



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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God's Masterpiece!

Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10

Before Christ, people were spiritually lifeless, separated from God due to their disobedience (trespasses) and sinful nature, following worldly paths and the influence of Satan. By nature, humans were subject to God's judgment, living according to fleshly desires, making them deserving of wrath. Just as a corpse cannot revive itself to life, neither can an unbeliever revive his own spirit into new life. **We know from Romans and Genesis, that the cause for humanity's dead state is the sin of Adam, which we inherited at birth.** Every person begins their life on earth in a state of spiritual deadness, and apart from a work of God to revive our spirit, this state will continue uninterrupted until our physical death. Spiritual deadness is a condition which finds its source in Satan. He was the first to fall, and his deceptive influence contributed to the fall of Man in the Garden. Today, he rules the hearts of those bound in spiritual deadness, and he exerts his controlling influence through the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15). All unbelievers are spiritually dead sons and slaves of the devil.

God's reason for saving us was entirely His own. Being rich in mercy and having a great love, God determined to save us. We did not merit His mercy, nor did we earn our salvation. God must act first, because men do not naturally seek God (Romans 3:10-11). God must act first on our behalf, because dead corpses are not capable of reviving themselves. We share none of the action with God. By Himself and according to His own purpose and while we were still yet unaware of Him, He made us alive. Though we are presently located on earth physically, nevertheless we have been assigned a place spiritually at the right hand of the Father in Christ. Paul's point is that our salvation should not be appreciated as merely a change in status or intellectual thought (i.e., being saved isn't merely a matter of agreeing with the Gospel). Rather, salvation is a change of spiritual position before God. **By His work, we have been moved, spiritually speaking, from our prior position as sons of the devil dead in sin to our new state as sons of God alive in Christ.** According to this truth we must conclude that our new spiritual state is not reversible, because nothing can tear us away from Christ (and Paul says we are now seated "with Christ"). In effect, we are His appointed audience to receive His grace and kindness, so that in the ages to come we may glorify Him for it.

God's work presupposes a purpose, and the purpose for His acting is so that we might do good works. As Jesus Himself said in Matthew 5:16: *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* Our good works will display the masterpiece of God. They do not produce our salvation; they result from our salvation. Finally, Paul says that even our good works were prepared beforehand by God. When we endeavor to please God by our works, we must accomplish the work He has appointed for us. If we accomplish other work of our own choosing, we labor in our flesh and we do not please the Lord. Therefore, **only those works He has purposed beforehand for us constitute "good works" done in faith.** Grace is unmerited favor. The grace of God was manifested by faith. When the time came for God to bring us His grace, He delivered it through faith. Our faith was not the means by which we received grace. Instead, **grace was the means by which we received faith.**

Ephesians 2:1-10 means that people are spiritually dead in sin, following worldly ways and Satan, but God, rich in mercy, makes them alive with Christ by grace through faith, not works. This act of salvation, a gift from God, makes believers His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus *for* good works, which God prepared beforehand for them to do, demonstrating His kindness and love, seating them with Christ in heavenly places. We did not leave our state of spiritual deadness and come to believe God's word by our own efforts. Dead corpses cannot raise themselves. Instead, the faith we received was a gift of God (hence, it was grace). **The moment a person is born again and moves from the kingdom of darkness and enters into the light of the truth of the Gospel, they do so because God, by grace, bestowed the gift of faith.** God's manner of salvation precludes any possibility that our newfound state could be attributed to human works. Since our very faith is itself a gift of God, we must acknowledge that we are God's masterpiece. These passages show a radical transformation: from spiritual death to life, from being lost to being found, from being under wrath to being seated with Christ, all by God's immense grace, so that His incomparable kindness and love might be eternally displayed through us as His renewed creation.