

EPHESIANS 2:1-22

SUNDAY 5th OCTOBER 2025 | SIM FORDER

Ephesians 2:1-22

Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 5th October 2025 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

Reading: John 3:16-17

Introduction

Well, good morning! We come now to an important part of our service where we get to study the Bible — this amazing book that tells us who God is, what He is like, how much He loves us, what He has done for us, and what He expects of us too. And as you may know, this wonderful book that we call the Word of God, is a collection of 66 books, written by around 40 authors over a period of roughly 2000 years — each author inspired by God Himself, so that when we read it, we *really are* reading what God has said to us. And that alone makes it the most amazing book that has ever been written — though, if time allowed, we could also once again look at how it is reliable, trustworthy, without fault, and without equal; how time and time again it has proven it's critics wrong.

But this morning we are going to continue a verse by verse study we began last week of one specific book within it, which is the book of Ephesians. And by way of reminder, this book — just 3000 or so words long — was actually a letter written by the apostle Paul, to a group of Christians living in the ancient Greek city of Ephesus, a large city full of commerce, idolatry, and immorality. Yet in the midst of that was this thriving group of believers — Christians — that Paul had previously nurtured, taught, and equipped with the Bible over a three year period.

And last week we *read* in chapter one how Paul reminded these Christians that God had blessed them (*and* us) so much, having planned our salvation even before the world began, *that* one day He might gather together a people who love Him, who live for Him, who are to His praise and glory. And the key to all that was who we are, and what we have *in Christ*.

And Paul went on to say, that when he heard of the *Ephesian's* faith in Christ, he couldn't stop giving thanks to God for them, praying that God would do yet more in their lives, and that they would understand more as they sat at Jesus feet, who is the Head of the church. Of course, reading those things would no doubt have been an encouragement to them. And indeed, this whole letter is very much one of encouragement.

Overview of chapter two

- **v1-10** — We have been saved by grace
- **v11-13** — We have been brought near by His blood
- **v14-18** — We have been reconciled to God
- **v19-22** — We are now fellow citizens

And as we get into chapter two, a division that is really there to help us find our way to it, we'll find that *what* we read is a *continuation* of (and building upon) those things that Paul had already said, with the first ten verses showing the contrast between how these believers once were, and how they now are — yet not through *their* efforts, but by God's *grace*.

In verses 11-13 he will then remind them how they (who were once far from God) have been brought *near* by Jesus' blood shed on the cross for them. And then, from v14-18, how they have been *reconciled* to God, having removed all barriers between them and Him.

And finally, in verses 19-22 he will explain how that has not only brought us close to God, but to each other, as we now grow in the presence of our common Saviour.

Another way of putting it, is that as we move through this chapter Paul will speak of God's work for us, in us, through us, and among us.

Chapter two

So then, let's get going, starting in verse 1 where we read:

Ephesians 2:1

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

So, speaking specifically to these Christians in Ephesus, and to those of you here this morning who are also Christians, he says *God* has made us alive. That is, it is *His* work. And this is amazing news, because we were *dead*. Not physically, but *spiritually*. Why? because of our trespasses and sins. *Trespasses* being that crossing of the line from morality into immorality. And *sins* meaning to miss the mark in a moral sense, failing to meet God's holy standard.

And being dead, we were not looking for God. We might have been looking for comfort or relief, or maybe we had the idea we can better ourselves, but the Bible says that no-one naturally seeks after God. That is how much of a mess we were in. That not only were we in the *middle* of the problem, but we weren't even *looking* for the solution... because, speaking of these sins, we read in verse 2:

Ephesians 2:2

in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

The idea here being that we were meandering around, with no sense of direction, but rather we were being blown by the wind in which ever way it was going, all under the influence of Satan, who stirs up wickedness in our hearts.

Ephesians 2:3

among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

That is, Paul's saying we were *all* previously doing these things, we were *all* giving in to the lusts of the flesh, we were all doing as we pleased, and *thinking* as we pleased. Just as all those around us were doing too. And if in any doubt of what he is referring to by the lusts of the flesh, we read in his letter to the Galatians:

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

And the problem wasn't merely that these things are bad, but they were offensive to God, they were contrary to His holy nature. And because He is good, because He is just, He cannot let those things go unpunished, and so as we read a moment ago, we were by nature the children of wrath.

