

## Ephesians, Chapter Two, Lesson One

CREATED IN CHRIST Ephesians 2:1-10

### STIMULATE

\*\* As our study last time was coming to a close, we considered the importance of meditating on "the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance, and the surpassing greatness of His power (dunamis)" that works toward us who believe. Have you found that meditating on those wonderful truths has been helpful in your daily walk with Christ?

Absolutely! When the trials or tests of each day try to wear me down, it is so refreshing to think on the truths of God's word which lift us above the drudgery of this world.

### MOTIVATE

\*\* Having completed our study of chapter one, we have seen God's eternal plan for our redemption. But, what is the immediate result of that plan? Today the apostle Paul continues his theme of teaching about all that we have gained "in Christ". We are going to see that God's plan has caused us to be "Created in Christ" and the impact that it should have on our daily lives. We will be looking at three aspects of that plan, namely:

- 1) **Our Position in the Plan**
- 2) **God's Pardon in the Plan**
- 3) **Our Practice in the Plan**

Let's begin by reading through the passage as we set our hearts towards the treasure of God's precious Word.

Read passage (V.1-3) (V.4-7) (V.8-10)

Opening Prayer

### *Created in Christ*

### INVESTIGATE

#### **V. 1 to 3 - Our Position in the Plan!**

**V. 1** \*\* As God's eternal plan for our redemption unfolds, in what position do we find ourselves?

"...you were dead in your trespasses and sins..."

\*\* As he is writing this love letter to the Ephesians, does Paul think that they were terrible sinners, but fortunately he was a holy apostle?

No! He includes himself in this despicable condition, needing the grace of God like everyone else. cf. V. 3 "Among them **we too** all..."

\*\* What kind of death is Paul speaking of in this verse?

Spiritual death, they were physically alive (or they could not read his letter), but they could not respond to anything spiritual apart from God's grace.

cf. Matthew 8:21-22 and Ephesians 4:17-19

\*\* What difference do you see between trespasses and sins?

**Trespasses** (paraptoma) - means to slip, fall or stumble, perhaps be going in the wrong direction. cf. Proverbs 7:24-27, Proverbs 19:27

**Sins** (hamartia) - indicates simply to miss the mark of a target. cf. Romans 3:23

**V. 2** \*\* According to verse two, was this just an occasional problem for the unredeemed human race?

No, Paul says that we "formerly walked" in our trespasses and sins. This is indicating a present state, ongoing condition of life. A life of death!

\*\* Do you think that non-Christians are very uncomfortable in this state?

Not at all! In fact, they love it and are very comfortable following every sinful impulse until they are convicted by God Himself. cf. John 3:19-20 and John 16:8

\*\* According to this verse, who is it that set the standard for this dark world of unsaved sinners?

"...the prince of the power of the air..."

\*\* Who is that?

Satan himself! cf. John 12:29-31, John 14:29-30 and 1John 5:19

\*\* Since Satan, as the "prince of the power of the air" is so powerful - even supernatural, should Christians just give up trying to live for the glory of God in this present age?

Absolutely not! We have already won the battle through the victory of Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit. cf. 1John 4:4

\*\* So who does Satan influence, in whom is he working?

"...the sons of disobedience".

\*\* Who are they?

Those who have not entered God's "rest" (salvation) because of their ongoing disobedience. cf. Hebrews 4:6 and John 8:39-44, 8:59

**V. 3** \*\* Back in Ephesians 2:3, aren't you glad that we were not ever like those bad people?

Wrong! We too all (like the apostle Paul) formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh!

\*\* In this one verse Paul categorizes the sinner's problem into three categories. What are they?

- 1) **lusts of the flesh** - Romans 7:18
- 2) **desires of the flesh and mind** - Col.1:21-22
- 3) **by nature children of wrath** - John 3:36

\*\* Given that description of who we were in our unbelief to whom does Paul now compare us?

We were just like "the rest". The very sons of disobedience that we met back in verse two.

Well, seeing how desperate our position was in the plan of God's eternal redemption, would anyone like to move on to God's pardon in the plan? Amen!

#### **V. 4 to 7 - God's Pardon in the Plan**

**V. 4** \*\* What does the little word "but" indicate in this passage"?

The introduction of a contrast. In this case, fortunately for us, a strong contrast!

\*\* Set up against the depths of our depravity, what two attributes of God does Paul now introduce to our thinking by way of contrast?

