

# EPHESIANS 2:1-10

## Dead Made Alive: By Grace Through Faith

### Memory Verse

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Ephesians 2:8-9

### Real-life Problems

We learn from a young age that good behavior earns rewards and bad behavior earns punishments. As we grow, we bring this understanding to all we do. From grades to paychecks to our position on the team, we work hard to earn what we want. And we try to do this with our relationship with God as well. We work to earn our salvation through our good actions. However, in this lesson, we will see how God is nothing like the world. Our identity in Him and His love for us cannot be earned by what we do.

### The Good News

When we could not do anything on our own to restore our relationship with God, Jesus freely gave His perfect life for ours. Not only did Jesus take the punishment we deserved, but He actually gave us His life in exchange for ours. By this act of grace, we have been saved. And since we did nothing to earn our salvation, we can do nothing to prove ourselves worthy of it.

## I. Introduction

### OPENING QUESTIONS

**Idea #1:** Have you ever forgotten to turn in a homework assignment or school project? What happened? If not, what do you think would happen if you missed your next assignment?

**Idea #2:** If you were given the opportunity to do anything you wanted for your career, what would you do?

**Idea #3:** What is the best surprise you have ever been given?

### PRAY

Open your time together in prayer.

### REHEARSING THE GOSPEL

#### What does gospel mean?

Good news

#### What's the good news?

Jesus died for my sins

#### Why did He die for your sins?

So that I can have abundant life in relationship with Him now and forever

#### What is grace?

God's love for undeserving sinners

## REVIEW

### 1) What were the two reasons Paul wrote this letter?

1) To remind the church of the power of the gospel 2) To encourage believers to live in light of their new identity as the church

### 2) Who was the original audience of this letter?

The church, or followers of Jesus Christ, in Ephesus

### 3) Where was Paul when he wrote this letter?

Paul was in prison for his work in spreading the gospel.

## *What's going on?*

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### REMIND

God showed His power by raising Christ Jesus from the dead, doing the one thing no other power could do—defeat death. Now, not only is Jesus alive forever, but His reign is forever. This is the hope for the Christian because not only is Jesus greater than all other powers, but God has made all other powers subject to His rule. Because of this, our prayers and praise should go hand-in-hand. We should praise God for showing His power in the resurrection of Jesus and for exalting Him above all rule and authority. And we should pray that the Holy Spirit would grow our understanding of that power.

### TODAY WE'LL LEARN

After praying that the Spirit would give the Ephesians a deeper understanding of God's power in Christ, Paul now shares one of the clearest accounts of the gospel in the New Testament. After first reminding the Ephesians of the truth of who Christ Jesus is—risen, reigning, and all-powerful—Paul will now encourage them with the truth of what this means for the Christian.

- 1) Without Christ, we are dead.
- 2) With Christ, we are made alive.
- 3) Through Christ, we are given a purpose.

## *Read*

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Read **Ephesians 2:1-10** aloud in your group.

## *II. Questions for Discussion*

### A. WHAT?

#### **1) What are the words or phrases Paul uses in verses 1-3 to describe life without Christ?**

1) We were dead in trespasses and sins. 2) We were followers of the world. 3) We were followers of the prince of the power of the air. 4) We were sons of disobedience.

#### **2) According to verse 4, what motivated God to save us?**

His mercy and His great love.

#### **3) Looking at vv. 5-6, what are the three things God did—with Christ—for us in our salvation?**

1) He made us alive. 2) He raised us up. 3) He seated us in the heavenly places.

#### **4) Can you find the repetitive phrase in verses 5 and 8? What does Paul add in verse 8 that is not in verse 5?**

The repeated phrase is "by grace you have been saved." In verse 8 Paul adds "through faith" so that it reads, "By grace you have been saved through faith."

#### **5) According to verse 9, what is one result of our salvation being a gift and not something we earn?**

We cannot boast in our salvation, but we can only boast in the Lord.

#### **6) This passage begins with the word "and," which connects it to the passage we read in the last lesson.**

##### **What connections or parallels do you see between these two passages?**

In the last lesson's passage, Paul talked about how God showed His power through raising Jesus from the dead and seating Him at His right hand. In this passage, we see a parallel in our own resurrection from the dead. And in the same way Jesus rose from the dead, God has taken us from death into life.

### B. SO WHAT?

#### **1) Why is it important for us to remember who we once were without Christ?**

In order to understand the power and gift of grace, we have to understand what grace truly did for us. There is a big difference between simply making bad decisions and being dead in our sins. If we believe all we were without Christ is a person who sometimes made bad decisions, then we might believe that we have the power to stop sinning by simply making better choices. But this is not who we were without Christ. We were dead. In death, we have no power, no abilities, to do anything. God did not save us from our decisions, He saved us from the grave. This is the power of God and the gift of His grace.

