

# Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 7

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: “A New Life...A New Purpose”

*Ephesians 2:4-10 ~ March 20, 2011*

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**OBJECTIVE:** To help us realize God’s grace toward us – and the temporal purpose He saved us.

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## Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Japan relief
- Parking lot work this week
- Become a member of CDOBC – New Members welcomed on April 10<sup>th</sup>
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Opening prayer...(Joseph)

(ppt slide show immediately after Joseph’s prayer)

If the human story ended here – if pain, death, cruelty, abuse, crime and all sorts of evil were unchecked and without divine limits, we would all have a hopeless existence. In fact, one could argue that if vs. 1-3 was the beginning and end of the story, suicide and a “live for the moment” philosophy makes sense. But the story doesn’t end with vs. 1-3 – in vs. 4, we see hope – we see life – we see the mercy and the grace of God.

**Read 2:4-10**

**Our great and only hope** vs. 4

“But...God”

The truth that we are dead spiritually – unable – not just unwilling, but unable to reach out to God on our own is a discouraging truth to comprehend.

But vs. 1-3 are only the beginning of the story here. They are the diagnosis of our problem – of our desperate state before God. It’s so important for us to understand that before

coming to faith in Christ, our sin nature means that before God, we are corpses.

“But...God” –God takes a hopeless situation and brings us hope. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot choose Christ on our own! Jesus communicated this same message to His disciples after talking to the rich, young ruler and this young ruler walked away, refusing to sell everything to follow Jesus – Jesus said,

Matthew 19:22-26

“When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. 23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.24Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" 26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, **but with God** all things are possible.”

Our salvation is only because of God’s work in us. By His indescribable great power, He raises us and infuses us with His life, which enables us to put our faith in Him.

**Illus.** – A dead person cannot do the simplest of tasks – they can’t put their clothes away...they can’t comb their hair or brush their teeth...they can’t even say hello or even wave. Some Christians hold to a view that humanity is severely injured...we are spiritually disabled in a sever way...but we are able to reach out to God and put our faith in Him out of the goodness that is left within us.

But scripture is clear. We are spiritually dead – unable to reach out to God...but God has given us His life in Christ! Why does He do this? What is His reason for giving us His life?

His love for us (vs. 4)

His mercy (vs. 4)

God's desire is not to judge you and punish you – but to save you – to redeem you! His desire is that you look to His Son and be delivered from your sin. He loves you – He wants to be merciful toward you.

### **Three things God has done for us** vs. 5-6

#### 1. Made us alive with Christ

Takes us back to vs. 1-3 – we were dead – spiritually dead and needed to be raised – infused with the life of Christ before we could do anything spiritually pleasing to God.

#### 2. Raised us up with Christ

Brought us out of our spiritual grave – and into new life – a new existence!

#### 3. Seated us with Christ in the heavenly realms

Through Christ, God has rescued us from the “dominion of darkness”(Colossians 1:13)and brought us into His kingdom. We now enjoy “every spiritual blessing”(Eph. 1:3)right now...in this life...but we now have the power to live in the kingdom of heaven – not just in this world, according to the philosophies and systems of this world.

All three of these verbs – *God made us alive, God raised us up, and seated us with Him* – are in the aorist tense in the Greek which tells us that they are a completed action. It's also in the indicative mood, which gives absolute certainty to these things. There is no doubt that God has done these things – and they are complete – there is no uncertainty if these things will happen – they have already occurred at the

moment of your conversion. This is not expressing a *hope* that this will be true, but the aorist indicative in the Greek expresses the absolute fact that these things have occurred in the life of the believer!

**We display God's grace.** vs. 7

“7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

God saves us and we are blessed as we receive the kindness of God through the person and work of Christ Jesus. Instead of being an enemy of God, instead of facing eternal judgment from God, instead of taking His wrath against our sin, we receive kindness from Him!

Also, just like 1:7 (“...the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us...”) – Paul repeats this blessing here in 2:7. He tells us that we will for all eternity (“...the coming ages...”) be showered with the riches of God's grace – the over-abundance of God's grace! He will lavishly – excessively give us His grace, and all of heaven will marvel at this and worship Him because of it!

1 Peter 1:12(see vs. 10-12) – “Even angels long to look into these things.”

What an amazing insight...even the angels are curious and amazed at God's grace to the Gentiles, the Spirit of God in each believer, the mercy of God toward all believers!

Think about this...the sinless, holy angels, who have been in existence since before the creation of the world, who have intelligence and wisdom beyond our comprehension due to their sinless state and their existence in the presence of God for the duration of human history – yet they strain to understand God's grace and mercy toward repentant sinners! No doubt, they worship

God because of this great mystery – and all of heaven will worship the Lord for these things in “...the coming ages...”!

## **God’s gift of salvation** vs. 8-9

8“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.”

When we talk about being saved from our sin – we are speaking about something that only God can do for us and to us. The grace of God and the kindness of God will be on display in the “ages to come” because it is a wonder that He was gracious toward anyone! “...it is by grace you have been saved...”

Your salvation is not through your baptism. You are not saved because you attend church, or give money to the church, serve in the church. If you were confirmed, your confirmation doesn’t save you. It is only by the grace of God that you are saved.

“...through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God...”

Saving faith. What is faith? What is saving faith?

Faith is firm belief and trust. Saving faith is having a firm belief and trust in Jesus’ death on the cross as payment and penalty for my sins.

“...not of works, so that no one can boast.”

Phil. 1:29

“For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him...”

Acts 11:18

“When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.”

Acts 5:31

“God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.”

2 Timothy 2:25

“Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth...”

Hebrews 12:2

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith...”

## **The Christian’s newpurpose in life** vs. 10

**10** “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

In this verse we see the new purpose for the life of the believer. It seems that this truth keeps coming to the surface over the last several months – the truth that we are not saved simply for eternity – but for this life also – that we can fulfill God’s plan for our life here on earth – not just after we die and are in heaven.

Notice a couple of key points here.

First, you are God’s “workmanship”. This Greek term (*poi-ēma*) has the idea of manufacturing, constructing, building, a thing made. We derive our English word for poem from this term. So, another way to explain this term is that you are God’s poetry – He has crafted you for a specific purpose.

Second, notice that you were “created”. 2 Cor. 5:17 says, “...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

This is indeed a mystery, but God creates something brand new in you at the moment of your conversion. He creates a ‘new you’ – He transforms / creates something alive from something that was dead! But notice, that your ‘new creation’ is purposeful – it’s not just for your sake – it’s for the larger purposes of God!

You are “...created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Are you living up to your God-designed purpose? God has manufactured you – He has constructed you in a special way – to accomplish specific things within the church – within His plan...do you know what that purpose is?

## **Application**

Give thanks for your salvation and citizenship in heaven.

Become a Christian...right now. God has wakened your spirit – He is calling you – drawing you to Himself – put your faith in Him.

**A**dmit your sins to God

**B**elieve in Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross for you sins.

**C**hoose to follow Him each day.

Flannigan was driving down the street in a sweat because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place.

Looking up to heaven he said, "Lord take pity on me. If you find me a parking space I will go to Mass every Sunday for the rest of me life and give up me Irish whiskey."

Miraculously, a parking place appeared.

Flannigan looked up again and said, "Never mind, I foundmeone on my own."

