SESSION 3

RESURRECTED

EPHESIANS 2:1-10

1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you previously lived according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. 2 We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, 5 made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!

6 He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift— 9 not from works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

EXPLORING KEY WORDS

A All mankind is spiritually dead because of their sins. This is the state of every person everywhere prior to coming to Christ by faith.

B "Formerly walked" (NASB)

C Refers to Satan, who encourages, tempts, and enjoys the world disobeying God in all things

D Desires contrary to God and His law (Gal. 5:16-21)

E All humans are sinners (Rom. 3:23; 5:19).

F While all are deserving God’s wrath, God Himself came to our rescue.

G God’s mercy and love were motivating factors for His act of salvation on behalf of believers (John 3:16).

H "He gave us back our lives again" (TLB).

I “We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it” (The Message).

J “Lifted us up from the grave” (TLB), or moved from spiritual death to life as a result of Christ.

K As Christ is in heaven (Acts 1:9-11), the Christians’ future presence there is guaranteed as well.

L A reference to God’s eternal kingdom.

M The depth of God’s kindness toward us is shown to us in Christ (Titus 3:4-6).

N Grace and our faith are gifts from God (Phil. 1:29).

O No matter how damaged or broken you were, when you come to Christ He transforms you into His “masterpiece” (NLT).
1. ONCE DEAD (Eph. 2:1-3)
   - Paul reminded his readers that prior to their salvation in Christ, they were spiritually dead.
   - They were also bound by Satan, living a life of sin and rebellion against God, and deserving God’s wrath.
   - Emphasize the urgency believers need to have in sharing with others.

2. NOW ALIVE (Eph. 2:4-7)
   - Paul declared that believers are made alive as an act of God’s grace.
   - This salvation is offered because of God’s love for us.
   - Believers will be granted positions in heaven based on Jesus’ exalted position.

3. THROUGH GRACE ALONE (Eph. 2:8-10)
   - Paul emphasized that God’s salvation comes only through faith and is an act of His grace to humanity.
   - Salvation can’t be earned but only received as a gift.
   - Our salvation frees us to live a life of good works.
   - Emphasize that works are the result of salvation, not the means of salvation. Interpret salvation in terms of past, present, and future.

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

God provides salvation by grace through faith apart from our good works.
   - Apart from Christ, all people are separated from God and subject to His judgment.
   - Believers find life and purpose though faith in Jesus.
   - Salvation is granted through faith alone in Jesus, removing all grounds for personal boasting.
DISCUSSION PLAN

FOCUS ATTENTION
Describe a time in your life when before and after photos would be drastically different.
• The popularity of television makeover shows indicate people enjoy seeing dramatic before and after differences.
• To fully appreciate the after picture we must see the before picture.
• Paul reminded believers their condition before salvation and explained how that transformation occurred.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE
EPHESIANS 2:1-3
Complete this statement: “Before God saved me in Christ I …”
• Our before picture was dire and hopeless. We were corpses rotting in a cesspool of sin.
• We were powerless to break free of this worldly system, Satan, and our sinful natures that controlled us and incurred God’s wrath.
• Because God is holy, pure, and just, His wrath must be against all that is impure and sinful.

How could Paul call breathing people dead?
• Paul was not referring to the cessation of existing but to the tragedy of existing estranged from God.
• Every person gets their sin nature from Adam. The instant Adam and Eve rebelled, their bodies began to decay and their spirits were separated from God.
• Lost people have no ability to know or experience God.

EPHESIANS 2:4-7
Why are the words “but God” (v. 4) two of the most beautiful in the Bible?
• “But God” is a hinge of hope. God had a solution to humanity’s situation. He gives life and freedom to those who are dead and enslaved.
• There’s no “after” picture without “but God.” We were dead, but God made us alive. We rejected God, but He accepted us. We were under wrath, but now we’ll be seated in the heavens.

What’s the key to this before and after transformation?
• God’s grace shown to us through Christ changes everything.
• Transformations are costly. Jesus paid that cost. He willingly came down into this cesspool and died for the very people who rejected Him.
• When we’re in Christ, we share in the power of His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation. Sin isn’t the boss of us anymore; we don’t have to do what it says.

