

Saved to Serve; Ephesians 2:8-10

I. Dead

A. Life before Christ

B. Ephesians 2:1–3; 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

C. It doesn't matter how we grew up, whether in the church or not; there came a time when we knew we were not right with God

1. We were "following the course of this world," "carrying out the desires of the body and mind"
2. Selfishness; doing what we wanted when we wanted to do it (If it doesn't hurt anybody then it is okay to do it)
3. It is hard to think about that idea of being dead when we are alive
4. It is hard to think about ourself as lost (without God)
5. Paul reminds the Ephesian church, "you WERE dead"
6. It is good to remind us the same thing
7. There may be some here who still ARE dead, following their own desires
8. Some may ask, "If God loves us, how can we be dead (spiritually)?"
9. Why would a loving God consign his creation to eternal punishment?

D. Choices

1. We walk (live) according to our choices, God doesn't choose for us
2. We can walk according to the course of this world, the passions of our flesh, and the desires of our body and mind... it is our choice
3. God is at odds with those choices just as a parent may be at odds with the choices of their children
 - a) Military service
 - b) Tattoos
 - c) Marriage
 - d) My mother still loved me even though she didn't love my choices
4. My choices brought consequences
 - a) Military service put me face to face with the idea of being killed for my country, or having to kill for my country
 - b) Tattoos brought me face to face with the possibility of diseases that don't go away (and prohibited donating blood)
 - c) Marriage brought me face to face with failure; It wasn't until Christ was in me that I realized that marriages don't have to fail
5. Our choice to live selfishly brings the consequence of being without God, sons of disobedience, children of wrath

E. God still loves us, even through our selfish choices

II. But God

A. God chose to make a way for us to return to Him

B. Ephesians 2:4–7; 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, 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 coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

- C. No matter what choices we have made in the past, we can still make the choice to live for God through His Son, Jesus the Christ
- D. We were dead, but now are alive... but only in Christ
 - 1. There is not a more accurate picture of life out of, and in Christ
 - 2. Dead or alive
- E. We are saved by Grace
 - 1. Titus 2:11–14; 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.
 - 2. Even though we chose life outside of God, even though we rejected and crucified (our sin separated us from God and required a sacrifice) the Christ, even though we are a sinful people; God still chose to provide the only sacrifice that would satisfy his wrath
 - 3. That is a perfect definition of grace
 - 4. We did not deserve it, but God gave us Jesus anyway; we are saved by Grace!
- F. But this salvation is even more than it would seem
 - 1. We are not just saved to live with God in heaven (although sometimes I think that is our limited understanding of salvation)
 - 2. We are coworkers, heirs WITH Christ
 - 3. Romans 8:12–17; 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.
 - 4. 2 Corinthians 5:20–6:1; 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 1 Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

III. Workmanship

- A. Ephesians 2:8–10; 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.
- B. There is nothing I can do (you either) that would make God say, “You deserve salvation”
- C. Remember who we once were
- D. Romans 5:6–8; 6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- E. Paul reminds us who we were outside of God, and that God saved us by His own will, not because we did anything special
- F. And then Paul reminds us who we are inside of Christ... workers

1. When our new self is created through the imitation of Jesus' death, buried and resurrection (ours is in water, not a tomb Romans 6:1-7), God give us the reason for our creation
 2. Good works
 3. James 2:22–24; 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.
 4. Hebrews 11:6; And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
 5. A faith without works is no faith at all
- G. God set up these good works for us to accomplish
1. This is past tense "God prepared beforehand"
 2. It almost seems as if they were prepared before we were even born
 3. Psalm 139:13–16; 13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.
 4. This is how important our good works are to God, that he would set them up for us to accomplish at the appropriate time
 5. God says we were created for them
 6. He says without them our faith is incomplete (dead, not really faith at all)
- H. Christianity is not about worship
- I. Worship is a product of our salvation
- J. God saved us and so we love, adore, and worship Him
- K. Christianity is about service to God in His Kingdom
- L. Mark 9:33–35; 33 And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" 34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. 35 And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."
- IV. Saved to Serve
- A. We were dead
 - B. God made us Alive in Christ, co-workers, co-heirs
 - C. We were created to be servants, saved to serve!