

Thank God for the Reminders!

Ephesians 2:1-13 (vv. 11-13)

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I. Historical Background and Biblical Context

Book of Ephesians was written by Apostle Paul to the Ephesian Christians; however, it is also speaking to Christians everywhere. Ephesus was located in a region where Christianity and pagan religions were clashing. The Apostle Paul saw an opportunity to advance the kingdom of God.

We have had powerful in-depth teaching and studying for six Sundays on chapter 1. We are now in our 3rd Sunday on chapter 2, and God is not finished with us yet. These powerful teaching have shown us that we have been more sinful than we could fathom and yet, more loved than we could ever imagine. Praise God for His inexpressible, unconditional, unchangeable, and immeasurable love. Romans 5:8 so profoundly states that, “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were sinners, Christ died for us.” In this letter, Paul walks believers through spiritual inheritance in Christ. This inheritance moves them from death to life and into God’s family.

What a powerful, almighty, sovereign, and majestic God did in reconciling back to Himself that He created in His own image who submitted to disobedient and brought about separation of relationship and broken fellowship. God restore, made whole and alive that which was spiritually dead through the shed blood of His only begotten Son – Jesus, the Savior of the world. Ephesians chapter 2 opening verses give a clear and undisputed view of how a loving God can transform spiritual deadness into spiritual life by

His great mercies and love. We are given a panorama view of our salvation past, present, and future.

God has taken us from the graveyard to glory; and from death valley to grace.

II. The Lesson: Thank God for the Reminders!

1. **vv. 1-3.** Before we met Jesus, we were wandering from God. As the words of an old hymn puts it – “Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; Prone to leave the God I love: Take my heart, oh, take and seal it with Thy Spirit from above. We were like the walking dead. As soon as we were born in this world we were separated from God by sin. David says in Psalm 51:5 (KJV), “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

No self help, self improvement, self adjustment, self service, nor self righteousness can save self in dire need of salvation. Only God through Jesus for in Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that He lavished on us. When the first man Adam sinned, death entered the world and spread, When sin matures it causes spiritual death – for the wages of sin is death. We all have been guilt. We all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 8:23). We have in times past miss the life divine’s aim. This was a pathway to death and need of a new life. We didn’t just need a new start – we needed a new heart.

We didn’t just to turn over a new leaf, we needed a new life. We needed more than reformation, we needed transformation. Before we experienced the marvelous grace of God, we were by nature children of wrath and disobedient.

Instead of dealing with us as deserving wrath and judgment, the Lord has dealt with us in compassionate mercy and with unconditional love (Lamentations 3:22-23).

God made us spiritually alive by imparting the life of Christ in us.

2. **vv. 4-7. Positionally, we are Seated in the Heavenly Places.**

3. Paul uses in Christ Jesus in heavenly places where we are positionally not literally. Right now, we are literally at Second Baptist Church but positionally we are seated in heavenly places. In the ages to come, in the future, we not only be positionally in heavenly places but we will be literally be there. It will take all eternity for us to get the full revelation of God's love. We should be getting homesick right about now. God didn't let us die eternally in our sins, He has forgiven our sins, by His grace saved us, and have raised us up in with Christ Jesus and positionally seated us in heavenly places. We keep a watchful eye out for His soon return.

4. **vv. 8-10. We are God's Workmanship in Christ Jesus!**

Before Christ returns, there are still things for us to do. God's is at work in us and through us. We are His workmanship. We are His masterpiece. We are all under construction. He is the potter and we are the clay. (Isaiah 64:8, "Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.") For some of us, God has had to not work the clay but rework, not only shape but reshape. The good news He never stopped working on us and what God has started in us He work it to completion.

Philippians 1:6, "being confident of this, that He who has began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Beforehand God had created us to do good works. First and far most, it is great to be saved from our sins. Secondly, it is great to be used by God as an instrument for the spreading of the good news about Jesus Christ to a dying world. There is no certain level you have to be at for God to work through you. You don't have to wait to

get to a certain level. None of us are without our defects and yet, God work through and in us. God using us is not based upon our abilities, our intellect, our social position, but upon His purpose, will, and plan. He who is perfect, will work out the imperfections in our lives. For we are not saved by good works by for good works that bear good fruit, all for the glory of God which was prepared in advance.

5. **vv. 11-13.**

In verses 11-13, it is as though Paul is repeating himself. He has in verses 1-10, rehearsed our dreadful past when we were in sin, followed by contrast, but because of God's great love that leads to heavenly blessings in Christ, to our walk in good deeds; however, the focus ongoing is not so much individually but rather, corporately. He is not suggesting that we remember our past state of spiritual condition but he is commanding that we be reminded that we have not always been where we are. ***We were once spiritual blind but now we see. We were once spiritual lost but now we are found. We were once not a people, but now we are the people of God; once we had not received mercy, but now we have received mercy.*** It is God who has brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light. ***From time to time, we need to be reminded that we didn't make it this far on our own but by the grace of God.*** We should be singing, I shall never forget what He has done for me.

Paul had to remind the people that need to remember their lost and hopeless condition before God saved them by His grace. He was saying these things to the Gentiles as a group. In the past, God had chosen to work with the Jews. If you were a Gentile, the only way that you could know God and have your sins forgiven was to be circumcised and the Jewish rituals and sacrificial system. To worship, the Gentiles had to do it from a distance. They could go

beyond the dividing wall. In Christ, the wall that divided Gentiles and Jews were broken down. Christ reconciled the Jews and Gentiles to God and to one another on the cross.

There were not only religious differences but cultural and racial divisions. Paul ridicules the Jews view of calling the Gentiles, “uncircumcision” as only an external difference, made by human hands.

God had made it clear that that He did not choose Jews because of anything in them. They became so proud in their status and hated the Gentiles.

God chose the Gentiles by His grace while they were dead in their sins. Throughout these verses Paul is **reminding** the Gentiles to remember from which we have come.

It is a **reminder** to us today, we must never forget the lost, helpless, and hopeless situation that God has brought us out of.

As the Gentiles in the scripture, we were afar off but now by the grace of God, we can worship, praise, and pray close up to God, in heavenly presence.

III. Conclusion:

Every day we should praise God in remembering who and what we use to be in contrast to who and what we are now.

Every day we seek opportunity to praise God for His abundant grace.

Now may the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do His will working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever as we remember, He has done for us what no one could do – He saved us.