

Readings

Scripture

¹And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in 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— ³among 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. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2:1-10 (*English Standard Version*)

Reflection

Nothing is more central or basic than union and communion with Christ. ... Union with Christ is in itself a very broad and embracing subject. It is not simply a step in the application of redemption; ...it underlies every step of the application of redemption. Union with Christ is really the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation not only in its application but also in its once-for-all accomplishment in the finished work of Christ. Indeed the whole process of salvation has its origin in one phase of union with Christ and salvation has in view the realization of other phases or union with Christ.

- John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (p. 161)

Paul was under no illusion about the degradation of mankind. He refused to whitewash the situation, for this might have led him to propose superficial solutions. Instead, he began this paragraph with a faithful portrayal of man as subject to three terrible powers, namely 'sin', 'death' and 'wrath'. Yet he refused also to despair, because he believed in God. True, the only hope for dead people lies in a resurrection. But then the living God is the God of resurrection. He is even more than that: he is the God of creation. Both metaphors indicate the indispensable necessity of divine grace. For resurrection is out of death, and creation is out of nothing. That is the true meaning of 'salvation.'

- John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians* (p. 85)

Sermon Outline

From Death to Life

Ephesians 2:1-10

The Theology of Tears

Brad Anderson

Because of God's great love we have been made alive together with Jesus Christ...
(Ephesians 2:4-5)

How did God respond in love to our need?

By meeting us in a hopeless condition... (Ephesians 2:1-3)

- Dead in sin...
- Yoked to evil...
- Children of wrath...

By placing us in union with his son Jesus Christ... (Ephesians 2:4-7)

- By grace we were made alive...(resurrection)
- By grace we were raised...(ascension)
- By grace we were seated...(session)

By revealing the character of his sovereign grace... (Ephesians 2:8-10)

- Salvation is by grace through faith alone...
- Salvation is not by works...
- Salvation is a gift...
- Salvation is recreation...

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- What was one of the best gifts you received as a child? What made it so special to you?
- What does it mean to be "dead in sin": Helpless? Guilty? Lifeless? What has caused this death? Why do you think it is difficult for our culture to conceive of being in a hopeless condition like the one described in Ephesians 2:1-3? Is Paul just being mean, or is he being realistic? Why?
- What has God done to fix the problem? Why must he take the initiative? What comparisons does Paul make between Christ's experience (Ephesians 1:20-23) and ours (Ephesians 2:5-7)?
- In Ephesians 2:8-10 Paul describes that both grace and faith are gifts from God. How does that prevent boasting?
- The word workmanship in Ephesians 2:10 is the same word from which we derive the English word for poetry. It means artistic creation or masterpiece. What images are brought to mind as you consider that you are described as God's poetry, or God's masterpiece? You may have to think about what you know about poetry, a poem's economy of speech, word placement, meter, and use of images to expand your answer.
- How is Paul's life a testimony of Ephesians 2:1-10? You may want to read Acts 8-9 or consider other places in scripture that share pieces of Paul's life and ministry.
- Accepting God's solution to your sin problem, what good works do you think God has in store for you? Why?