But lest we get confused on this point, Paul wasn't being high and mighty, he wasn't being self-righteous, looking down on others saying "*huh, look at what those folks do, look at how wicked they are*" — but rather, he was saying look at how we *all* were. For we were *all* in a hopeless state before God, chasing our lusts, doing whatever we thought was good. Following the world's mantra of "*you've got to do what feels good to you*".

Ephesians 2:4-5

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

But God. Those words change *everything*. For God stepped in. We read *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life* and furthermore that *God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*. And not only died for us, but called us. Not only called us, but convicted us of our sin, revealing our sin to us by shining the light of His law on it, and led us to Him, saving us by His grace. Taking this spiritually dead man, and making him alive!

That's why Paul wrote that God is *rich* in *mercy* — for we deserved *worse* than nothing, for we deserved to be held to account for our sin before a pure and holy God. But, speaking to these Christians, and all Christians today, Paul says God did not give us what we deserved, because Jesus bore all of that in our place, that we might be forgiven of all our sin. Yet furthermore, in His *grace*, in His unmerited favour toward us, He also gave us that which we *never* deserved, which is a restored relationship with Him. That we would be *in Christ*, that we would have all the spiritual blessings he spoke of chapter one.

J Vernon McGee, a great Christian minister from the last century, put it so well. He said:

God is rich in mercy. He had mercy on me. He has had mercy on you. This is such a radical change from the first three verses, which are as black and hopeless as anything can be. Man is a complete failure. He is incapable of saving himself. God comes on this scene of death with His mercy. He does not have too little, too late. He has a surplus, for He is an infinite God who is rich in infinite mercy. He has what man needs. He has what you need. The only requirement is that you believe Him.

J Vernon McGee

Here, Paul goes on, speaking of the blessing we have in Him, saying that God made us alive together with Christ...

Ephesians 2:6-7

and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

And this should blow our minds; that though we understand He has raised us to newness of life, that He has forgiven us, and has made our position in Him secure, that there is still yet more He will reveal to us in how vast the riches of His grace are, as we spend eternity with Him!

For you see, we have surely only grasped in *part* what God's grace has *already* done for us — for we certainly have not remembered each and every sin that God has forgiven us of. In that sense we're unaware of the *depth* of the grace He has shown to us.

A way of thinking about this, is that it can be quite the surprise to see how much you've spent on something over time, right? For example, if you just took a look at how much you've spent on coffee, take-aways, or ice cream, you'd probably be horrified! Or if you counted up how much you'd spent on your hobbies, or servicing your car, and so on, the total would shock you. That's how it's going to be one day when we realise how much sin we have committed, and the sum of all that which Jesus had to pay for in our place. Oh, the weight of sin that He bore!

If right now we can sing "*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!*", then how will we find the words to describe the wonder of God's grace when we understand it more?!

Yet, beyond *that*, we will also be amazed at all that God has *prepared* for us, as we spend eternity with Him in Heaven. As we have joy upon joy upon joy. And forevermore.

When we think of this, we should surely conclude that we don't deserve this — but that's the point! For we have been saved by *grace* — of which a good way to remember what that *really* means is the acronym **God's Riches At Christ's Expense**. It's all because of what *He* has done. Which is why Paul writes next:

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

That is, we contributed nothing to our salvation. Yet, it wasn't forced upon us, rather we accepted this gift by *faith* — putting our faith, our trust, in Jesus to save us from our sin. But that decision isn't something we get *any* credit for, for our salvation is a gift. And like any gift, we didn't earn it — for if we did, we'd have something to brag about.

And so we have to be careful in our thinking here. For God's grace is not there to top us up. It's not that you needed more grace than me, or that I needed God's grace more than you. We both needed it. We both needed Jesus to die for us! We all did. For we were all dead in our sin. We were done. There was no hope left. Rather, it was *only* because God stepped in that we could be saved. And our salvation *all* rests on *Him*, and none of it on us. The only thing that we contributed to our salvation was the sin that made it necessary. And so rightly, *God* is the One who should get all the glory.

Let me give an illustration. This morning, you walked in here, and sat down on the chair you're sat on right now. And you had faith that that chair would hold you up. That it would bear your weight. That it would not fall apart as you sat on it. So let me ask you, what credit do you deserve for that? What did you contribute to the chair's ability to support you? Nothing. So it is when you put your faith in Christ to save you.