**Mercy** - this is God's heart attitude toward us!

**Love** - this is the action flowing out from His attitude, providing the solution to our problem.

**V. 5** \*\* Is there anything unusual or unhumanlike about the timing of God's marvelous mercy and love?

Yes! He was willing to demonstrate it toward us "even when we were dead in our transgressions". Our gracious God's love is totally different from that of human love, which is dependent upon the loveliness of the object to be loved.

**V. 6** \*\* What three things has God done for us?

- 1) **He made us alive** (V.5) 1Thessalonians 5:9-10
- 2) **He raised us up with Christ** (V.6) Colossians 2:12
- 3) **He seated us in the heavenly places** (V.6) Ephesians 1:20

\*\* We must not move on without making special notice of an extremely important theological truth contained in Paul's parenthetical statement, what is it?

"by grace you have been saved" If this was the only place in Scripture that this was said, it would make it no less significant. We cannot save ourselves, it is totally an act of God's loving grace!

\*\* Even though Paul is going to expand his thought about God's grace in verses 8-10, why is it important for him to mention it here?

Going from one extreme to the other (dead to alive) must not be considered as accomplishable by any act of human will or effort!

**V. 7** \*\* What reason does Paul give for God to show us His love and mercy?

"in order that in the ages to come (all eternity), God can display the surpassing riches of His grace! cf. Ephesians 3:8-10

\*\* According to verse seven, how does He display it?

"...in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus".

Because He has "pardoned our sin" through the payment made by Jesus Christ on our behalf. (Colossians 2:14)

Having seen **our position** and **God's pardon**, let's look together at **our practice** in the eternal plan of redemption.

## **V. 8 to 10 - Our Practice in the Plan**

**V. 8** \*\* As Paul reintroduces the truth of salvation by the grace of God, what element does he add to it?

It comes "through faith".

\*\* Is this then man's effort, his time for glory because of what he accomplished in his own salvation?

No, even our faith is not of ourselves, it is a gift from God!

(Acts 13:48, Philippians 1:29, 2Peter 1:1)

**V. 9** \*\* Why is the apostle so determined for us to understand this most significant truth?

"...that no one should boast..." From our study of chapter one, we learned that God's plan for redemption is all to His glory! cf. Ephesians 1:6, 12 and 14

\*\* Does that mean that Christians should never boast?

No, God's glory is to be on display. cf. 1Corinthians 1:26-31 and Jeremiah 9:23-24

**V.10** \*\* This verse begins with the fact that we are God's workmanship. What does that mean to you?

Our gracious God is **THE** creator! He made me, that makes me the created one who should worship and adore my creator. cf. Psalm 100:3

\*\* Why have we been "Created in Christ"?

"...for good works...that we should walk in them".

\*\* Remember that earlier today we saw a form of this expression. What does Paul mean by "walk in them"?

He is referring to "**Our Practice in the Plan**". It should be the step by step practice of every Believer to perform the very deeds that God has set out for us to do.

\*\* If good works do not save us, then why is God so determined for us to "walk in them"?

**Titus 1:16** Bad deeds deny God

**Titus 2:6-7a** Be an example of good deeds

**Titus 2:14** Zealous for good deeds

**Titus 3:1** Ready for good deeds

**Titus 3:8 & 14** Engage in good deeds

When we live the life He has designed for us, it causes Him pleasure, brings Him the glory He deserves and can draw others to the God of salvation. cf. Hebrews 13:16

## **EXTRICATE**

**When considering God's eternal plan of redemption . . .**

**\*\* What was our desperate position in the plan?**

We were "dead in our trespasses and sins"?

**\*\* Why did we receive God's pardon in the plan?**

Because He nailed our guilt to the cross!(Colossians 2:14)

**\*\* Why were we "Created in Christ" or, to put it another way, what is to be our practice in the plan?**

To walk in the good works that our Heavenly Father has designed for us to do.

## **DELINEATE**

**\*\* What significant theological truth have we seen today, for which we should be eternally thankful?**

"For by grace you have been saved!" (V.5)

## **EVALUATE**

**\*\* What impact should God's loving grace have upon us once we realize that it is by His mercy and love that we have been "Created in Christ"?**

We should offer our Lord a heartfelt, loving obedience as people of "His own possession, zealous for good deeds."

## **ACTIVATE**

**\*\* Will you commit now to apply your thankfulness to your daily walk, that it might produce an even greater glory for His name sake? We need to be the people that He has created us to be!**

Closing Prayer