

# EPHESIANS

## LIVING (THE) GOSPEL

### Sermon 2 – Ephesians 2:1-10 – By Grace

1. Do you have a 'before' and 'after' story to share? Perhaps weight loss, perhaps before and after dealing an addiction, perhaps before and after coming to know Jesus. How can understanding a 'before' scenario, help us better understand an 'after' picture?

#### Recap – Ephesians 1:15-23

2. We saw last week, Paul's prayer that we might know the Lord better, know the hope to which we've been called and know the power that is available for us. Have you used this for our church this week? What difference might such a prayer make to us/our church?

#### Read again Ephesians 2:1-10

##### ONE contrast -

we were: dead-slaves-under-wrath, but we are now: alive-with-Christ-under grace

3. Review our 'before' picture. What does Paul mean when he says we were 'dead'? Is this reality new to you? What stands out for you from our 'before' picture?
4. *We were by nature, objects of wrath.* A Christian friend says to you, "I don't think God is wrathful towards us. He's a loving God". How would you respond?
5. Review our 'after' picture. What does Paul mean when he says we are 'alive in Christ' and 'seated with him in the heavenly realms'? What stands out for you from our 'after' picture?

##### TWO words – "But God"

6. Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758, an American preacher and writer said: "You contribute nothing to your salvation except the sin that made it necessary." Discuss this in the light of what we see in this passage.
7. A friend says 'my faith in God – that has to be worth something doesn't it?' How do you respond?
8. Read v7 again- what is God's aim through all that he has done for us?

##### THREE implications – by faith, no boasting and the place of good works

9. How did Mark/Chris describe the faith by which we take hold of the riches of God's grace?
10. Why are we tempted to look for some redeeming feature in ourselves to boast about or defend ourselves? How can we help and remind one another that our only boast is in the Lord Jesus and what he has done?
11. We are God's handiwork – a beautiful description of what he has achieved in us by bringing us from death to life and setting us free to serve him. How do you think we find those good works which God has prepared in advance for us to do? (Note again the relationship between salvation and good works – we are saved *for* good works, not *by* good works!)

*Pray that we might fully grasp the serious nature of our 'before' picture, that we might be humbled by and rejoice all the more in our 'after' picture. Rejoice today in the incomparable riches of God's grace!*

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018  
**Services:** 730, 930, and 930 Peregian (via Chris)  
**Series:** Ephesians: Living (the) Gospel  
**Passage:** Ephesians 2:1-10  
**Title:** By grace  
**Outline:** **1 contrast**  
**2 words**  
**3 implications**

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- Jenny Craig and Weight Watchers ads love **before** and **after** shots...
- And without fail the **BEFORE** shot is **unbelievably bad** – bad **hair**, bad **lighting**, bad **clothes**, and the **AFTER** shot is incredibly **good** – professionally **shot**, **make up**, **glamorous clothes** – the **works**.
- You're meant to see the **contrast** in the **starkest possible terms**.
- Isn't it true though that if you only saw the '**after**' shot, you may not be all that **impressed**... it wouldn't have the same **impact**... you may be left wondering "what's the big deal"...?
- The '**before**' shot makes you realise just how **significant** a transformation has taken **place**. //
- Paul is out to paint two pictures in words here in chapter 2 – a **before** and **after picture** – **BEFORE Christ** and **AFTER Christ** – and the **impact** is very **dramatic**.
- But **hang on a minute** – we've jumped right in – so let me tell you what's happening here... so we understand the **all-important context**... //
- I reminded you last week, that a **mystery** has been **revealed** to us – namely – God's plan to unite **everything** – every **person**, every **power**, every **authority** – **UNDER CHRIST**
- The plan begins with God bringing **people** under Christ...
- Which **people**? – **us**. You and me. **Believers** across the **ages**.
- He **chose** us, **adopted** us, **redeemed** us, **informed** us of his **plan** and **sealed** us with His **Spirit**.
- **Staggering realities!** **Humbling** isn't it to know how God has **blessed** us...! and he **loved doing** it.
- In the **second** half of the chapter, Paul goes on to pray that we may know **the LORD**; **know** the **hope** we have for the **future** and **know** the **power** which is **ours**... power to hang in there as **believers** in a world full of **sceptics**.
- But now as we get to chapter 2, it's as if Paul is **anticipating** a couple of **objections**... as if someone has asked – well – hang on a moment... **how can** God unite people under **Christ**, who have turned their **back** on him...? so he **zooms** in and takes a closer **look** at **that** issue. //
- So – here's where we're heading this morning –
  - 1 **contrast**
  - 2 **words**
  - 3 **implications**

• So

## 1. 1 CONTRAST

- If you are a Christian here this morning, there is a truth about yourself that you may never have realised.

