

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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Text:	Ephesians 2:1-10		Pastor/Teacher
Date:	December 31, 2017 (a.m.)		Josh Walker

THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

Introduction

As we begin this morning, let me remind you where we have been in Ephesians. In chapter 1, verses 1–14, we saw that we are to praise God because He chose us, He forgives us, and He seals us with the promised Holy Spirit. We saw that all of these wonderful blessings were given to us by God, and that we did nothing to merit or earn them. These glorious truths lead Paul to offer a prayer of thanksgiving and intercession, chapter 1, verses 15–23. This prayer, as we saw, was Paul asking God to enlighten the Saints in Ephesus with the truth of God’s great power towards them (1:17–19), and then Paul praising God for raising Christ from the dead and exalting him above all else (1:20–23). Paul then, moving into our passage this morning, reminds his readers of God’s great power in the life of believers. This brings us to our passage this morning, Ephesians 2:1–10. The main point of this passage is summarized well in these words,

This passage contrasts the horrible plight of believers before their experience of Christ with their new life in Christ now. This experience can only be described as passing from death to life by virtue of their participation with Christ in his resurrection and exultation. This salvation experience is a gift from God and enables them to live the life God has called them to live.¹

We will unpack this passage in three points this morning: 1) Our Former Bondage, 2) Our New Life, and 3) Our Salvation. Let me repeat those: 1) Our Former Bondage, 2) Our New Life, and 3) Our Salvation.²

Our Former Bondage (2:1–3)

Spiritual Death:

Colossians 2:13–14, “And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.”

Romans 5:17 explains that this death was due to the original transgression of Adam, and that all humans participate with and in Adam’s first sin, since he is the one God chose to represent them. As a result, all humans are born in this state of spiritual deadness.

The connection between Adam’s sin and the death that results can be found in Genesis 2–3.

Trespasses and Sins:

Hendiadys: the expression of a single idea by two words connected with “and,” e.g., nice and warm, when one could be used to modify the other, as in nicely warm.

Greek word for sins (ἀμαρτίας) is in the dative case most likely used to express a causal relationship between sins and spiritual death.

Our New Life (2:4–7)

“But God”: “In light of the distressing plight humanity faces because of the powerful chains of their slavery, the “but God” of this next paragraph shines a bright ray of hope. That God of creation is not only just, but he is merciful—exceedingly so. The introductory blessing has already characterized God as rich in grace. But God is also rich in mercy.”³

***Our Salvation* (2:8–10)**

“In order to stress that salvation is by God’s grace alone and through faith, Paul adds two balancing negatives: first, *and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God* (v.8b), and, secondly, *not by works, so that no one can boast* (v.9). In the first clause, which emphasizes the divine initiative and activity, some have taken this to refer specifically to faith, which immediately precedes. The point being made, then, is that the response of faith does not come from any human source, but is God’s gift. This interpretation is grammatically possible, assuming that the term denotes faith and not Christ’s faithfulness, and it is consistent with Pauline teaching elsewhere (cf. Phil. 1:29). However, the context demands that this be understood of salvation by grace as a whole, including the faith (or faithfulness) through which it is received.

“God’s magnificent rescue from death, wrath, and bondage is all of grace. It neither originates in nor is effected by the readers. Instead, it is God’s own gift, a point which Paul goes out of his way to emphasize by changing the normal word order and contrasting ‘God’s’ with ‘yours’. The particular word for gift, though common enough, does not appear elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. Other words with a similar meaning are used to speak of Gods gift of righteousness and life in Christ (Rom. 5:15–17; 6:23).”⁴

ENDNOTES

¹Arnold, Clint E., *Ephesians: Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Zondervan, 2010), 126.

²This outline is adapted from Arnold, Ephesians, 126.

³Arnold, *Ephesians*, 134.

⁴O’Brien, Peter T., *The Letter to the Ephesians: The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Eerdmans, 1999), 175-76.