

**Subject: A Believer's Biography**

**Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10**

Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future. Someone put it like this: "I'm not what I ought to be and I'm not what I'm going to be, but thank God I'm not what I used to be." John Newton may well have had this scripture in mind when he wrote that song, *Amazing Grace*: "I once was lost, but now I'm found, 'twas blind, but now I see." In these verses we have a description of every believer's spiritual biography. Paul paints a vivid contrast between our old life before Christ and our new life in Christ. He describes what we were by nature and what we have become by grace.

### **1. OUR OLD LIFE BEFORE CHRIST (vs. 1-3)**

Paul is not describing a specific group of especially evil or heathen people here. He is describing all people. He gives us a summary in three verses of what he describes in three chapters in the Book of Romans.

#### **1. We were dead in trespasses and sins (vs. 1)**

That means we are spiritually dead, as stated in Eph. 4:18, "alienated from the life of God." Every person doesn't sin in the same way and to the same degree, but all are dead in sin. If you see three dead bodies in a funeral home, each one is dead. You wouldn't say, "That person is barely dead. That one is really dead, and that one over there is permanently dead." Dead means dead.

To say that we were spiritually dead means we were unresponsive to spiritual things, the things of God. Just as a dead person is unaware and unresponsive, so were we. We had no appreciation and no appetite for God or the things of God.

#### **2. We were dominated by the world, the flesh, and the devil (vs. 2)**

The world is the system of evil over which Satan rules. Whether consciously or unconsciously, we were influenced and controlled by the world, the flesh, and the Devil. In verses 1-2, Paul uses the word "you" and "ye," but in verse 3, Paul uses the word "we" and includes himself.

#### **3. We deserved God's wrath (vs. 3)**

God's wrath is not some fit or emotional outburst, but God's settled attitude toward sin.

**John 3:36** *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

### **2. OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST (vs. 4-10)**

"But God" – This is the turning point that we call "conversion." Paul speaks of God's mercy, God's love, God's grace, and God's kindness. Paul tells us what God has done for us and why He has done it. Everything has changed because of our spiritual connection to Christ and our union with Christ ("together with Christ" and "in Christ").

#### **A. Believers are alive in Christ (vs. 5)**

This refers to our regeneration or new birth. In salvation the dead come to life and the blind are made to see. Jesus said: “You must be born again.”

B. Believers are raised with Christ (vs. 6)

The power that raised us is the same power that raised Christ and it's the same power that enables us to live the Christian life.

C. Believers are seated with Christ (vs. 6)

Christ is exalted and seated at the Father's right hand and we are spiritually seated with Him. Even though we're not in heaven yet, we are united with Christ and in God's plan, it is as good as done. Throughout the eternal ages we will be trophies of God's grace and kindness.

D. Believers are saved through Christ (vs. 7-9)

We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

G. R. A. C. E. = God's Riches At Christ's Expense

2:7 – the exceeding riches of his grace

1:7 – the riches of his grace (without limit, grace that is greater than all our sin)

3:8 – the unsearchable riches of Christ (all of His blessings, all that He is and has)

3:16 – the riches of his glory (without limit and available to every believer)

E. Believers are created in Christ for good works (vs. 10)

- Grace makes salvation *possible*
- Faith makes salvation *personal*
- Good works make salvation *practical* – We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. But the faith that saves is never alone.

We are God's workmanship (Gk., *poiema*, “poem”). We are God's masterpiece, His work of art. Artists have given us great works of art—Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Thomas Kinkead. When you look at one of their works, you can identify the artist. The work of art reveals the artist who created it. The same can be said of God as the master artist. As people see our lives they see God's handiwork. Our life reveals His glory.

We need to be careful and understand this. We are not saved by good works, but we are saved for good works.

**Titus 3:5** *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

**Titus 3:8** *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*

**Matthew 5:16** *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* Good works are the evidence of salvation, not the cause of it.

The text says that God has before ordained (planned ahead of time) that believers should “walk” in good works. Good works are normal for a Christian. Just as it is normal for an unsaved person to walk like the world (vs. 2), a believer has a new walk with Christ in which he does good works. Our Christian walk involves a starting point, a destination, and a journey. A walk implies motion, progress, and consistency. Our walk should match our talk.

Charles Spurgeon: “May we so seek God, that when we come to die we may feel that we have lived for something; that although our hope has rested alone in what Jesus did, yet we have not made that an excuse for doing nothing ourselves. Though we should have no good works in which to glory, yet may we bring forth fruit that shall be for the glory of our Lord.”

There is a landmark sign over State Street in downtown. It says Bristol is a good place to live. The fact is that many people need a new life that only comes from Christ in salvation.

### ***“The Gospel According to You”***

*The most beautiful story was given to all,  
Written down many long years ago  
By Matthew and Mark, by Luke and by John,  
Of Christ and His mission below.*

*And you write a gospel, a chapter a day,  
By your deeds, whether faithless or true;  
So as others read it, what do they think  
Of the Gospel according to you?*

*It's a wonderful story, the Gospel of love,  
As it shines with the Christ light divine.  
Oh, that its truth might be told once again  
In the story of your life and mine.*

*You are writing each moment a letter to all,  
Take care that the writing is true.  
It's the only Gospel some people may read—  
The Gospel according to you.*