

# PM Ephesians 1:1-2:10 Are you alive?

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Preacher: Rev Thomson McKenzie

[ 0 : 00 ] Passage this morning, Ephesians chapter 1 verse 1 to chapter 2 verse 10. So Ephesians chapter 1 verse 1 to chapter 2 verse 10.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Even as he chose us in him before the foundations of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love.

He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us.

[ 1 : 27 ] In all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things, according to the counsel of his will.

So that we who were the first to hope in Christ, might be to praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is a guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and your love towards all the saints, I do not cease to give you thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you.

What are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints? And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of his great might, that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come, and to put all things under his feet, and gave him as head of all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

[ 3 : 37 ] And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved, and raised up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the measurable riches of his grace, and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Thanks be to God for the reading of his holy name, and to

his name be the praise and the glory forever.

[ 5 : 12 ] Amen. So this morning we looked at the first part of the reading, we looked at chapter 1, verses 3 to 14, and we've seen the working of God the Father, how he has predestined us, how he has decided on our adoption, through the work of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We've seen how Christ died for us, and how through him we have so many blessings. Blessings of a new life, and a life for all eternity.

We've seen how, as a triune God, also the Holy Spirit assures us of that salvation. And this evening, we want to go on to look at more about us, and our positions in life.

So, what we want to start with is a question. What is your biggest problem? What is your biggest problem in life?

Now, no doubt, many people will give different answers, depending on their life experiences, and their circumstances. Some will say it's poverty. Some will say that it's discrimination, because you're poor, because you're male, or because you're female.

[ 6 : 40 ] Some will say that it's to do with inequalities elsewhere. But, Paul does not dismiss any of those actual reasons, or the idea of any of those being difficulties in life.

But, he hits straight to the heart of the problem. Those are the symptoms. So, if you go to the doctor, the doctor looks at the things he sees before him.

And he uses that to look into what the real cause is. And those examples that I've gave you are but symptoms of the real problems of this world.

Paul, in verse 1, states quite clearly in chapter 2 what the problem is. You were dead in the trespasses and sins which you once walked in.

Our life, our choices, our heart are the problem. Because they are dead. They are dead in sin.

Tonight, we'll see that we are dead in sin.

[ 7 : 55 ] But, God has a solution. God offers us salvation and a new life through his son. And the purpose of our salvation is to give glory to God.

It's something that we cannot earn. It's something that God gives us as a gift. And it's something for which we should praise and honour his name. Verses 1 to 3 show humanity's hopelessness and helplessness.

that it's in a helpless state. Paul is clear in verse 1. You are dead in your trespasses and sins. You can do nothing for yourself.

Many may say, but I'm not dead. I'm very much alive. People say, I'm breathing. I'm moving about. I'm alive.

I am not dead. Yeah, you're physically alive. But you're spiritually dead. You're distant from God.

[ 9 : 02 ] Your life, instead of being an eternity with God and glory, is going to be limited to a time on earth. And then you will have a penalty to pay.

Verse 2 and 3 highlight that you and I are like the rest of humanity. We are focused on ourselves and our own desires, not upon God and what he desires of us.

It's in our nature to rebel against God and to rebel against his teachings. Verse 2 and 3 read, In which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

here we see that we walked in Satan's way. We were led by him and we were happy to follow. We were the same as anyone else in society.

We were the sons of disobedience. We did everything against what God desired. And verse 3 reads on, Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of our body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

[ 10 : 29 ] So we lived for ourselves, for what our hearts wanted, not what God wanted, not what our creator desired. We lived for ourselves, and as such, we deserve judgment, the same as the rest of society.

We deserved God's wrath because we went against his law. And yet, in his grace and mercy, he gives us a saviour and our Lord Jesus Christ.

But we have to respond to him. Paul recounts here how even he, the great Pharisee, who tried to ensure that he kept the law, was equally as guilty as anyone else, and that his salvation only comes through Jesus Christ.

Paul shows that he sees himself as a child of wrath in his old ways, living for himself and promoting his own goals. In Galatians, he talks about how great he was doing, how he was advancing greatly

beyond many of his age.

He was going his own way, but then he came to realise the importance of Christ in his life, and how he was not in control of his lives, rather sin was in control of his life.

[12:03] In Romans 7, 15 to 20, he writes, for I do not understand my own actions, for I do not do what I want to, but I do the very thing I hate.

Now, if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but the sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my flesh. For I have desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

Now, if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So Paul here in Romans sees that he is not in control of his life.

That the sin and depravity of his life is what controls his actions. His own self desires control his actions. As part of humanity, we were created to be in communion with God, to be able to walk alongside God.

