

We Are God's Good Work

February 11, 2007

Eph 2:1-10

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Synopsis:

If someone gave me the choice between life and death, I think I would choose life. As insane as it may sound, the Bible says that we, despite the desire for life, choose death and are now stuck with that choice. If this is the case, and you'll have to be the judge, how do we get unstuck and move back to life? The Bible's answer is through faith, trusting that God has acted for us in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I.

DEAD

Eph 2:1 "You were dead through the trespasses and sins"

Learn a bit about Ephesus before reading the text:

- 4th largest city in Empire (Rome, Alexandria, Corinth)
- Port city
- Artemis Shrine: one of 7 wonders of world
- Known for magic and cultic practices
- Paul there for 2 years
- Gentiles and Jews (see both in letter, 2:14)
- Letter? a circuit letter

Diagnosis of Human Predicament = vv 1-3

What's wrong with the world? Everyone has an answer here
e.g. Doctor diagnoses before treating

Strange terms: Look at vv 1-3 to describe the predicament

- “trespasses” = “fall aside”
e.g. get off-track
- “sins” = “miss the mark”
e.g. go after wrong thing

* No matter how you calculate, we are not *where* we want to be and not *what* we want to be

- “course of this world” = spirit of the age, what's happening now

- “ruler of power of the air”
“spirit at work” e.g. Zeitgeist
= power greater than my fall,
miss mark
 e.g. institutional power,
 sub-personal power at
work on earth
- “disobedient” = we make choices, not victims
- “once lived” vv 2, 3 = choices make lifestyles; life is
a path determined step by step
- “desires of flesh, senses” = not body, but body opposed to
what is best (God); go after the
wrong thing, we become
sub-personal, less (low-life)
 e.g. screwdriver used to open
 cans, bent
- “children of wrath” = find difficulty, pain when
we go against our purpose;
not natural to sin *by nature*
 e.g. Parents: temperature of
 God’s love

*Thus 2 powers: within me and without me = we make choices, choices make us, and we become sub-personal, less than we are created to be

Result of the human predicament = DEAD
It happens before you die

READ: *The Hollow Men* by T.S. Eliot
Or *Babel* (current movie out)

Does Eliot/Babel describe your life?

II.

ALIVE

Eph 2:4-5 “But God . . . made us alive together with Christ”

Diagnosis is DEAD

Cure is LIFE

Strange terms again: Look at vv 4-7 to describe the cure

-“rich in mercy” v 4 = kindness for someone in need;
same word as OT *hesed* =
love in action
e.g. freeway pull-over to help a
blow out

-“great love, loved us” v 4 = took action in kindness for us

-“grace” vv 5, 7 = favor towards us

-Notice *together* words vv 5-7

alive *together* v 5

raised, seated *with* him vv 6

in Christ vv 5, 6, 7, 10

= something happens
together/with/in Jesus

-“heavenly places” = not up there, but where God is
in mercy, love, grace; versus
earth = where we are; in Bible,
heaven and earth overlap; in
death and resurrection of Jesus

*Conclusion of human cure = God has done something for us in Jesus Christ
to give us LIFE

It also happens before you die

READ: Amazing Grace first stanza

Is a gracious life what you want?

III.

How to Get from DEAD to ALIVE

Eph 2:8 “For by grace you have been saved through faith”

Biblical analysis of human predicament:

Diagnosis is DEAD (we did it)
Cure is LIFE (God did it)

What then is the treatment? What's the prognosis?

Strange terms again: Look at vv 8-10

-“saved” v 8 = pulled *from* death to life, not
pulled *out* of life (another world);
notice perfect passive (already
done); result = we become
something rather than go
somewhere

-“faith” vv 5, 8 = faithfulness of God *and*
our response, but both are gifts
e.g. Offered help, we accept

-“Christ” vv 5, 7, 10 = Messiah, anointed, God in
person come to do something
about the human predicament;
e.g. Person shows up on
freeway

-“what he has made us” v 10 = word is *poema* = artwork is
the goal of saved v 8
e.g. you're a masterpiece

-“our way of life” = reversal of death lifestyle

Human predicament = DEAD from falling away/missing mark
Human cure = ALIVE thru death/resurrection of Jesus
Human treatment = TRUST in God acting in Jesus

Conclusion:

DEATH and LIFE overlap in this world through Jesus Christ

Do you want to move from death to life? TRUST Jesus