

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

SESSION 3

Letter to the Ephesians: Ephesians 2:1-10 - PARTICIPANTS GUIDE

WELCOME

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.

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 2:1-3**

EPHESIANS 2:1-3

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

- We were spiritually _____ & _____. [vs. 2]
- And, we were spiritually _____. [verse 3]

QUESTIONS

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?

- 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?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Ephesians 2:4-10**

EPHESIANS 2:4-10

Ok, so Paul tells the church – it isn’t your _____ that determines your adoption status – it’s only His _____ and _____. 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. 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.

QUESTIONS

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?**

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?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and 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 chapters as one letter. They would not have had chapters or verses to slow their reading OR pause their reading.

Outline for how we will study Ephesians:

- **March 10th: Ephesians 2:11-22** - *As a result, God has destroyed the barrier between Jew and Gentile, unifying them and being indwelt with his Holy Spirit.*
- **March 17th: Hangout Night**
- **April 7th: Ephesians 3** – *The gospel call to share the gospel and prayer for spiritual strength.*
- **April 14th: Ephesians 4** – *Live in supernatural unity to the glory of God.*
- **April 21st: Ephesians 5–6:9** – *In regeneration, walk in love toward one another.*
- **April 28th: Ephesians 6:10-24** – *Strength through the whole armor of God.*
- **May 5th: Hangout Night or Content Make-Up**