



SEQUIM COMMUNITY CHURCH

# EPHESIANS

## SESSION 3B: THE WAY OF SALVATION: DEATH TO LIFE

Ephesians 2:1-10

*"Exploring the new life and new society God has created through Jesus"*

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### II. CONVERSION: DEATH TO LIFE

*"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions- it is by grace you have been saved."*

– Ephesians 2:4-5

*"God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'"*

– Galatians 4:6

*"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." – Romans 8:16*

God miraculously made the spiritual part of us come alive, and therefore be able to interact with his Holy Spirit! He sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts and helped us to intuitively know that we are his children. He started the ball rolling from his side, and enabled us to wake up. Notice that he did it even though we were knee deep "in transgressions". We didn't have to clean up first!

1. What has God's grace meant to you in your life? \_\_\_\_\_

• From what did it save you? \_\_\_\_\_

*"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 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 2:6-7*

There are three things mentioned that God did in saving us:

- He raised us up with Christ
- Seated us with Jesus in heavenly realms
- He showed the incomparable riches of his grace

These promises have a sense of present and future fulfillment about them. We have been made alive and are actually united with Jesus. We are now "in Christ" - a term that Paul uses throughout all of his letters. Colossians 1:13-14 expresses more about what this salvation means.

*"He (the Father) has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."*

**In terms of the world:** We no longer need to set our affections on the motivations and purposes of our culture. Instead, we are kingdom people who live out God's desires and purposes. We are working with Jesus now!

**In terms of the devil:** We no longer need to fear or be influenced by his lies, because the Father has rescued us from the dominion of darkness!

**In terms of our sinful nature (flesh):** The deeds of the past are forgiven and done. We are now under new ownership (redeemed), and the past is not relevant or an offense any longer!

7. Share with one another how God has:

- moved your affections away from the world and into God's purposes \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- dealt with fear, lies and bondage \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- forgiven your past deeds and put them to rest \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This is, in essence, your testimony of God's grace in your life. This is the story you want to be telling those who don't believe yet.

### III. OUR NEW PURPOSE:

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

When I was younger, I was asked to memorize Ephesians 2:8-9, and I did so, immersing myself in the idea that salvation was all about faith and belief and had nothing to do with good works. If someone said, "Good works are necessary to please God.", I knew where to send them in the Bible to correct their error. I had memorized the verse!

Then one day, as I was reading Ephesians, I suddenly realized that I had been pulling this important text right out of its context. Following Ephesians 2:8-9 was verse 10, which said we are "created in Christ Jesus to do good works". How could that be? What did it mean?

8. How do you reconcile these two ideas? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

From that day on, I memorized all three verses, 8-9 and 10, and whenever I would tell

someone about Jesus I would be sure to quote all of them.

This is how I would start my gospel presentation:

“When I was living independent of God, my good works were quite meaningless. They didn’t buy my salvation. I learned that the only way to come to God is to believe in the power of Jesus’ death on the cross and receive his healing grace (addressing the world, devil, and my flesh which we talked about above). Now that this had happened, there was a resurrection in store! Just as God had raised Jesus from the dead, I was also raised from spiritual death to life, and this life is one of union with Jesus and with other believers in the body of Christ. We are now “in Christ” and together we are “his workmanship” - literally his poem. And in this new reality we are created for God empowered good works, that were prepared in advance for us to do.”

This was radically different than I had previously imagined salvation to be. It was no longer just me and Jesus, and going to heaven. Now I was part of the greater purpose of God, lived out through the church! Needless to say, this awareness changed everything for me.

9. Have you ever shared the gospel with someone in this way? \_\_\_\_\_

How does the church play a part in your salvation story? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Digging Deeper

*For those who want to do more personal reflection on this topic.*

### A Biblical model for God’s transformative work in our lives

Here’s a visual way to conceptualize our lesson today. It’s based on 1 Thessalonians 5:23: *“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Assuming that our spiritual part is at the center, we have the soul, which is our mind, emotions, and will. We also have a body, which represents our actions in the world. When Ephesians 2 says that we were “dead” it means that the spiritual part of us was dead and disconnected from God. The soul - meaning mind, emotions, and will - was very much alive and was enmeshed with plenty of transgressions, misguided motives, wounds, sin and deception.

When God made us alive, and our spirit connected with the Holy Spirit, that wounded and impure soul didn’t immediately change. We still had bad habits, lies, bondages. But what was different was a new center. The spirit - controlled by the Holy Spirit - began to work outwardly into the soul and initiate changes. As

we “live by the Spirit” the soul begins to be affected and change happens. This change moves outward to the body - and into actions in the real world. If we choose to ignore the promptings of the Spirit, we end up living by the flesh, and nothing changes inwardly or outwardly. So, living by the Spirit means letting that new part of us, which is alive and connected to God, permeate and transform the rest of us.

