they were Gentiles, they were not saved because of what they had learned through their mystery religions. They were saved by grace (this is God's part) through faith (this is their part). The "gift" is salvation, not faith. If God, because of His love, kindness, mercy, and grace, had not initiated His eternal scheme of redemption, there is no way man could be saved. Faith, of course, comes by hearing and believing God's Word (Romans 10:17). Therefore, salvation, a gift of God, is something to be *seized* rather than *achieved*. Furthermore, and one must

never lose sight of this fact, faith, truth faith, the kind of faith under discussion in this verse, is more than just believing (James 2:19).

Paul is reminding us we are saved by grace and not faith. He says this to remind us that if we say we are saved by faith, then the location of the action is inside us. The believer's faith produces salvation which would mean we could say we saved ourselves. Salvation is by grace and grace comes from God. By grace he predestined us to receive salvation.

So, God manifests His grace to us through faith in Jesus Christ. Grace existed before you ever came to be. Another way of saying it is, grace is God's part. Faith is defined as being a positive response to what God has already provided by grace. In other words, faith is your positive response to God's grace, or faith only appropriates what God has already provided for you. Therefore, faith is your part.

***Question...will God's grace without faith save you?***

Verse 9...Salvation is not the result of works so walking down to the altar does not save you. We have no reason to boast about our salvation. Works are not a way to reach heaven. Human achievements are not required to enter Heaven. How can dead people boast about becoming alive? Could Lazarus boast that he raised himself from the dead? Could he have said "I heard the Lord's voice, so I decided to sit up and walk out of the tomb?"

***Question...does reciting a confession of faith save you?***

Verse 10...God desired to be glorified through us, His workmanship, created in Christ for good works. Let's take a moment to marvel at His workmanship in us. Look at the human body...

***Question...what are some things you find amazing about the human body?***

God's work needs to be seen through us. Works are the way we bring glory to the God who saved us. Therefore, it is imperative that the kinds of things we think and say and do following salvation should be different than those we did prior to salvation. The scripture says He planned good works for us long ago. So, then are the plans we make controlled by the sovereignty of God? Can we decide for ourselves what God wants us to do?

I think it boils down to we either follow Him in doing the works He has prepared for us to walk in, or we go our own way which is called disobedience.

Let's look at an analogy of a cafeteria restaurant or buffet. The food was prepared for us beforehand. They don't make the food according to our desires; you can't order off the menu. There is just the food they decided to prepare beforehand sitting there in those stainless trays. It is up to you to choose what you want, but your choices are limited by what the restaurant decided to prepare beforehand. We can take a few things or if we have the appetite, we can take a lot of things. The more we take, the more we will experience what the restaurant has to offer. Our will determines what we select, but our will doesn't create the options.

Now what if you brought a sack lunch to the restaurant – they would say “you can't bring your food in here.” This is what Paul is referring to when he says God has prepared good works for us beforehand. God has prepared a menu of good works that he desires you and I would accomplish in bringing Him glory. We don't get to define our own path of good works, but we do get to choose which ones we will do.

So, the Lord has set before you a buffet of opportunities for how you can serve the Lord during your Christian life.

◦ Your ticket to this buffet is your faith, because without faith it's impossible to please God

- But through faith, you may serve Him in the ways He determined
- You might imagine that on this buffet are works of prayer, service, teaching, counsel, giving, and more
- These works have been prepared for you because they fit your abilities, they cater to your spiritual gifting
- More importantly, they are designed to promote the spiritual growth inside you that the Lord desires to accomplish
- Now you can eat as much as you want
- The more you eat, the stronger you will become spiritually
- And the more blessed you will be for having served the Lord

- When you pass something up, you're missing out °

*Question...should churches hire out for basic service needs or leave it on the buffet menu for congregants to select from? I.E. cutting the grass, cleaning the church, holding positions of leadership, etc.*

*Question...what happens when we substitute our own ideas for what God may want from us?*

We can't tell God what he values. We can only obey His commands. So though there are many good things that we **could** do, the good works we **should** do are those God has prepared for us to do.