



Sunday, March 1, 2020
Pastor Doug Phillips

Intro to Ephesians 2:1-10

It can be a good exercise to think about our “spiritual autobiographies.” One of the most famous Christian books ever written is Augustine’s *Confessions*. In that book, Augustine writes in painstaking detail about all of his sin—his pride, his foolishness, ways in which he was deceived, and much more. This exercise, while painful for many, actually is one application of Paul’s writing in this passage.

By stating the spiritual condition of the Ephesians, he is, in a sense, forcing them to remember their lives apart from Christ. They were not free then, they merely obeyed the course of the world, their own selfish passions, and even Satan himself. As we remember these things about ourselves, it actually magnifies the grace of God in Christ and prompts us to be more devoted to personal holiness. So, while it may not be pleasant to talk about divine wrath and the depth of our own depravity, remembering where we were and where we have come from spiritually will better enable us to live the Christian life in a manner worthy of our calling.

Context

This passage, while often divided neatly by subheadings in our Bibles, is actually a demonstration of a point that Paul was making in chapter 1. There, Paul talks about how he is praying that the Ephesians would know “the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.” Then, to demonstrate that in such a way that God might use Paul’s own argument to answer his prayer, Paul explains how God’s power raised Christ from the dead (1:20-23), and then also how that same power raised us (2:4). This gives us great hope as Christians, to know that the same power God used to raise Jesus from the dead is the same power at work in us, not only to save us initially, but to aid us in putting off our old selves and living our new lives in Christ.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

“Saved by Grace for Good”

1) What makes our plight so severe/so urgent?

- We are separated from a holy God
- We are destined for spiritual slavery and death
- The wrath of God remains on us (John 3:36)

2) What is the point of our salvation?

- We are saved from the penalty of sin
- We are new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17)
- God sent the Holy Spirit so that we could live new lives
- We don't repent perfectly, but we do sincerely

Discuss

- 1) How closely does this passage resemble your own “spiritual autobiography”?
- 2) Why do you think Christians (and churches) are tempted to water down the Bible’s teaching on God’s wrath?
- 3) Do you think of verse 10 as being just as much “good news” as verses 8-9? Why or why not?
- 4) J.I. Packer said, “Repentance means turning from as much as you know of your sin to give as much as you know of yourself to as much as you know of your God, and as our knowledge grows at these three points so our practice of repentance has to be enlarged.” How might this definition encourage someone who thinks they have to be perfect in order to come to God?
- 5) When you think about sharing the gospel with non-Christian friends and family members, how might these truths change the way those conversations typically go?