- did you know that Jesus was not the **only** person to have been raised from **death**, **ascended** to God and **seated** with the **Father**?
- did you know that this is **your** reality too? //
- let me show you what I mean.
- first things first – did you know you were once **dead**?
- now you may have never seen yourself as having previously been dead - but that is in fact the truth - and no I am not just talking about those times when you got home late and were up early next morning and you walked out into the kitchen your parents or flatmate or spouse exclaimed – “what time did you get in last night - you look like death warmed up!”
- let’s have a look at what Paul says - 2:1 *as for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*
- so yes **dead**. Not **metaphorically** dead. Not on death's **door**. Not on death **row**. But **actually** dead. **Spiritually dead**. **No life** toward God **whatsoever**. **No hope** of living with **him**.
- Not only were we **dead** - but we were **trapped** - **following** the ways of this **world**...
- Not only this, but we were **servicing** Satan - the “**ruler** of the **kingdom** of the **air**”; and gratifying whatever selfish desires came our way. Satan was our Master; whatever we wanted to do we did and God was not on the scene.
- and all this had a further implication - that by our **nature** we were **objects** of God's **wrath** - v3.
- now God's wrath is not God's bad temper or his fickle mood swings, it is the **understandable** and **appropriate anger** of a **holy** God who cannot **tolerate** our **sin**.
- that is the very real and sobering reality which is our **past** - or indeed if you are **not** a Christian - it is your **present** reality - you are **dead** and you are **trapped**, and you are subject to God's **wrath**.
- but let’s explore what is **NOW** the reality for the Christian - and if you are not a Christian what the reality **could** be for **you**:
- last week we saw God's incredible power which raised Jesus from death.
- look back with me a 1:19 - *That power is like the working of his mighty strength which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion...*
- so through the **power** of **God** - Jesus was **raised** from **death**, taken into **heaven** and given **authority** - given a **throne**.
- but now look at how Paul describes what has happened to the **Christian** in v4 / *But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy made us alive in Christ... now v6... and God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms with Christ Jesus...*
- through the **love** of God - **we** have been raised, **taken into heaven** and given **authority** - for to **sit** is it take **authority**.
- what an amazing and astounding contrast with our **previous** situation! What an amazing **before** and **after** shot!
- now you might be sitting there thinking - hang on - what does he mean ‘raised’, ‘taken into heaven’ and ‘seated with Jesus’?
- ...as far as I am aware - I'm still very much here on earth with my feet very much on the ground on the Sunshine Coast!
- and here Paul is speaking from God's out-of-time-perspective.

- In a way which we will perhaps never fully comprehend, God is not bound by time as **we** are - time is part of **this** creation - whereas, God is **eternal**.
- From his perspective of being **out** of time, it is a **fact** that we are **now** made **alive, raised** and **seated** - that is our **present spiritual reality**.
- if you are a Christian here this morning, then from God's perspective you are **already** saved, made **holy** and you are **living** in the **presence** of **Jesus**. //
- so here is our *before* and *after* shots:  
we were **Dead-slaves-under-wrath**  
NOW  
**alive-with-Christ-under grace!!**
- how did this come about?
- Two words:

## 2. BUT GOD

- in v4 - the word order in the Greek has the verse beginning with a very big bold **BUT GOD!**
- for Paul wants us to be absolutely certain who has brought about the change in our present reality.
- So let me show you: *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved*
- it is all the **work** of **God** - from **beginning** to **end**.
- **BUT GOD!**
- without him stepping in to act we would still be **very dead**. //
- it is **God** who made us **alive**, God who **raised us up**, God who **seated** us with **Jesus**.
- notice that all happened in connection with Jesus -
- God made us alive **with Christ**.
- God raised us up **with Christ**.
- God seated us with him in the heavenly realms **in Christ**.
- this adds again to the force of the contrast - where once we kept company with the **world**, with our selfish **desires** and the **devil** - now we are **one with Christ**.
- this is of course entirely consistent with what we saw in the opening verses back in January - that God **chose us**.
- our salvation **begins** with God choosing, and **continues** as **his** work from **beginning** to **end**.
- did your conversion begin with a **spark of interest** in Christian things? - that **spark** was put there **by God**.
- did it continue with an **inquiry** - asking **questions**, listening to **studies**, reading a **book** with greater interest? - that interest was put there **by God**.
- did it proceed by asking someone for **help** - or praying a **prayer** or going **forward** at the end of the meeting? - that was because **God was at work in your heart by His Holy Spirit!**
- do you **now** believe the truth about Jesus - that he was God's **Son**? - that his death was for **you** and means your **forgiveness** and **eternal life**? - you now see these things as **true**, because **God** has **revealed** them to you.
- how was it possible for him to have anything to do with us total **rebels** - even while we were

dead? - v4 - because of his **mercy**.

