

Ephesians - Study 2
Eph 2:1-22
By Grace

Q. What do you think is at the very heart of grace? _____

Read Ephesians 2:1-22 and as you read circle the words you think are important. (Discuss your reasons afterwards).

Ephesians 2:1-22 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 sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we **were by nature objects of wrath.**

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.

⁸ **For it is by grace** you have been saved, through faith-- and this 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 workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)--
¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

¹³ **But now in Christ Jesus you** who once were far away **have been brought near** through the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ **For he himself is our peace**, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,
¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. **His purpose was** to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,

¹⁶ **and** in this one body **to reconcile both of them** to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

¹⁷ **He came and preached peace** to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

¹⁸ **For through him we both have access** to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ **Consequently, you are** no longer foreigners and aliens, but **fellow citizens with God's people** and members of God's household,
²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

²¹ **In him the whole building is joined together** and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

²² **And in him you too are being built together** to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Q What was our state before God when we followed the ways of the world? Discuss what you think it means to follow the ways of the world? (see verse 3)

Q Although we continued to choose evil, what did God do for us?

(v5) _____

Q Why did God choose to do this even though we chose to live a different way? (v7) _____

Discuss verses 8 and 9 about what grace is in terms of our 'works'

Q How should we understand our 'good works' then in verse 10?

The Biblical term called grace is unique to the Bible in the sense that it is an act of mercy which God shows *while we were in the act of rebellion against Him*. Grace therefore is undeserved, it's powerfully sacrificial. God chose to rescue us from our wilful commitment to our own self destruction by sending His son Jesus. (Although the passage does not explicitly mention the cross, it is such a clear example of grace because the innocent and sinless God would die for us, *while we were still sinning against Him* (Rom 5:8). Even in view of our overt rebellion, He died for us.

This undeserved favour that God lavishes upon us has implications on the way we see ourselves and others in relation to being 'saved'.

Read verses 11-13 and try to work out who the 'you' Paul is writing to?

Q. How do verses 14-18 inform the situation Paul is writing about. What do you think the issue at hand may be?

God's promise of salvation began with the nation of Israel. In the letter to the Romans (9:4), Paul speaks of their calling in these terms: 'Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.'⁵ Theirs are

the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen'.

What a special relationship God had with the Israelites and out of this nation God called the first believers under the ministry of Jesus. The apostles and first believers were Jewish and through their ministries the gentiles (other nations) were also called. Through the death of Jesus, now believers are reconciled to God.

The other reality therefore, that transpires from this union with Christ is that both the Jewish and 'Gentile' believers are now united as one body in Christ. This reality could never have happened under the Old Testament Covenant where the Israelites were separated from all the other nations and Paul wants to urge these two cultures to live out their new citizenship in unity, under the authority of Jesus as the new living temple of God, where His spirit dwells.

Q. In what ways can we find it hard to live with other people, cultures or social differences now that we have been united with them in Christ?

Spend some time praying about how we can encourage unity within the body.