## Remember Who You Are

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Watch this clip with your students: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byDN8aoR4TI>

After the death of his father, Simba runs away from his home and family. He makes a new life for himself. Yet, after years away, he is faced with a the choice to return to his family in order to save his people.

In this scene, Simba is struggling to believe that he is the king that his family says he is. In his mind, only his father has the power to save his people. So Rafiki tells Simba that he knows his father and can actually take Simba to him.

However, Rafiki simply takes Simba to a lake where he shows Simba is reflection. Simba does not understand at first, but Rafiki is trying to make Simba remember. He wants him to remember his true identity, as the one who bears his father's image. It is only in remembering who Simba was that Simba found the strength to be who he was born to be.

This is why Paul calls the Ephesian believers, and us, to remember. Remember who we were and who God is. He does not want us only see who we once were, but he knows that when we can remember who we were, we will truly be able to see the reflection of our Father brighter in who we are.

### **2) Look at back to Ephesians 1:20 and compare it to 2:6? Why is this comparison significant?**

1) As God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, He also raised us from the dead with Him. 2) As God sat Jesus at His right hand in the heavenly places, He also sat us in the heavenly places with Him.

This parallel of God's work in Christ and in us is extremely significant because it shows us that, because of Christ, not only are we made alive, but we are with Him in His rule. The grace of God in our lives not only saves us, but secures us.

### **3) If grace is God's undeserved love for sinners, according to this passage, in what ways do you see grace in God's salvation of us?**

1) Even when we were dead and could give nothing to God, He chose us and made us alive (v. 5). 2) God has raised us and seated us with Christ in a place of honor we did not earn or deserve (v. 6). 3) God prepared good works for us, even when we were still dead in our sins (v. 10).

### **4) How can grace and works go together?**

By ending this passage with the reference of "good works," (v.10) Paul is reminding us that our work is not the root of our salvation, but the fruit of it. He wants us to understand that while we are not saved by the good works we do, we were created to do good works in our salvation.

## C. NOW WHAT?

### **1) In the same way that Paul is reminding Christians of the gospel, how can you regularly proclaim the gospel to yourself and other Christians around you?**

Answers will vary. Help your students practically apply this to their context and their lives. Are there places they put gospel reminders in their room? Can they find ways to sing the gospel or paint or write? What would it look like for Christians around them to remind each other of the gospel?

**2) How does understanding our union with Christ change the way we live now?**

Our union with Christ means that we are not only saved, but kept. Think about Romans 8:39 here. Being united to Christ means that neither height nor depth, nor anything in all creation can separate us from the love of God! This offers freedom from our fears, hope in our suffering, and peace in our failings.

**3) How might we live our faith differently if we were to forget what our lives were like without Christ?**

This is an opportunity to get your students to remember the depths from which Christ saved us. No matter what age we were, or what circumstance we were in, when Christ saved us, we have all been saved from the curse and power of sin. Without Christ, we were all "sons of disobedience" (v.2) and destined to slavery to sin and life without God. When we remember who we were without Christ, the understanding of grace becomes that much more beautiful to us.

### *Main takeaway*

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Without Christ, we are dead; with Christ, we are made alive; and through Christ, we are given a purpose.

## *III. Closing*

### REMEMBERING THE GOOD NEWS

When we could not do anything on our own to restore our relationship with God, Jesus freely gave His perfect life for ours. Not only did Jesus take the punishment we deserved, but He actually gave us His life in exchange for ours. By this act of grace, we have been saved. And since we did nothing to earn our salvation, we can do nothing to prove ourselves worthy of it.

### CLOSE IN PRAYER

God of mercy, thank You for loving us with such a great love. Thank You that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. We know that there is nothing we have done to earn Your love, and there is nothing we can do to make You love us less. Help us to show and share Your great love to others. Amen.

## *Supporting resources*

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### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Is there any part of the gospel that is hard for you to believe as true in your life? When was the last time you prayed for the Spirit of wisdom to help you believe? Spend some time now praying for eyes to see and ears to hear.
- 2) Are there areas of your life in which you are still trying to earn God's favor through your good works?
- 3) How does knowing that God has a purpose for your life change the way you live now?

### QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- 1) How have you experienced God's mercy and grace in your own life?
- 2) If our good works do not save us, why do you think God worries about good works at all?
- 3) Do you often feel like God has a purpose for your life? How can I as your mom/dad/etc. help remind you that this is true?