

**CORE Seminar**  
**Spring 2024**  
**Paul's Letter to the Ephesians**  
**Week 3: Ephesians 2:1-10**

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**ICE BREAKER**

Choose an ice breaker from the *Spring Community Group Guide* or go to [www.fbcportland.org/icebreakers](http://www.fbcportland.org/icebreakers) to select an ice breaker to ask your group.

- Spend about 5 minutes discussing the question – this is a great way to “warm up” your group.

**INTRODUCTION**

Last week we spent a time in **Ephesians 1**. In **chapter 1**, we saw that God calls His church to a new way of life – one that is guided by His Word and marked by faithful obedience to Him. We saw that the church was made up of the adopted, regenerate children of God. Now, this would have been a big deal – almost a source of disunity in the church – because it was made up of Jew and Gentile. The Jewish members could point to their heritage as a reason for their being an adopted part of the family of God – the church. This was something that the Gentile converts did not have. So – based on this alone – you can see the tension that could exist.

Well, today, we're going to see how Paul leveled the playing field in this story of adoption. We are going to read the first 10 verses of **Ephesians 2**. **Ephesians 2:1-10** depicts the spiritual condition of all of man – once dead in trespasses and sins, captive to the ways of the world and influenced by evil. All of this separated us from God – the Jew's heritage could not bridge that gap. Only by God's grace and the work of Jesus Christ can believers be brought from spiritual death to life, redeemed and reconciled with God.

Let's pray and we'll get started:

**PRAYER**

Ok, open your Bibles to **Ephesians 2:1-10**

2 And you were **dead** in the trespasses and sins<sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of **disobedience**—<sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind [the others].

**QUESTION:** As you read through the first 3 verses initially, what stands out to you?

- Do you find anything particularly hopeful in the passage?

In **Ephesians 2:1-3**, Paul starts off with our life before Christ. And guess what... the picture is not a pretty one. What is interesting is that Paul doesn't point his finger to one particular group and say "you guys are really bad," or "you guys are really good." At least I don't see this. What he seems to do is use phrases that include all of mankind.

Let's look at **verse 1**. Paul uses the phrase "And you..." Now, by using this phrase, he is specifically talking to the Gentile converts at the church in Ephesus. And then he provides some commentary about their condition – dead in their trespasses & sins AND disobedient.

And then in **verse 3**, he says "all" and "the rest of mankind" [some translations may have "the others"]. So, he's moved on from the Gentile converts and now has included the Jewish portion of the church. Basically, Paul is covering everyone – there's no one in the church at Ephesus OR in the church today that doesn't fit into these descriptions. Paul is talking about everyone – just like he does in **Romans 3:23**. He is giving us the biblical diagnosis of our nature – that we are sinners.

And in these verses, Paul shows us that before Christ we were these three things:

1. We were spiritually **dead** & **disobedient**. [vs. 2]
2. And, we were spiritually **doomed**. [verse 3]

**How does Paul describe our pre-Christian life in 2:1-3?**

- Do you think this is a fair description?

**What does Ephesians 2:3 teach us about our sinful actions?**

- What clear connection do these actions have to the first two verses [1-2]?
- How do you think a typical unbeliever today would respond to this description of a non-Christian: "dead," a slave to Satan, dominated by appetites, and doomed destined for wrath?

What was the consequence of our pre-Christian status? [doomed]

- Prior to faith in Christ, what hope is there for the dead “sons of disobedience,” who Paul refers to as the “children of wrath”?
- Based on this understanding, do most Christians have an urgency to share the gospel with everyone they encounter?

In Ephesians 2:1-3, Paul shows – that in our sin – we all were apart from Jesus Christ. Based on this description, we have a clear understanding of how completely we need God’s grace and resurrection power in order to be saved.

- How should these verses humble us?
- How can these verses help us to understand the spiritual condition of our family, friends or neighbors who do not know Jesus?

Any other questions or observations on the first 3 verses?

Ok, let’s finish up with verses 4-10

***<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.***

Ok, so Paul tells the church – it isn’t your **heritage** that determines your adoption status – it’s only His **grace** and **mercy**. To double down, Paul tells them they were dead in their sin and disobedient to God.

But **verses 4-10** show us the beautiful hope of the gospel: that we who were dead have been “made alive” in Jesus Christ BY the saving power of God [**verses 4-7**]. So, now we have a new status – we live in the power and resurrected life of Jesus Christ. We have been raised from death to life through Jesus, AND we have been saved for “good works” that God has prepared for those who love and serve Him [**verses 8-10**].

**QUESTION:** Why are the words “But God,” so sweet?

- Why did God makes us alive?

- OR, why does Paul tell us that God saves sinners in the way that He does?

What specific language does Paul use to describe God's salvation in Ephesians 2:5-6?

- Why might he have chosen these words specifically?
- Why should God's salvation humble us?

According to verse 7, what is the ultimate end, goal, and purpose of our salvation?

- Why is this such good news?

What does Paul say in Ephesians 2:8 about the mean of our salvation?

- Why is it so important for us, given what he will go on to teach in verse 10, to understand that we are *not* saved by works?
- Why does this doctrine remind us not to "boast" [verse 9]?

In Ephesians 2:10, Paul explains the role that "works" have in our faith. What do you think is the relationship between God's grace and works?

- In verse 8, Paul says that faith is a gift - how is faith a gift?

What about Ephesians 2:4-7 should cause us to praise God more joyfully and to wonder at His salvation?

- What do these verses show us about the way God's power is revealed in saving us from sin and death?

How should Ephesians 2:8-10 motivate us in the areas of obedience, outreach, and acts of love and mercy toward our neighbors?

- With what attitude, and with what motivation, should you engage in such acts of obedience and love?

## TO BETTER UNDERSTAND

Have someone in your group read **Ezekiel 37:1-10**.

- What is this vision meant to teach God's people about their spiritual condition?
- How does it point them to the new life that will ultimately come through faith in Jesus Christ?

## CONCLUSION

I would really encourage you to read **Ephesians 2:11-22** next week. Really spend time on them and study them. Work through those verses, and if you have questions – write them down. Also, don't read those 11 verses in isolation. Go back and re-read **chapter 1 & 2:1-10**

with them. This is a good practice as we make it through Paul's letter. The church at Ephesus would have read all six chapter as one letter. They would not have had chapters or verses to slow their reading OR pause their reading.

### CLOSING PRAYER

As you close this study of **Ephesians 2:1-10** in prayer, begin by asking everyone to consider their previous life – the life they lived apart from God and dead in their sins.

Encourage everyone to praise God for making them come alive by His grace and purpose in Jesus Christ! That is God's plan and purpose. We should all be thankful for this plan and purpose.

Last, ask Him for the strength to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel to the world around us. They desperately need God's love, forgiveness and joy!