



Ephesians Chapter 2 verses 1 –10

Background Detail :-

One of the issues that Paul is dealing with in this letter is two main corruption's of the Gospel that he is expounding. **The first** is that the Jewish teachers are wanting to say that there is a righteous in the law and that obedience to the Jewish law and religious duty are the prerequisites for anyone who wishes to be right with God. Salvation is not down to some magical substance called grace, but is down to works of obedience, to the law. **The second** corruption of the Gospel of Grace came from within the church itself and is linked with the development of Gnosticism within the church. There was a group in the early church, influenced by Greek Philosophy, who believed that once the spirit of a person was saved, the body was an irrelevance and therefore could be ignored, or its lusts indulged without there being an affect on salvation. Alongside of this, some of this group also taught that Christians could indulge their sinful lusts and appetites, because such lapses only give the grace of God more room to display its glory.

Discuss – What spiritual state do you think people are in before they become a Christian?

What do you think are the consequences to them being in this state, both now and in eternity?

Do you think most Christians would admit that this was the state, they were in before they were saved?

Read – Ephesians 2 v 1– 3

In Paul's understanding of humanity we see that there is a fundamental link between sin and death. Many times in his letters he declares that sin and death are two sides of the same coin. This coin is the life of the lost. In verse 1 we see how he declares that people live in a state of spiritual death because of the sins and trespasses they commit. This is His understanding of those who have not responded to Jesus. He sees them as the walking dead, who are lost to God and enslaved to sin and death.

Paul's view of the state of the Lost

Point 1 – Under Spiritual powers of evil. (verse 2)

Human life is seen as under the malicious influence of spiritual powers / elementary Spirits. These spirits corrupt morality, set up a sinful heart to society (structural sin) and blind people to the Good News that is found in Christ. **The prince of the power of the air** is a title that is given to Satan, who is described as the ruler of demonic agents. **The Spirit now at work** – refers to the evil effects in a human being / and society, of alienation from God and the hardness to the gospel that results. People follow the pattern of Satan in that as he was proud and disobeyed God so we also are proud and disobey God.

Point 2 – Dominated by lusts and sins from within (verse 3)

For Paul, even though we may not manifest some of the more obvious evils of the flesh, we are still enslaved to sinful desires and lusts that influence our behavior and attitudes. Paul sees the person without Christ, as someone who is very much dominated by these internal lusts and desires.

Point 3 – Under God's Wrath (3)

At the end of this verse we see how Paul sees the reality of being lost as a condition that human beings are born into. It is the natural condition of fallen humanity that we are in the above condition and therefore as a result under the judicial condemnation of God.

Discuss – How does it make you feel, that even the so called good people around you are in this spiritual condition?

What do you think our response should be in relation to the different bondage that the lost find themselves in?

Read – verses 4 – 6

In this chapter which is very much about the before and after reality of the human condition we see that the key pivotal verse is verse 4. Here we see that God's mercy and love does not leave mankind to perish without the hope of restoration, but takes it upon Himself to instigate a plan of salvation. Through the giving of His Son at Calvary and the power of the resurrection we have been included into Christ and share a common inheritance with Him. Through personal faith in Christ our condition becomes that of the redeemed.

Discuss – How does it make you feel to know that even though God was the offended one, He is the one who took the initiative, and gave His Son for our salvation?

What does this tell us about God and His desire to save the lost.

In light of God's desire, what do you think our response should be in reaching out to the lost?

Read – verses 7 – 10

In this final section Paul brings correction to both of the arguments that we looked at, at the start of the session in regard to the corruption of the gospel. He makes it clear that both the mechanism of salvation, His Son, and the process of salvation, being Born Again, are in fact down to the processes of God. The entire process rests in the hands of God and cannot be added to by man. No person is allowed to contribute to their own salvation – so that no-one can boast. He highlights for us the complete inability of man to help or save himself. It is simply by grace alone and by faith alone that a man is saved. This corrects the confused teaching of the Jews. However he goes on to say that we are His workmanship (*Poiema*) This means made by Him, His product, His design, made that way so that we can produce good works to glorify Him. A genuine sign of God's saving work within us is a growth in the Spirit's work, taking us on the journey of sanctification. Therefore as a person who has been designed by God, molded by His Spirit, we will not submit our bodies to the sins and corruption of the old life. Righteous, and moral living is a genuine hallmark of a real conversion experience.

Discuss – In light of the teaching found here do you think a person can remain the same once they have come to Christ?