

## *Ephesians—Walk, Wealth, Warfare Our Reality in Christ*

### Lesson 14—Ephesians 2.1-10

#### ***Amazing Grace***

Most of us have seen the game show “Let’s Make a Deal,” in which the contestants who qualify for the Final Showcase are asked to choose between what is behind two doors with only partial knowledge of their contents. A few years ago my mother-in-law made it into the Final Showcase and had to choose between fifteen thousand dollars’ worth of new kitchen appliances and what was behind door number two. Unfortunately, she chose Door Number Two, which hid her prize; it was a donkey. Her comment was, “If I had only known what was behind the door, I would have made a better choice.”

In life we are all asked to make a choice between two doors. Door Number One has a very attractive front and is labeled “The World” and Door Number Two is labeled “Jesus” (“I am the door,” John 10:9). In our passage of Scripture this week, Paul allows us to peek behind both of these doors to reveal their true contents. Door Number One, “The World,” looks attractive from the outside as Satan works (literally energizes) to make it appear appealing with the promise of pleasure, no guilt, and the good life. But behind it we find men dead in their sins and trespasses. By contrast, behind Door Number Two, labeled Jesus, we find the surpassing richness of God’s grace. Paul adds the prefix *hyper* to *surpassing* to describe the magnitude of our gift (we get our word *hyperbole* from the Greek term for *surpassing*). If that isn’t enough, this passage speaks as if we have already been raised with Jesus and seated with Him in the heavenly realm. In truth, once we have accepted Jesus, God the Father sees us as holy. This is our *position* in Christ before God. However, in our earthly tent we still tend to sin in our present *condition*. It is through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit that our

condition (sinful man) grows closer in character to our position (Holy before God) as we will read about in chapters 4 through 6 of this epistle.

Faith and works are often seen as the polar opposites of theology. Yet in the familiar passage of verses 8 through 10, Paul shows us how they are connected. He clearly teaches that salvation is by God's grace alone through faith and not as a result of anything we can do. We are not saved by our works but we are saved for God's work. In his book *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren says life's most important question is: "What on earth am I here for?" Warren goes on to explain, "You are not an accident. Even before the universe was created, God had you in mind, and he planned you for his purposes."<sup>1</sup> Paul writes that we are His workmanship or masterpiece (*poiema* in the Greek from which we derive *poem*) created for good works in Christ.

In the first half of our passage Paul addresses our individual salvation; in the second half of the chapter he writes about how our spiritual rebirth brings about the reconciliation of different groups within the Body of Christ. Modern racial hatred and prejudice pales when compared to the attitude of the Jews towards Gentiles in the ancient world. To the Jews the Gentiles were dogs, without the true God and without hope. One rabbi wrote that the Gentiles were "fuel for the fires of hell." If a Jew married a Gentile, the family would hold a funeral service for them. The wall mentioned in verse 14 was both figurative and literal—a wall separated the Court of the Gentiles (the location of the moneychangers) from the actual temple, which only Jews could enter. Ironically, Paul wrote this letter from prison because of the charge against him for allegedly bringing a Gentile into the temple.

In Christ, these mortal enemies have been joined together in immortality. From the two He has made one new man. The Greek word for *new* means new not only in time but also by being novel or unique. Paul goes on to write, in Colossians 3:11, that there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised. Together Jews and Gentiles in Christ have become living stones (1 Peter 2:5), being built up on the cornerstone of Jesus into the house of God. The world preaches tolerance but practices prejudice. Governments promise equality and tranquility but cannot make good on that promise. It is only in Christ that we shall find peace (Greek *eirene* means more than a lack of eternal strife but also a quality of inner calm). An often-heard cry from a mob is "No Justice, No Peace"

---

<sup>1</sup> Rick Warren *The Purpose Driven Life* page 23 Zondervan Grand Rapids, Michigan 2002

chanted while they continue to riot in the streets. History and current events have proven this to be false. A revised version of this refrain that has been proven true for a countless number of believers is “No Jesus, No Peace—Know Jesus, Know Peace.”

### **Prayer**

Start by praying over the passage and asking the Holy Spirit to give you fresh insights and wisdom in understanding it. Then read through the entire passage two or three times. This week’s passage contains some very deep theology so you may want to make one of your readings in a more dynamic translation, such as the New Living Translation, that’s easier to understand.

### **Scripture Meditation/Memorization**

One of the most fundamental and rewarding Christian disciplines that pays back in full spiritual dividends is Bible meditation/memorization. It is an absolutely fundamental in the formation of your spiritual development, spiritual walk and faith growth. In Psalm 1:1-2 (NLT), the Psalmist warrior, King David said,

*“Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,  
or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.  
But they delight in the law of the Lord,  
meditating on it day and night.”*

Use the suggested verse(s) to meditate on during the course of this week's study.