- how did he come to give his Son's **life** for you? - v7 - because of his **great kindness**.
- how do you describe **love** toward **rebels**, **mercy** to **dead people** and **kindness** in giving his **Son??** - **one word** : - **GRACE**.
- because God's **purpose** in all of this - v7 - was to **show** the **incomparable riches** of his **grace!** //
- **BUT GOD!**
- we were dead, **but God** made us alive.
- we followed the ways of this **world** **but God** intervened to show us a better way
- we followed the **devil** - were enslaved to him **but God** loosed the bonds
- we were **trapped** by our own desires and thoughts **but God** turned our hearts and empowered us to overcome them.
- we were objects of God's wrath **but God** poured out that wrath on Jesus so that we could be pardoned.
- we were lost **but God** found us, blind **but God** made us to see, with our backs to him and running **but God** turned us around!
- Yes - **incomparable riches of grace!** - **God's wonderful rich, loving kindness by which we have been saved...**
- **BUT GOD! ///**
- Well.... 1 contrast, 2 words and finally:

### 3. 3 IMPLICATIONS

- what is all of this going to mean?
- Well of course, if you've grasped this, you will be incredibly humbled and thankful to God who has acted in this way towards us who are so completely undeserving.
- but three implications further than that: note that these blessings are taken hold of

#### 1. **through faith** -

taking hold of God's gift through faith means turning to God with a sense of **need** and **weakness** and **emptiness...**

- faith simply is **trust** - trust that the Bible's assessment of us is real - trust that the only **answer** is **Jesus** and trust in **Jesus' death on the cross** for your sin.... And **trust** as you hand the **control** of your life over to God to now be in charge!
- is this what you have **done?** //
- have you in sorrow bowed before our gracious God and said - "I admit it - I am lost, dead, trapped by sin - there is no other hope for me but you. Forgive me, make me yours. Thank you for Jesus' death."
- **until** you have come to **that** point - or something like it - you have simply not become a Christian and you are still **dead!**
- and I want to urge you this morning as you have seen the riches of God's grace described in these verses to come and take **hold** of that grace - through **faith**.

#### 2. **Second implication: no boasting** -

- it's a very humbling thing isn't for a Christian to say - I take **no credit** for **who I am**; for my **forgiveness** and **turning** to God - it's all **God's work**.
- we have done absolutely **nothing** to deserve God's grace. It is not as if we helped a lady across

the street one day and God looked down and saw - there is someone who deserves to be saved - I'll save them.

- anything **good** that we did before becoming a Christian didn't count for **anything**...
- Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758, an American preacher and writer said: "You contribute nothing to your salvation except the sin that made it necessary."
- therefore, we have absolutely **nothing** to boast about - **nothing** except the Lord **Jesus** and our **gracious God**.
- we live then, to help make **known** the incomparable riches of his grace!
- Third implication - the place of good works

### 3. **good works** -

- while doing good things will in no way **lead** us to salvation or **earn** us our salvation (I hope that's been clear this morning!), this passage says that salvation will **lead naturally** to **good works** -
- have a look with me at v10 - *For we are God's workmanship - handiwork - created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*
- Have you heard that description of yourself before?
- **God's glorious handiwork!** Having made you who were dead, alive now with Christ... Paul says elsewhere - you are a **new creation**... !
- And has his **brilliant handiwork**... he has **created** you to do **good works** - and **prepared** those good works in **advance** for you to **do!!!**
- It really makes sense doesn't - we've been brilliantly **showered** with **riches** of **grace**... and now **our** job is to shower **others** with **grace**...
- Paul Tripp "Living a life of love doesn't make God love you, but demonstrates that he has already showered his transforming love down on you."
- That's your **job description**... keep **blessing** and **blessing** and **blessing** people with what they **don't deserve**...!
- You doing good at **home**...? making life a **joy**?
- You doing good at **work**...? standing out from others due to your **amazing kindness**?
- Doing good at **school, uni, sport's club**... doing good at **church**...?
- There's a whole **program** of good works that God has prepared in **advance** for us to do - and **that's** what we're to be on about...///
- And if we're not on about that? We may just still be **dead!** //

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Let's see what we've seen this morning:

- **one contrast** - between what we **were** and what we **are** - between **death** and **life**.
- We were **dead-slaves-under-wrath**
- Now? We are **alive-with-Christ-under-grace**
- all and **only** because of **God**. ///
- **BUT GOD** - **two words** which show us how totally dependent we are - which show us that **God has done it all** - he is the one who has **reversed** our **fortunes through the incomparable riches of his grace!**

- **3 implications** –  
we receive this amazing news - **through faith**,  
it means there is **no boasting** but in our glorious Lord Jesus  
**and** it results, naturally and wonderfully **a life of good works** - **for** which God has made us. //

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- *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved*