

Grace and Redemption Are Gifts from God

Ephesians 2:1-10 (8-10)

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I. Historical Background and Biblical Context

A. Historical Background

a. There are two main themes in Ephesians:
(1) Christ has reconciled all creation to Himself and God, and (2) Christ has united people from all nations to Himself. These deeds were accomplished through the powerful sovereign and free working of the triune, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and are recognized and received by faith alone through His grace. In light of these great truths, Christians are to lead lives that are a fitting tribute of gratitude to the LORD.

b. There was no specific occasion or problem that inspired this letter.

However, Paul did mention that he desired the Ephesians to know how he was faring in confinement (Eph. 6:21-22). Ephesians articulates general instructions in the truths of God's redemptive work in Christ, the unity of the church among diverse peoples and proper conduct in the church, the home and the world. Unity and love in the bond of peace mark the work of the Saviour as well as Christians' grateful response to His free grace in their lives.

B. Biblical Content

If one comes to the Christian life believing he can do anything for God in his own strength or repay Him on any level, he has fallen back to a self-dependent death from which Jesus saved us.

Ephesians 2 frees us from this belief by showing that the Christian life is completely fueled by God's grace. It begins with how believers were dead in their sins; then moves to how God loved us and

rescued us from death by His grace, bringing salvation to all in Christ, uniting Jews and Gentiles as one people in whom the Spirit of God dwells. The first half of the chapter focuses on God's rescue operation that delivered us from our sins and God's wrath and ends with Verse 10 that centers on how God deliverance means Christians are created anew for lives of righteousness.

II. The Lesson: "Grace and Redemption Are Gifts from God"

1. vv. 1-3.

Do Christians understand the position of those that do not know Christ? Unbelievers are dead in their sins. The Bible declares that all are spiritually dead. They have no spiritual life in them. Death speaks of separation. Physical death is the separation of the Spirit and soul from the body; spiritual death is also the separation of man from God. This is how people are born into this world because of the fall of man-kind. If we were left in that condition, we would experience the second death as revealed in Revelation, eternal separation from God.

The ways of the world that unbelievers follow are opposed to the ways of God. The ways of the world are to live for pleasure, seek power, and wealth and happiness; live for now and refuse to think about eternal or spiritual matters or what happens after death. All the world swims in this same direction, downstream, but the believer is charged to swim against the tide, especially in these difficult last days.

2. vv. 4-7.

And here, having passed through the swamp of condemnation, is the narrow gate where the ground is good, "But God". God was and

is able to do something incredible to rescue the repentant sinner from his terrible condition. Those that were sinners can be made holy. Those that were dead can be made alive. Those in darkness can receive the Light. Those that were controlled by an evil spirit can receive the Holy Spirit. Those that were children of wrath can be saved and come under the Fatherhood of God. God did it for us when we were without hope. When we become new creations in Christ, we have been washed, restored, saved, lifted and seated with Christ in heavenly places. Some examples in the Bible of those who were lifted to great heights include Joseph, Ruth the three Hebrew boys, etc. God did this so that in the coming ages there will be witnesses and testimony to the incomparable riches of God's grace

3. vv. 8-10.

Salvation is by grace, not by our works, through our faith in the person and work of the LORD Jesus on our behalf. When it comes to salvation, our own righteousness 'good works' are as filthy rags to the LORD. Some Christians haven't got the message that 'good works' don't and can not save anyone. Though the word highlights that our salvation is not based on works, Christians must understand works to be a part of God's grace. Because we were created in Jesus Christ (made alive and raised with Him), we are God's handiwork with the goal of good works.

Salvation and redemption are entirely unmerited gifts from God, not something humanity can achieve through its own efforts and good deeds. Rather than being a reward for righteous living, this unmerited favor is freely offered by God. "Redemption" refers to undoing the effect of sin for all mankind. It means to 'buy back'. Though His mercy, God used the life of His Son, Jesus Christ, as currency to pay that debt. Redemption and salvation are free at Jesus' expense. God has purchased our freedom, and we are no longer in bondage to sin or to the Old Testament law.

III. Conclusion

The streets of heaven will be filled with former captives who, through no merit of their own, finds themselves redeemed, forgiven and free. Slaves to sin have become saints. We will sing a new song, a song of praise to the Redeemer who was slain for us. We were slaves to sin, condemned to eternal separation from God. Jesus paid the price to redeem us, resulting in our freedom from slavery to sin and our rescue from the eternal consequences of that sin.