Why would God work this transformation in such undeserving people?
• Dead people can do nothing to convince God to save them.
• God was motivated by His mercy, love, grace, and kindness for His creation.
• God’s purpose in making believers alive in Christ is so He can display the immensity of His great grace. Believers will spend all eternity with God’s kindness directed toward us.

EPHESIANS 2:8-10
Why can’t believers brag about their “after” condition?
• Salvation can’t be earned, only received as a gift.
• Faith symbolizes our empty hands reaching up to God’s hand that is filled with grace. Even that reaching-out hand is a gift from God. We can’t take credit for any part of our salvation.
• Faith is the channel, not the cause, of salvation. The object of our faith—Christ—is what matters, not the size of our faith.

Some renovated buildings are repurposed to fulfill a specific new objective. How have believers been repurposed in Christ?
• Because believers are alive in Christ, we’re free to live out God’s original design for us.
• We make a difference in this world by doing what God has prepared for us to do.
• Good works are the result, not the means, of salvation.
• Jesus does good works through us as we faithfully obey Him.

SUMMARIZE & CHALLENGE
What are logical responses to Paul’s before and after depictions?
• An imperative response is to accept God’s gift of grace by putting our faith in Christ.
• Remembering what it’s like to be lost should fill us with compassion for unbelievers and a sense of urgency to share the gospel with them.
• Recognizing we did nothing to earn our salvation should fill us with humble gratitude to God.
• We can be purposeful about finding and fulfilling the works God created us to do.

Personal Challenge: If you’re dead in your sin, accept God’s gift of grace today. If you’re alive in Christ, ask God to empower you to live compassionately, urgently, humbly, gratefully, and purposefully.
A PIECE OF DIAMOND JEWELRY AND BLACK PAPER OR FABRIC

Invite participants who are wearing diamond jewelry to look at the stone carefully and allow others to as well. Then pass around a sheet of black paper or fabric and request participants view the diamond against that dark background. State: As jewelers know, if you want to highlight something beautiful and expensive, put it against a dark background. The blacker the backdrop, the more stunning the stone.

Explain that in order to highlight the precious and valuable treasure that believers have in salvation, Paul first laid the backdrop of life without Christ. There’s nothing darker than a life without God. Unbelievers wander aimlessly, controlled by their desires to satisfy their appetites, and are completely powerless to get themselves out of that state. Paul wanted believers to realize we used to be like that. He didn’t bring up our past to condemn us (that’s what Satan does), but to renew our awe at what God did for us in Christ.

When laid against that dark backdrop of sin, enslavement, and hopelessness, the facets of God’s grace shine brightly. Ask: What is rare and costly about God’s grace? Explain that most people don’t purchase diamonds for themselves but receive them as gifts. That gift often signifies love, commitment, and devotion for a lifetime. Ask: Why can’t we purchase salvation for ourselves? How can we receive salvation? How does seeing the blackness of our lives without Christ help us treasure the jewel of salvation God has graciously given us?

GOD’S WORKMANSHIP

One of the most obvious ways in which God relates to us is as Creator. We are introduced to God as Creator at the very beginning of Scripture (Gen. 1). The Psalms also regularly look back to it (Ps. 33; 90:1-2), and God also pointed us there in His discussion with Job (Job 38). As humans, the Bible also affirms that we aren’t just created by God, but are created “in his own image ... in the image of God” (Gen. 1:27).

In Ephesians 2:10, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, told us we are “his workmanship.” Think less about the pottery mug you made in fifth grade art class and more about an incredibly valuable work of art. The term, in the original language is poiema, a term for which we get the English term poem. This helps us have a more robust understanding of what Paul had in mind by “workmanship.” As God’s creation, we are highly valued. At the same time, it also means we have a specific purpose. All authors and artists have reasons for their masterpieces. A painting is to be viewed, a poem is to be read, and a 1968 Dodge Charger R/T with a 426 Hemi is to be driven.

We too are created for a purpose—to glorify God (Isa. 43:7). One of the ways we glorify God is through doing the good works God “prepared ahead of time for us to do” (Eph. 2:10). In other words, we are created, as a masterpiece, to do good works, all for God’s glory in this world.

When Christ redeems us, He enables us to live out this purpose of doing good. As The Baptist Faith and Message says: “Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God.” Thus, as God’s workmanship, we’re each (1) specially created by Him, (2) valuable to Him, (3) have a purpose to fulfill from Him, and (4) that purpose is ultimately to do good for His glory.