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# God's Amazing Grace

## Ephesians 2:1-10

### Introduction

1. What causes you to appreciate the efforts that another person makes on your behalf?
2. Is it a knowledge of how destitute you are — the fact that this isn't something you can do for yourself?
3. Is it an understanding of how much another has sacrificed on your part?
4. How do you tend to show your appreciation for that individual?
  - a. A card, phone call, or personal words of gratitude?
  - b. A continued effort on your part to do for the other person?
5. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he seeks to bring them to a deeper appreciation of the salvation which God has made available to them.
6. His goal is to motivate them to ever greater service in the Lord's kingdom.
7. This evening as we look at His letter to this church, I would like for each of us to consider the response we give to our God who saved us.

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## I. We Were Dead (vv. 1-3)

### A. "IN TRESPASSES AND SINS" (v. 1)

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins"

1. At one point in our lives all of us have been dead.
2. This death is spiritual, not physical — separated from God, having no communication with Him.
3. Two things have brought about this death:

- a. Trespasses (*paraptoma*) — the crossing of a boundary — the wrong we do
- b. Sins (*hamartia*) — a missing of the mark — the good we fail to do

**Slide 3****B. THE REASON WE WERE DEAD (VV. 2-3)**

## 1. We followed the world

“you formerly walked according to the course of this world” (2a)

- a. The word translated as “world” (*kosmos*) is found 186 times in the Greek New Testament
- b. Virtually every instance has an evil connotation.
- c. In his letter to the Christians in Galatia, Paul called it “the present evil age” (cf. Galatians 1:4)
- d. It is the social and value system which is hostile to Christ.
- e. Those without Christ are captive to this system.
  - 1) In Isaiah’s day it consisted of people who had their values upside down and backwards (Isaiah 5:20-21).

“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;  
 Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness;  
 Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!  
 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes  
 And clever in their own sight!”

(Isaiah 5:20–21, NASB95)

- 2) In John’s day it was those who found themselves in love with the world (1 John 2:15-17).

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is

passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” (1 John 2:15–17, NASB95)

- f. Our focus wasn't upon heaven or the life of the age to come but the here and now.

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### 2. We followed the devil

“the prince of the power of the air” (v. 2b)

#### a. Jesus called him . . .

- 1) “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31)
- 2) “the ruler of the demons” (Matthew 9:34)

#### b. Paul called him “the god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4)

#### c. John said that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19)

#### d. Here, Paul said that he is “the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience”

- 1) A further description of the devil's work.
- 2) He exercises a compelling and effective power over the lives of men and women.
- 3) He is so effective that Paul refers to his victims as “the sons of disobedience.”
- 4) Such people have become rebels against God's authority in their lives.
- 5) They reject the gospel (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:8) and disregard God's will.
- 6) All those who are outside of Christ live in a kingdom which Paul called “the domain of darkness” (cf. Colossians 1:13)

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3. We gratified our desires
  - a. We “lived in the lusts of our flesh” (v. 3a)
  - b. “Indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind”
    1. These would also include anger, envy, rage, dissensions and selfish ambition as well (Galatians 5:20)
    - 2) Even our thoughts were corrupt — they controlled our actions.
- The result is that we “were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” It is the wrath of God of which Paul speaks here — His holy anger against sin.
 

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,” (Romans 1:18)

**Slide 6****II. But God . . . (vv. 4-7)****A. THE NATURE OF OUR GOD**

[Paul points to four aspects of God’s character which brought about His response toward us.]

1. His “mercy” (v. 4)
  - a. He is “rich in mercy”
  - b. In the O.T. God’s mercy is given another term — lovingkindness or steadfast love (Exodus 20:6; Exodus 34:7).
  - c. Here it means His “undeserved kindness” toward sinners.
  - d. God is rich in exhibiting this undeserved kindness.
2. “His great love” (v. 4)
  - a. The noun for “love” (*agape*) comes from a verb which means “to seek the highest good in the one loved”
  - b. Because we were spiritually dead toward God, they had nothing to

**6a**

commend us to God.

