

A New Reality
Ephesians 2:1-10
August 31, 2025

Opening Illustration

One man's courage.

Introduction

Because of one man's courage, a new reality began for the people of Rome. Because Of Jesus' mercy and grace, a new reality has come for every one of us to move from death to life.

Three Phases of Our New Reality in Christ

1. In our sins we are dead spiritually.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. Ephesians 2:1-3

There is no more descriptive picture of the spiritual lostness of a person before they come to Jesus. To be Christless is to be without Christ and oblivious to all that he has done for us. Paul described it this way, "You were dead in your trespasses and sins."

This means we are unable to understand and appreciate spiritual things. The unbeliever is not sick, he is dead. He doesn't need resuscitation; he needs resurrection.

Paul describes this state before Christ comes into a life.

When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. ²¹ What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! Romans 6:20-21

Then he described the change that comes when Christ enters the life of a sinner.

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:22-23

Paraptoma (trespasses) means to slip, fall, stumble, or go the wrong direction. Hamartia (sins) literally means a miss. When a man shoots an arrow at a target and misses, this is hamartia. Sin is the failure to hit the target of life. It is to slip and stumble and go the wrong direction. In the spiritual realm, it is missing or falling short of God's standard of holiness.

Illustration

The tragic end of Oscar Wilde.

2. In Christ's love we are made alive in Him.

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:4-7

Through Christ, God did what we could not do for ourselves and what we desperately needed. In His great love for us, He made us alive with Christ even when we were spiritually dead in our sins. He resurrected us just like He resurrected Lazarus from the grave.

Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” John 11:43b-44

When you and I trust in Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, He declares, (insert your name), “Come out from the tomb!” Come up from the dead and receive the new life I have for you!

We are resurrected and saved simply because of His grace. None of us can save ourselves, We can't be good enough or do enough to please God because sin separates us from Him. It is His grace, His unmerited favor that everyone of us so desperately needs. He is unlike every other religious teacher because He offers us grace. Jesus is the only One who came to meet us where we are and give His life because we were incapable of gaining God's favor on our own.

God gave His best to us to show the world His love and mercy, kindness and favor.

⁷ in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:7

Oh, my friends, could He have done any more to prove His love and mercy to us? Our God loves us! He proved His love by sending His Son to take the punishment we deserved and to die in our place upon that cross. Because He did, God's justice was satisfied, and we were given the joy of eternal life in heaven.

Illustration

God's treasure of grace.

3. In God's grace we are saved for His glory.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:8-10

Paul finishes this passage with the great paradox of God's grace. We are saved by grace' not by our good works. It is God's amazing gift to us, and our response is to humbly accept it.

*For this is what the high and exalted One says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of **the lowly** and to revive the heart of the contrite. Isaiah 57:5*

However, once we are saved, our life is to be filled with good works. We don't work to earn our salvation, but to prove our salvation.

With God's grace there is no boasting on our part because God had done it all. If we should boast, then let it be about God and who He is, His character, His love, His goodness, His mercy, and so much more.

When we boast, we put ourselves in the centre of our universe. When we boast about Jesus, we put Him in the centre in His rightful place. The prophet Jeremiah revealed God's desire to us.

This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches,"²⁴ but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord. Jeremiah 9:23-24

Finally, Paul gave us three admonitions for the work on earth God gives us to do.

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph. 2:8-10

1. We are God's handiwork.

We are His masterpiece, and we honour Him in His work.

2. Jesus Christ created us.

He fashioned us and gave us life for the work He gives us.

3. God prepared our work in advance.

He planned our work before we were ever born. Are you doing His work? If not, why not?

Closing Illustration

He knows the Shepherd.