But the opposite is true with your salary, right?? If your employer came to you at the end of the month, and said, *I've got gift for you! Here's your pay cheque*. You'd probably react by saying, that's not a *gift* — that's what I've *earned*! And you'd be right. Indeed, this is the example Paul uses in Romans chapter four, saying that *"to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt."* That is, you are owed your wages by your employer. It is not gracious of them to pay you!

And so I hope you see, that if you contributed to your salvation in any way, then it wouldn't be a gift, but rather it would be expected that God would save you. But that is not what has taken place, for there is *nothing* we contributed to our salvation. It is the *gift* of God. It is extravagant, it is amazing, it is totally unmerited. It is grace.

And because it is grace, because our salvation rests on *Him*, and not us, and because God is *unchanging* in His nature, we have security in it! That when we still sin (and we still do), we don't — or at least shouldn't — think *that's it, I've blown it, God won't save me now*. Because God has paid for *all* our sin... past, present, *and* future. All of it.

And grace like that changes us, right? We can't shrug the shoulders and say, *oh, well that's nice!* If we do, then I really don't think we've understood what God has done for us at all.

But rather, what this does result in, in the life of a believer, in the life of someone who has accepted Christ, and is a recipient of His amazing grace, is a desire to live right. To not drive those nails deeper, as it were. Which is why we should take note of what we read next. For we read in verse 10:

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

You see, God hasn't saved us merely that we would do no more *wrong*, but that we would also *do good*. Not to earn our salvation, but in response to it. Again, that is, more than simply *not* doing the things that we ought not, we actually do the things He *wants* us to do. Doing the good works He has called us to, not because we have to in order to accrue enough points to enter heaven, but rather, serving Him out of love. That He would hear His Son's heart beating in us.

So what has God prepared for *you* to do? I can't tell you that. But what I can say, is that you or I shouldn't sit around waiting to figure that out, when there is already plenty to do. I didn't wake up one day, having never served the Lord, and hear Him say "*Sim, I want you to pastor*". No, no. Rather, it was in the midst of a season of serving in my singleness, and gone midnight one night, as I walked back home from an evening of ministry work on my own here, that I heard that call.

I guess what I'm trying to say, is don't sit around idle, hoping you'll get some revelation from God as to what you should do with your life. But rather, press on serving Him, doing the many good things His Word already tells us we should do, for in the midst of that He will make clear the details of what you should specifically do as you respond to His grace.

Now, as we get to verse 11, Paul says *therefore*. Which means he is building on what he has just said, that we were dead in our sins, without hope. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, has made us alive by His amazing grace, all at his expense (and not by our own effort) in response to which we wouldn't simply *be* good, but *do* good.

So let us read on. He writes:

Ephesians 2:11-12

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

So then, in light of what he has already written, Paul says to the Ephesians (and to us); remember that as Gentiles you were once without *any* hope. That is, unlike God's chosen people, Israel, you hadn't been given the covenants (which, by the way, we still have no right to appropriate for ourselves), and you hadn't had God's commands given directly to you, and you didn't have the promise of the Messiah to come. You had no direction. You had no hope. You had no sense of any relationship with God.

But, as we read in his letter to the Colossians "*you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—*"

And he writes here in Ephesians:

Ephesians 2:13

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

That is, because of Jesus death on the cross in our place, because of the shedding of His blood for us, we have now been brought near to God. And near is almost an understatement here, for we are now *in* Christ! We are even the bride of Christ! Again, that is we have moved from being alienated from God, to being found in Him! Not just close to the house, but in it, as it were. With all the distance and barriers to God that once separated us from Him now removed in their entirety, all because of what Jesus did.

So, no wonder we read next:

Ephesians 2:14-16

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

First then, He *Himself* is our peace. Not merely a way to peace. But He is peace *Himself*. That is, knowing Jesus as your Saviour is the greatest source of comfort you could ever find. Not because you think there is comfort in rituals or routines of church or whatever. But because there is no greater comfort than knowing all of your sin has been dealt with once and for all on the cross. That in light of that forgiveness, we can lay to rest all our shame over past failure, for there is nothing He has not paid for with His blood. And greater still, there is nothing left on our account that God will have to hold us to account for on the day of judgement.

