

# The Epistle to the Ephesians

## “United by a Moment”

### But God Eph. 2:1-10

Receiving the truth – it not just academic problem but a heart problem. Sometimes the issue is that men do not like what they hear (i.e. Rom. 1 – they suppress the truth). We have no excuse for rejecting the truth – the truth about us, the truth about God, and the truth about salvation. Hearts by nature are not wired to love the truth –especially truth that minimizes man and exalts God. May we be humble and hungry to hear truth.

Where did the problems of the world come from? It is not just the “bad guys” – it is us. We are the problem. “And you...”

#### A. Truth that hurts (v. 1-3)

No one knows the extent of his sinfulness. It is deeper than anyone knows.

But the Bible does not leave us without help to know ourselves. The fact that we cannot know *fully* how sinful we are, does not mean we cannot know *deeply* how sinful we are. The Bible has a clear and devastating message about the state of our own souls. And the reason it does is so that we will know what we need and shout for joy when God gives it to us.

- **You were dead (v. 1).**
- **You were enslaved (v. 2).**
- **You were doomed (v. 3).**

Reflection: If we really understood that this is the state from which we are saved, what difference would it make to our life and actions?

#### B. Truth that exalts (v. 4-7)

##### But God ...

“BUT” is one of my favorite words in the whole Bible!

Look at this!

- We were dead in sin, BUT GOD made us alive with Christ.
- We were captive to the prince of the power of the air and enslaved to the course of this world, BUT GOD raised us with Christ and made us sit with him in the heavenly places.
- We were children of wrath and deserving of an eternity in the torments of hell, BUT GOD, instead of pouring out wrath, will spend eternity showing the immeasurable riches of his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

### **1. Kindness in the Place of Wrath**

### **2. Freedom in the Place of Captivity**

### **3. Life in the Place of Death**

For he is a great God of wonders! He makes the dead to live. He sets the captive free. And he will spend eternity lavishing the riches of his kindness on those who trust him.

This is new covenant love. This is the kind of love God has for his bride. He finds her dead (Ezekiel 16:4-8), and he gives his Son to die for her, and then he makes her alive. And he keeps her forever. "I give them eternal life," Jesus said, "and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28).

Reflection: How does having your identity in Christ, impact our attitude towards our sin; other Christians; our forgiveness; forgiving others; prayer etc.?

### **C. Truth that humbles (v. 8-10)**

- *We have not contributed to our rescue and transformation one bit.* There is not one thing to which we can lay claim. There is no goodness that we can assert; no integrity we can display; no virtue we can present by way of counter-argument.
- *It is all of grace. It is all a gift of God.* Whatever we are now, it is because we are God's workmanship. God is a Master-craftsman at work and we are his new creation. As such we are called to live lives that please God. We have been made for good works, but God has prepared even those in advance!
- That is why it is a truth that humbles. It is a truth that emphasizes God's role and God's glory. John Newton, the ex-slave trader and the author of the hymn 'Amazing Grace', put it like this: 'I am not what I might be; I am not what I ought to be; I am not what I wish to be; I am not what I hope to be; but I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am"'

Reflection: How do we behave when we believe that we can contribute something to our own salvation? What problems does this lead to in our Christian lives and in our churches? How can we counteract this tendency?

There are two ways to respond to this truth of salvation entirely of God's grace: One is theoretical and impersonal; the other is personal and urgent. One says: How can this be, and how can that be? The other says: God brought me here today. God spoke in these texts to me today. God's mercy and love and grace seem desperately needed and beautiful to me today. O God, today, I submit to your amazing grace that has brought me here and awakened me and softened me and opened me. Thanks be to God for the riches of his mercy and the greatness of his love and the power of his grace.