#### **Memory Verse**

*“[8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”—Ephesians 1:8-10 (ESV)*

---

### **Ephesians 2:1-3—The Bad News: All Dogs Don’t Go To Heaven**

If you ask most people to describe the entrance requirements for heaven they will respond with “do enough good deeds.” They view a cosmic scale of justice in which good deeds are weighed against bad deeds and if the scale tips in your favor, you qualify for heaven. Verses 1–3 quickly dispel this false notion. Paul uses two different terms to describe these so-called misdeeds. *Transgressions* (Greek

*paraptoma*) means to misstep or to deviate from the correct pathway. *Sins*, a term more often used (173 times in the New Testament), comes from a Greek archery term (*hamartia*) meaning to miss the bullseye. Unless you shot perfectly, it didn't matter if you missed by an inch or a mile—you had sin (*hamartia*). We quantify sins as big or small based on bias and sliding cultural standards but from God's perspective, sin is sin and must be dealt with.

1. God's view on sin is very different from the view prevalent in our country today. If a policeman stops you for speeding, it is unlikely your lengthy description of your otherwise good driving record will keep you from receiving the penalty for your offense. What do you learn from the following scriptures?

a). Romans 3:11-12

---

---

---

---

b). Romans 3:23

---

---

---

---

c). Romans 6:23

---

---

---

---

d). James:2:10

---

---

---

---

2. From what you've just read in the preceding paragraph, the scriptures from question 1, and your own experience, rewrite Ephesians 2:1 so that it would be easier for an unsaved individual to understand it.

---

---

---

---

3. J. Vernon McGee and William Hendriksen, and others all comment on this passage, "We are not sinners because we sin but we sin because we are sinners by nature." How do the following scriptures support their statement?

a). Ephesians 2:2-3

---

---

---

---

b). Romans 8:5-8

---

---

---

---

4. During his brief sojourn into Christianity, Bob Dylan wrote a song whose lyrics said, "You've got to serve somebody; it might be the devil or it might be the Lord, but you've got to serve somebody."

a). According to today's verses, who are the unsaved following?

---

---

---

---

b). What does it mean to "follow the ways of the world" to you?

---

---

---

---

---

**Ephesians 2:6-10—Now the Good News**

Our imagination is captured when we see before and after images of “ultimate makeovers” of restaurants, people, homes, dog behaviours, or just about anything. Truly the ultimate makeover is in the regeneration of the lost as Paul describes in our passage today. After painting a bleak but factual picture of man without Christ, Paul pivots on the hinge—“But God” as he reveals the richness of our inheritance in Jesus.

1. Some have defined grace using the acrostic—**G**od’s **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist’s **E**xpense. What aspect of amazing grace do we learn from the following verses?

a. Ephesians 2:4-6

---

---

---

---

b. Romans 5:6-8

---

---

---

---

2. Isaiah writes one of God’s attributes is that He knows the end from the beginning. God’s future plans are so certain that God often speaks of the future in the past tense, as if it has already happened. For example, in Isaiah, God reveals King Cyrus will return Israel from exile 150 years before it happened.

a. How does verse 6 reflect that same confidence in a future event?

---

---

---

---

b. How is God’s confidence in the fulfillment of future events according to His will a source of assurance to us in our daily walk of faith?

---

---

---

---

3. According to verses 5–7 how is our salvation “Exhibit A” as evidence or proof of God’s grace?

---

---

---

---

4. What is the role of works, faith, and grace in connection to our salvation?

---

---

---

---

5. We are His workmanship (*poiema* or poem), created for what purpose? (See verse 10; also John 15:5 can help.)

---

---

---

---

6. \*What hinders you from doing the good works God prepared for you to do?<sup>2</sup>

---

---

---

---

---

### **Lesson 14 Summary/Take Away**

If one of your friends at work or a neighbor were to ask you what you did on Tuesday, you would tell them you went to a Bible study. The next question would likely be, “What did you learn?” We often summarize an entire athletic contest or a movie in a few brief sentences and easily convey the essence of the event. Now

---

<sup>2</sup> Question taken from *Galatians—Experiencing the Grace of Christ*, John Stott Bible Studies, InterVarsity Press-USA, 1998

apply these same skills to give a summary of the passage in a sentence or two. Then, in an additional sentence or two, describe what impact this passage will have on how you live.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Memory Verse**

*"[8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."*—Ephesians 1:8-10 (ESV)

**Key Words / Phrases**

To avoid walking in circles when lost in the wilderness, survival instructors teach their students to pick out the most prominent point in the distant landscape and walk toward it. In a similar sense we need to pick out the single most important truth in this week's study and apply it in our life as we walk toward Jesus and out of the wilderness. Please share with your group what that truth is for you and how will you apply it this week:

Dead in Our Trespasses (Ephesians 2:5)

---

---

---

Seated Us with Him in the Heavenly Realms (Ephesians 2:6)

---

---

---