And Paul says, that in God doing this, Jesus hasn't only brought us closer to God, but He has broken down the barrier between Jew and Gentile. That where once there was literally a stone wall outside the temple that divided the court of the Gentiles from that of the Jews in the temple, now there is no barrier of any kind between us. For the Jews, despite their self-righteousness in trying to keep the law, have been saved. And the Gentiles despite their unrighteousness of living without the law, have been saved. Not all Jews, not all Gentiles, but all those who have put their faith in Christ, have been brought together, as one, in Him. Reconciled to God; meaning that restoration of friendly relations with Him, where once we all due His wrath.

And Paul now underlines this, saying:

Ephesians 2:17-18

And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

In other words, both Gentiles — who were alienated and completely separated from God because of their sin, who were so far from Him, even a knowledge of Him — and Jews — who were so near to Him yet still separated from Him because of *their* sin — now both have a way, and the *same* way, to be reconciled to God, to a restored relationship with Him, as He had created us all to enjoy. And that is through repentance and faith. That is turning from our sin, and putting our faith in Jesus alone to save us through what *He* has done.

And let me be clear here, Paul is not saying that the Gentile believer has been elevated to the level of the Jewish believer. But rather, both Jews and Gentiles, if they come to faith in Jesus, are now found *in Him*. And as such both have access through the Holy Spirit to the God the Father Himself. Access that was once impossible, even unthinkable.

So consider this — especially if you do not know Jesus as your Saviour — that it doesn't matter who you are, where you have come from; there *is* a way to be reconciled to God. There *is* a way to be forgiven. For Jesus paid the price for your sin, to make that possible. But you've got to take hold of His outstretched arm toward you.

Look, if you had cancer, and I had a cure, and I offered it to you, what would you do? You'd bite my arm off for it, so to speak, right? You wouldn't complain that I was only presenting a very narrow minded way of looking at things, and that I really ought to offer you several different types of cure, would you?! That would be unreasonable!

Well, you, like everyone here, have a problem far greater than cancer, and there *is* a cure. There *is* a way to be forgiven for all your sin, that you might not have to give account for it in front of God when one day you stand in front of Him as your judge. But as I said at the wedding yesterday, God won't force you. He leaves the choice to you. There's nothing more He can do, for He has already done all necessary for you to be set free. For you to have peace *with* God (which is of primary importance), but also the peace of God — which is a peace that is past all understanding.

Now, speaking to these Gentile believers in Ephesus, and indeed all believers everywhere, including here this morning, Paul writes:

Ephesians 2:19

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

And I tell you, this is wonderful. There is such immense joy that comes from meeting other believers in Christ, for it is like meeting a brother or sister you didn't know you had. And one of the best illustrations I've heard of this was by a pastor called Jimmy Orate, who was teaching at a pastors conference I attended many years ago. He said how he had been at another place a short while before, and was talking to someone, and having a pleasant conversation with them, but it was all quite surface level, until the moment that they realised they had a common friend. All of a sudden the tone changed, as they talked about their friend, how they knew him, and at that moment a friendship started to form between them.

And he said, that's what it's like when we meet someone else that know Jesus. There's instantly something in common. Something that is so fundamental to who we are, how we live, where we're going. And it is a joy. And yesterday was a great example of that, speaking several Christians at Gavin and Carolina's wedding, it was like home from home. That I could talk as heartily and openly as I would with any believer in this church. That's what God has also done — that not only has He restored our relationship with Him, but He has given us a precious relationship with one another.

Which is why Paul, is exhorting the Galatians to love one another, says:

Galatians 6:10

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

We are part of the same family. Fellow citizens of heaven. And that is a precious thing.

Ephesians 2:20

having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

And this is why, for we have the same foundation to our lives. Jesus being that foundation. Not Peter, but Jesus our Rock. Our everything.

Ephesians 2:21-22

in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Because of Him, the building is secure. For He is immovable. And what is built on Him (the Rock) will last. And we are now that temple, for God could never be confined to a building — that was never the intent of the Jewish temple, as Solomon made clear — but now He lives *in* us through His Holy Spirit, and as the temple was to be a place of worship to God, so now our whole lives are to be one of worship to Him, which is why it matters what we do with our bodies, our minds, our everything.

Application questions

This morning, then, let me leave you with a few questions to think on as you enjoy your lunch, and as we go our separate ways this week.

- Are you relying on your own goodness to save you?
- How will you respond to God's offer of forgiveness?
- In light of God's grace, how will you serve Him?
- What is God calling you to do? What has He prepared for you to do?

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