

Amazing Grace

July 29, 2012

Eph 2:4-10 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 in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 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, that no one should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

But God

God saw our condition; He saw that we were dead (trapped) in trespasses and sins, He knew that we were held captive by the course of the world (peer pressure), spiritual forces of darkness and our fallen, sinful, human nature. (Eph 2:1-3)

God acted on our behalf!

Eph 2:4-5 made us alive with Christ.

But God, ... even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Rom 8:3-4 sent Jesus as an offering for sin, to condemn sin and fulfill the requirement of the Law in us.

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Col 2:13-14 made us alive together with Christ, forgiving our transgressions and canceling our certificate of debt.

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Why would God save mankind?

1. God is rich in mercy!

The word "rich" (Gk = plousios) "wealthy, abounding in material resources, abounding, abundantly supplied." (from Wuest's Word Studies)

"But God!" These words are among the greatest in the Bible. God could have allowed us to go on in sin and live eternally with the devil in hell, but instead He chose to save us. ... God did this because He is rich in mercy and great in love. Mercy means that God does not give me what I do deserve; grace means that He gives me what I don't deserve. (from Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament (542). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books)

Mercy is a characteristic of the nature of God.

Psa 103:8-11 The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.

Titus 3:3-5 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the

basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

(Rom 10:12; 11:30-33; 1 Tim 1:13; 1 Pet 2:10; Lk 1:78; Ex 33:19; 34:6-7; Neh 9:17; Ps 51:1; 86:5, 15; 111:4; 118:3; 130:7; 145:8; Is 55:6-8; Je 29:11; Da 9:9; Jonah 4:2; Mic 7:18-20)

The mercy of God is new every morning.

Lam 3:22-23 The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness.

2. Because of His great love for us

God is love (1 Jn 4:8, 16)

Eph 2:4 But God, ... because of His great love with which He loved us, For the sake of, in order to satisfy His love; (from Word Studies in the New Testament; Vincent)

Col 2:13-14 God saw our condition. He saw we were dead in our sins:

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Rom 5:6-10 Jesus died for people who are helpless, ungodly, unrighteous, sinful and enemies.

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

John 3:16-17 the Father sent Jesus to save (and not judge) the world, because of his great love.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

3. Grace: God intervenes on man's behalf

Grace is God's favor shown to man because Christ died for them.

Grace is not merely something which God expresses, it is an expression of what He is; "Grace is the attitude of God's part that proceeds entirely from within Himself and is conditioned in no way by anything in the objects of His favor." (from Foundations of Pentecostal Theology; page 226-227)

Transferred from the tomb to the throne

There is no mention in this section of our dying with Christ, it emphasizes that we were already dead in our transgressions.

Eph 2:4-6 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions...

Jesus died for our sins (He received the penalty of our death).

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

2 Cor 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Cor 15:3 ...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

When Jesus was crucified and died, my sin nature died with Him.

Gal 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (Gal 5:24; 6:14; Rom 6:4-6; Col 2:11-14)

God made us alive together with Christ (in His resurrection).

Eph 2:4-6 ...made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, ... (Rom 6:8-13; Col 3:1; 2:12-13)

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

We are seated with Christ in heavenly places.

Eph 2:4-6 ...and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,

Col 3:1-2 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

Thoughts from "The Pulpit Commentary":

A parallel is run between the way in which God's power operated on the body of Christ, and the way in which it operates on the souls of believers in him in respect of (1) the quickening; (2) the raising up from the grave; (3) the seating of them in heavenly places. The Father, having "given to the Son to have life in himself," and "the Son quickening whom he will" (John 6:21, 26), by God's decree we were first quickened by him, made partakers of Christ's life (John 11:25; comp. John 14:19; 15:5; Col. 3:4; Gal. 2:20, etc.). All the life we had lost was restored—the life forfeited by transgression, the life of a calm and well-ordered heart, the sublime life of fellowship with God.

Five facts about salvation:

Eph 2:5 ...(by grace you have been saved),

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

Eph 2:9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

1) Salvation is by His grace (God's part); it cannot be earned by Law keeping our by good deeds of any kind.

Eph 2:5, 8 ...(by grace you have been saved),...For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; (Acts 15:11)

God chose us by grace (Rom 11:5).

God justifies us by grace (Rom 3:24).

We grow spiritually through grace (1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18).

We continue our walk with God through grace (Acts 13:43).

Relationship with God is through grace (Heb 4:16).

Grace is best defined as the unmerited, undeserved love of God. It flows from God's nature through Christ and is irrespective of the worth or merit of the one loved. (from Study Guide Commentary Series; Vol. 8)

2) We participate in salvation by faith.

Salvation comes from believing

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, (Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31; 1 Cor 1:21).

Whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life

John 3:15-17 ...For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life... (Jn 3:36; 4:24; 6:40, 47; 11:25-26).

3) Faith doesn't originate from yourself; it isn't from your abilities.

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

The translation reads, "and this not out from you as a source, of God (it is) the gift." That is, salvation is a gift of God. It does not find its source in man (from Wuest's Word Studies)

Phil 1:29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

4) Saving faith is the gift of God.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is a gift, not a purchase; a free gift, without money and without price; what would never have been yours, but for the generosity of God. It is very usual in the New Testament thus to represent salvation; cf. our Lord's words to Nicodemus (John 3:16); to the woman of Samaria (John 4:14); St. Paul's "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15); "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23); and 1 John 5:11, "God gave unto us eternal life, and the life is in his Son." This usage confirms the view that it is not merely faith, but the whole work and person of Christ which faith receives, that is meant here as the "gift of God." (from The Pulpit Commentary)

5) Saving faith never comes from self-works.

2 Tim 1:9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

Gal 2:16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

(Rom 3:20, 27-28; 4:2; 9:11, 16; 11:16)

We are His workmanship:

This means that He is working in us, we are His project.

Phil 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Phil 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Hebrews 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Two facts about being His workmanship:

We are created in Christ Jesus for good works

God has prepared these works for us beforehand

Summary of Eph 2 by W. W. Wiersbe, (With the Word Bible Commentary)

From death to life.

Lost sinners are not simply sick people needing help; they are dead people needing life. The Son of God died that we might receive life through faith in Him (John 5:24).

From bondage to freedom.

Lost sinners are in bondage to the world, the flesh, and the devil (vv. 1–3) and cannot free themselves. In Christ, you have true freedom (John 12:31–32; Gal. 1:4; 5:24). Now God is working in you and through you to accomplish His great purposes (v. 10).

From the tomb to the throne.

God did not give you life and leave you in the cemetery. He lifted you up to sit on the throne with His victorious Son!

From separation to reconciliation.

In Jesus Christ, believing Jews and Gentiles are now one; the barriers have been removed.

Believers are members of one body, citizens of one holy nation, and living stones in one temple (1 Pet. 2:1–10).

All of this is of God,

His marvelous love (v. 4),
and His grace and kindness (v. 7).

No wonder Paul opened this letter with a doxology (1:3)!