



RESURRECTED: Saved by Grace

Ephesians 2:1-10

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FIRST THOUGHTS

A case can be made that virtually every advertisement and marketing message comes to us in a form of the “before and after” approach. At the very least it can be said that most cosmetic and fitness ads use this approach in which they show a person prior to using the product and then again with the amazing aftereffects. A subtle variation on this method is the “shock and awe” model, where shocking information is presented and followed up with an amazing solution to the problem.

As Paul wrote to his dear friends in the church in Ephesus, he began with a splendid expression of praise to God—a doxology—in which he extolled God’s grand eternal plan that includes believers ([Eph 1:1-14](#)). He then thanked God for those to whom he was writing, but along the way he moved from thanksgiving to petition for them ([Eph 1:15-23](#)). At last, the apostle was ready to get to the substance of his letter.

Paul is going to contrast the life of the Ephesian before salvation to their life after salvation. In doing Paul shows how great a mercy God had on us when we were sinners. We were once dead in sin but now are made alive in Christ.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

ONCE DEAD

[Ephesians 2:1–3](#)

¹ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Complete this statement: “Before God saved me in Christ I ...”

I was blessed to have come to Christ at the age of nine. I had godly parents that guided me and kept me from the major sins of our culture. This does not mean that I was perfect, far from it. Even at the age of nine I was dead in my trespasses and sins. I was a sinner who needed salvation just as much as the worst drunk or drug addict.

In chapter one Paul reminds the Ephesians of the blessing of salvation and the resources that come with a relationship with Christ. After discussing the power of God at work in the believer’s life, Paul turns in this section to the problem of the believer’s past: the effects of sin on the unregenerate. His purpose is to demonstrate the effects of God’s power by showing how it has overcome the bondage of sin.

When Adam and Eve gave into sin in the garden, their fallen nature separated them from God. No longer could they have the intimate relationship they had in the garden. That fallen sin nature is inherited by all of their descendants. We are dead in sin and under the wrath of God. The only thing that could restore that relationship was the sacrificial death of Christ.

As the great Scottish commentator John Eadie said, *“It is a case of death walking.”* Men apart from God are spiritual zombies, the walking dead who do not know they are dead. They go through the motions of life, but they do not possess it.

NOW ALIVE

[Ephesians 2:4–7](#)

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, 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 ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Why are the words “but God” (v. 4) two of the most beautiful in the Bible?

I can remember standing before a judge due to a traffic violation. I had been caught dead to rights. I knew that I was going to have to face the consequences of my actions. After pleading my case before the judge, he had mercy on me and only made me pay court costs. But, by that mercy of the judge, I did not have to pay a fine and my driving record was kept clean. Important, since I drive for a living.

Paul has laid out the case for God to severely judge all mankind. The only payment for our sins is death ([Romans 6:23](#)). Before we accepted Christ as our savior, we were dead in our transgressions. Then comes the beautiful three letter word BUT.

Paul tells us the BUT only by the mercy of God do we have a chance to live. Paul describes three incredible actions that God took toward those who have put their trust in Him. First, God ***made us alive with Christ***. Our sins had made us spiritually dead. They separated us from God. The resurrected Christ overcame death. God lets us share in Christ’s life. In so doing he caused us no longer to be spiritually alienated from himself.

Second, ***he raised us up with Christ***. Life in Christ **came** because we *experienced* Christ’s resurrection in the spiritual realm. We were raised up from our sin death and given opportunity for new life. Still facing life on earth where Satan reigns, we live with Christ as part of his kingdom.

Third, ***he seated us with him in the heavenly realms***. That is, he has made possible and certain our resurrection from the dead and has mysteriously positioned us in heaven where Christ dwells ([Eph 1:20](#)). To be seated with Christ in the heavenlies is a figure of speech meaning God considers us worthy and destined to be seated with Christ in heaven when we get there.

We were born sinners, dead in our trespasses and sin, But God had mercy on us. I like what D. L. Moody said.

“All that you have got to do is, to prove that you are a sinner, and I will prove that you have got a Savior. And the greater the sinner, the greater need you have of a Savior”. -- D L Moody

We were dead but have been made alive in Christ!

THROUGH GRACE ALONE

[Ephesians 2:8–10](#)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as 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 so that we would walk in them.

Why can't believers brag about their "after" condition?

If you spend any amount of time on social media, you begin to see a lot of people bragging about a lot of things. Jobs, talents, vacations, accomplishments, you name it someone has bragged about it. But there is one thing that nobody can brag about, that is the fact that God provide away for us to be saved.

The story is told of a man who came eagerly but very late to a revival meeting and found the workmen tearing down the tent in which the meetings had been held. Frantic at missing the evangelist, he decided to ask one of the workers what he could do to be saved. The workman, who was a Christian, replied, "You can't do anything. It's too late." Horrified, the man said, "What do you mean? How can it be too late?" "The work has already been accomplished," he was told. "There is nothing you need to do but believe it."

The sole basis of salvation is God's grace that we receive by faith. Salvation by faith is God's gift. Believing that salvation is achieved by human means is thinking too highly of oneself and too lowly of the power of sin and death. Salvation is the gift that God gave. God is the One who works in us unto salvation, but we have a responsibility to receive by faith what He offers.

Paul is consistently clear that a person cannot earn salvation by being good or doing good. This excludes all boasting on the part of those who are saved. The one who is worthy of praise in the salvation event is God.

When Christ redeems us, He enables us to live out this purpose of doing good. As *The Baptist Faith and Message* says: "Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God." Thus, as God's workmanship, we're each (1) specially created by Him, (2) valuable to Him, (3) have a purpose to fulfill from Him, and (4) that purpose is ultimately to do good for His glory.

Though salvation is not achieved by good works, it does produce good works after salvation is received. Paul declared that Christians were created in Christ Jesus for good works. Good works are the fruit of salvation, not the root of it.

SUMMARIZE & CHALLENGE

- An imperative response is to accept God's gift of grace by putting our faith in Christ.
- Remembering what it's like to be lost should fill us with compassion for unbelievers and a sense of urgency to share the gospel with them.
- Recognizing we did nothing to earn our salvation should fill us with humble gratitude to God.
- We can be purposeful about finding and fulfilling the works God created us to do.

Personal Challenge: If you're dead in your sin, accept God's gift of grace today. If you're alive in Christ, ask God to empower you to live compassionately, urgently, humbly, gratefully, and purposefully.

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