



## Northland Christian Church

EPHESIANS 2:1-10 • THE POWER OF GRACE: DEATH TO LIFE • WEEK OF 11/15/2020

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### MAIN POINT

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**Without Jesus, we are enslaved to sin, spiritually dead, and deserving wrath.**

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### CONNECTION AND INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What is your best story of a time when you felt like you were in a dangerous situation? What happened?**

**How did you get out of that situation? How did you feel once you realized you were safe?**

Whether we recognize it or not, all of humanity is in great danger. That's because there is no middle ground when it comes to our spiritual lives. Either we are dead in sin, or we are alive in Christ. Until we see how bad our situation was without Christ, we will never appreciate how good the news of the gospel really is; or our part in Jesus' mission.

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### ENGAGING AND UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 2:1-10.**

**How do verses 1-3 help us understand what sin is? How do they show us that sin is not just a bad choice, but a condition in which we live?**

**Why is it important that we understand humanity, apart from Christ, to be dead and not just bad? How does that understanding change the way we view the good news of the gospel?**

**Why, even as Christians, is it helpful to remember our condition before Christ?**

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## **Jesus's mission was not to make bad people good; his mission was to make dead people alive.**

**What is your "but God" moment—the moment when everything changed spiritually for you?**

What matters most about us is not what the world tells us, how people around us see us, or even how we see ourselves. Our identity is determined by what God says about us. While apart from Christ we were dead and hopeless, in Christ we are alive, and we will never be dead again. When we begin believing what God says about us, we can find the freedom to walk inside the good works He has planned for us.

**Look back at verses 4-7. What attributes of God do you see in this passage?**

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## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Why do you think God wants us to know that we are His "masterpieces"? Is it difficult for you to believe this about yourself? Why or why not?**

**How is your life different now than it was before Christ? Who are some people that you would be excited to experience the same thing? Take time to pray for these people doing group. Maybe even plan a gathering or party and invite some of these people.**

**Dave asked some Sunday; make sure your group is considering and processing these questions.**

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## **IF YOU HAVE TIME**

Finish by asking or reviewing and discussing the "wrestle with this truth" questions that Dave shared Sunday. You could also pray through these questions.

- If you live tomorrow, will heaven come to your home?
  - If you live tomorrow, will heaven come to your school?
  - If you live tomorrow, will heaven come to work?
  - If you live tomorrow, will heaven come to friends?
  - If you live tomorrow, will heaven come to social media?
  - If you live tomorrow, will heaven come to neighbors?
  - If you live tomorrow, will heaven come to your family?
  - If you live tomorrow, will heaven come to your enemies?
  - If you live tomorrow, will heaven come to your neighbors?
  - If you live tomorrow, will heaven come to the Northside?
  - If you live tomorrow, will heaven come to Topeka?
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## **PRAYER**

Thank God that in His mercy, He made you alive with Christ when you were dead in sin. Pray that you would have a greater appreciation of what Jesus has done and a greater compassion for others.

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## EXTRA COMMENTARY AND BACKGROUND

### EPHESIANS 2:1-10

2:1. People are not willing to be found (saved) until they know they are lost. Paul reminded his readers of the awfulness of sin that results in every person being lost, separated from God. As long as they are still unbelievers, sinners are in fact best described as dead people. The terms translated “trespasses” and “sins” are similar in meaning. The first term means falling from a known path, that is, actively breaking a boundary or rule. The second means falling short of a required standard. Both refer to the universal human failure to do what is right, either actively or passively.

2:2-3. Another way to describe the helplessness of sinners is to think of it in terms of a lifestyle, step by step, headed in the wrong direction. No person can blame the world or the devil for their sinning. We have only ourselves to blame. It was our fleshly desires that we indulged. It was the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts that have been the source of our disobedience to God. God’s righteous judgment against sin is settled. In our sinful nature, we all deserved eternal condemnation. We were born into this fallen condition. Without God’s grace, all human beings are spiritually helpless and hopeless. We need salvation because of what sin has done to us.

2:4-5. Paul turned from diagnosing our spiritual death to describing our new life in Christ. He began by piling up three overlapping terms that describe the divine basis for our salvation. We owe everything to God’s character. First, notice the reference to God’s “mercy.” Mercy is “the disposition to act compassionately in response to the plight of someone in need.” Second, notice the reference to God’s “love,” His sacrificial concern. Paul stressed the abundance of God’s love just as he had noted the abundance of His mercy: it was great. The third term Paul used to express the basis of salvation in God’s character is “grace.” Grace is similar to mercy and love but with a special distinction. The emphasis in the term grace is a person’s showing undeserved favor toward someone who has sinned against that person. The first benefit of receiving salvation by grace is that God made us alive. When Christ was raised from the dead, God saw all believers as united with Him.

2:6-7. The second benefit of receiving God’s salvation by grace through faith is that God raised us up. Thus when Jesus visibly ascended from earth to heaven, God saw believers as being spiritually united with Him in His ascension. We are now citizens of heaven (see Phil. 3:20). We no longer have to live as those bound to the sinful world, the flesh, and the Devil. Our true identity is in the heavens. The third benefit of salvation Paul named is that God seated us. After His resurrection and ascension, Jesus sat down at the right hand of God (see Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 12:2). He is there now, and God considers believers already to be sharing Christ’s eternal victory.

2:8-9. It’s too often typical for us humans to suppose that our actions can help earn our eternal life. Paul wrote that this is never true. But then he went on to explain the role that good works have in the life of those who are saved. Trusting wholly in God’s provision is the opposite of trusting in one’s own contribution to salvation. The whole of our redemption—past, present, and future—is God’s gift, by His initiative. For this reason, no one can boast about a personal contribution to salvation. Heaven will be filled with the praises of Christ’s glory and His works. No human display of works can compare to the riches of God’s grace toward those who once were dead in their sins but now are alive with Christ.

2:10. One of the goals of salvation for us is the fruit of Christlike character and of good deeds. In eternity past God prepared ahead of time that His redeemed people would do these good works as evidence of His grace. Here is His power not only in giving us new life but also in helping us to walk in good works throughout this life and into eternity. We cannot do anything to earn salvation. Yet God means for us who have received salvation to produce good works. If we have been given new life, raised with Christ, and seated with Him, we will certainly do good works as evidence that we have received this great salvation.