- c. This is why Paul described God's love as being "great"

#### 6b

3. "The surpassing riches of His grace" (v. 7)
  - a. Paul describes the grace of God as "surpassingly rich" or "exceedingly abundant"
  - b. He used similar adjectives to describe the power of God toward us who believe in 1:19.
  - c. God's lavishing of his mercy on sinners is to serve as a demonstration of His grace for all succeeding ages.

#### 6c

4. *His* "kindness" (v. 7)
  - a. Paul informed Titus that it was this "kindness" which caused God to save us (Titus 3:4,5)
  - b. He told the Romans that it was this same kindness which God uses to lead us to repentance (Romans 2:4)
  - c. Peter wrote that our tasting of "the kindness of the Lord" should cause us to long for "the pure (sincere) milk of the word" (1 Peter 2:2,3).

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### **B. AS A RESULT GOD HAS . . .**

1. Made us alive together with Christ (v. 5)

"Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4)

#### 7a

2. Raised us up with Him (v. 6)

"having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." (Colossians 2:12)

#### 7b

3. Seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (v. 6)

**Slide 8****II. It Is God's Gift To Us (vv. 8-10)****A. IT IS NOT DUE TO ANY EFFORT ON OUR PART**

1. "By grace you have been saved through faith" (v. 5, 8)
  - a. Grace is the receiving of what we need rather than what we deserve.
  - b. In Paul's letter to the Romans he points this out in 3:23-24:
 

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" (Romans 3:23-24)
  - c. Paul told the elders at Ephesus that his message had been "the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24)
  - d. God's grace is made abundant in our lives through our "faith" in Christ.
  - e. It is our faith in what Christ has done for us at Calvary.
  - f. Abraham's faith in the promises of God resulted in his being declared righteous (cf. Romans 4:3-5)
 

"For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness," (Romans 4:3-5)

**8a**

2. "Not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (v. 8)
  - a. Our salvation is not the result of any work or merit on our part — it is His gift to us.
  - b. This is the only time in his letters that Paul uses the common Greek word for gift (*dora*).
  - c. Everywhere else he speaks of the gift God has given us he utilizes the word (*charisma*) meaning "free gift" which has as its root (*charis*) "grace" (e.g., Romans 6:23)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in

Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

### 8b

3. "Not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (v. 9)
  - a. As if his readers didn't get the point, Paul makes one more statement concerning our salvation.
  - b. Neither is it the reward for good deeds.
  - c. Therefore, any opportunity for boasting is taken away.

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## B. IT IS HIS CALL TO A LIFE OF GOOD WORKS

1. From first to last, our salvation is the work of God — this is why Paul writes, "for we are His workmanship" (v. 10)
2. God has "created us in Christ Jesus for good works" (v. 10)
  - a. God has "made us anew" or "created" us in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24)
 

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

"and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." (Ephesians 4:24)
  - b. The goal of God's creation is that we should use the rest of our life to do "good works."
3. According to Paul "God prepared" these good works "beforehand that we would walk in them" (v. 10)
  - a. Paul began this passage by writing about the way we used to walk:
    - 1) According to the world
    - 2) According to the Devil
    - 3) According to the desires of the flesh
  - b. Now he points to the way God intended for us to walk — in good works.
    - 1) He informed Titus that God purified "for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good works" (Titus 2:14)
    - 2) As he told the Thessalonians, we are to "see that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for

one another and for all people." (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

- 3) **As he wrote to the Galatians, as long as we** “have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.” (Galatians 6:10)
- 4) **As he instructed the Colossians, we are to** “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:10)

## **Conclusion**

1. Every single one of us either has been or still is . . .
  - a. Dead in trespasses and sins
  - b. Enslaved to Satan, the world and our own fleshly desires
  - c. Condemned to face the wrath of God
2. But God is rich in mercy, and grace, and kindness — He has a great love for us.
3. He reached out to us when we were helpless and . . .
  - a. Made us alive in Christ
  - b. Raised us up with Christ
  - c. Seated us in the heavenly places with Christ
4. Why? So that we could walk in good works.
5. Some of you are still dead.
  - a. Some know it and some don't.
  - b. God is reaching out to you with an offer you don't dare want to refuse.
6. As for the rest of us, do we understand what God has called us to do — walk in good works?
7. What does your life reveal?