

Salvation: How & Why?

Ephesians 2:8-10 Sunday AM, June 18, 2023

Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10

(NASB95) And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God;* ⁹ not as 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 so that we would walk in them.

Overwhelmed with God's gracious goodness, Paul finishes Ephesians 1 offering a prayer of thanksgiving to God for these saints at Ephesus. I praise and thank-you God for your great and gracious mercies toward these believers. Help them see more of these blessings so they will be faithful to Your purpose for calling them. Help them not only see this purpose clearly, but upon seeing the human impossibility of faithfulness to that plan, help them see "the surpassing greatness of [Your] power toward us who believe." What kind of power? The kind that raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him in heaven to rule. The power by which He is head, ruling over His people, the church. This focus on Christ for worship, life, and direction is NOT natural. Two weeks ago, we saw natural life lived out from under Christ's authority, lived according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is not working in the sons of disobedience. This shrunk our world to the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind—leaving us focused on protecting ourselves and our personal happiness. And how is this life with its goals and values described? We were by nature, children of wrath—objects of the wrath of God. Why? Because according to the only reality that matters, it is DEAD living—there is separation between us and God and all that results is full of stench and decay. In the face of all this, we heard two wonderful words—But God! And following those words came an amazing description of this God which accompanied His actions toward us. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Why? ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. How did He do this? Why? Does it have to be fully understood before you acknowledge this is the kind of thing that God does? Praise the wonderful grace of Jesus.

*Hymn #198: Wonderful Grace of Jesus

Today, Paul continues this focus on God's grace. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God;* God gives to us not merely to make salvation possible, but to lead you to trust His words and live inside them. Think on this as you sing this familiar hymn.

*Hymn #202: Amazing Grace *Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: Midnight Cry Scripture: Deuteronomy 8:1-20

(NASB95) "All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your forefathers. ² "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ "Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. ⁵ "Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. ⁶ "Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. ⁷ "For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; ⁹ a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰ "When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. ¹¹ "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; ¹² otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them, ¹³ and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, ¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ¹⁵ "He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. ¹⁶ "In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. ¹⁷ "Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' ¹⁸ "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. ¹⁹ "It shall come about if you ever forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish. ²⁰ "Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so you shall perish; because you would not listen to the voice of the LORD your God.

Offering: *Doxology:

You WILL work if you are reconciled to God, but it is not your work which admits you to His kingdom or that makes Him love you more. Your salvation is not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. You will work, but it does not determine your success or failure, and your work will not be for your well-being apart from accomplishing all His good will. "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; ¹⁷ "Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' Don't forget—God saves, God keeps, God gives strength to follow, and God is preparing an eternal home for you. Don't determine life and love from your short, finite perspective. Sing the testimony of the redeemed—those who live by every word that comes from God's mouth.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): The One Who First Loved Me

You may be seated. God's grace frees you from needing to be known for what you've done and frees you to be His workmanship—His poem, created from His infinite well of love, creativity, and beauty to accomplish more of His good will. Yes, it is beautiful, but no, it is not optional. You will never see His beauty as He intended you to see not only in your life, but also in the lives of others He has redeemed, AND His magnificence in handling those who are enemies of His grace until you walk in the paths He redeemed you to walk. The saved were created for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Don't seek good works, seek to follow His word and you will do His good works. As pastor prepares to preach, pray Good Shepherd of my soul, teach me to follow.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): Good Shepherd of My Soul

Message: "Salvation: How & Why?" Ephesians 2:8-10 *Hymn #201: Grace Greater Than Our Sin *Prayer