[13:24] And yet, our nature now is such that we are distant from him. If God was to go right, we would go left. Simply because of our own desires.

In Genesis, we read how Adam walked with God. How he was in communion with God. But how also he decided to rebel.

He decided to go his own way and fell from his created state of a union with God. God. Now, as part of humanity, we have that same nature.

We wish to desire to flee from him. We wish to see God rejected from our lives and reject his scriptures, the blueprint for our lives and for the raising of our families.

This is our natural fallen state. And it sounds really negative. And it is negative. However, verse 4 turns it up on its head.

[14:32] Verse 4 starts with two small words. But God. Not anything to do with us.

But God. God changes things entirely. Dead men can do nothing for themselves.

If we are dead in our sins, we can't do anything about it. I remember coming back down from Lewis and having a chat with Ken MacLeod at Downvale.

And it had been about a situation I'd had when speaking to someone in Lewis. And the person wasn't in faith but was talking about how God answered their prayers.

And I was a bit confused about if you're not in faith, if you don't believe in God, how can you say that God answers your prayers? And Kenny said a brilliant phrase, dead men can't pray.

[15:39] If you're dead in your sins, then you don't have God in your heart. heart. If you don't know Christ, you don't have God in your heart.

So you may pray something and it may be the same as what God has already decided is going to take place. But it's not God answering your prayers.

Dead men can do nothing for themselves. But in sections 4 to 8, we see how things are turned around by God.

But God being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, calls us to himself through Christ.

We have a new life through his son whom he gave for us. Paul tells us that there is an alternative way. We have experienced it in our own lives and it's something that we should share with others.

[16:48] Verse 1 was blunt and to the point. You're dead in your sins. You're dead in your trespasses. However, from the beginning of verse 4, there is hope.

So that hopelessness, that helplessness is now gone. It's put aside. And we now have hope because of God and because of his intervention.

verse 1 describes where you were. And the thing is actually really quite significant because Paul actually writes it in the past tense.

You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked. If it's in the past tense, it's because we have the opportunity of changing our ways.

we have the opportunity to accept Christ as our Saviour. The gift that was given to us by God our Heavenly Father. We were dead in our sins but no longer because God being rich in his mercy has gave us a Saviour.

[17:59] Verse 4 and 5. But God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved. By God's grace, by God's mercy we are saved. Not by our actions, not by our prayers or piety, not by our good works.

Two small but immense words but God changes things. He offers us a beacon of light hope when around us is despair.

Christ's incarnation was not something that had anything to do with man. It was purely an act of God. God had decreed it from before the beginning of time that he would send his Son as our Saviour.

That he would bring one who would crush Satan and free us from the grasp of sin. by God's grace our lives were turned around. Not by our merits, not by our efforts but because God's great love for us is unchanging.

[ 19 : 18 ] It was the same before he founded the world, it's the same today and it will be the same for all eternity. It's love that is unchanging. Now God has made you alive.

Think about it, you were dead and you're now alive. What a turnaround. God has intervened as only he could. When you really needed him, when you were dead, he brought you back to life through the gift of his Son.

God makes us alive together with Christ. By grace we are saved. Salvation is through Christ alone. God gave his Son as a sacrifice for your sin and for mine.

Your old life is put to death and we are renewed in Christ. If you think of Galatians 2.20 when Paul is writing to the Galatians he says I have been crucified with Christ.

It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh. I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

[ 20 : 38 ] So just as Paul if we have accepted Christ as our Saviour our old life has been crucified. It has been put to death with Christ on the cross.

And we now have a new life. A life that has lived in us through Christ. A life where he is at the centre of our lives not our desires and our selfish wants.

God claims us for his own. And as he claims us for his own we also share the blessings of Christ. We are resurrected with Christ to a new life.

We share the same blessings. We are raised up with Christ and we are set with him above the heavens. What a turnaround in our lives from being hopeless and helpless and facing death to now being with God for all eternity because we've accepted Christ as our Saviour.

An offer that Christ that God made at the beginning of time and an offer he still makes to man today when he decides to accept his son as his Saviour.

[ 22 : 00 ] What the believers experiences now is but a glimmer of the privileges that will be in store. The blessings that we have now in God are but a shadow of what we will experience when Christ returns.

In 1 Corinthians 13 12 Paul writes again for now we see in a mirror dimly but then face to face now I know in part then I shall know fully even as I have been fully knowing.

So at the moment we see things dimly. We know of our salvation if we have accepted Christ as our Lord. Lord. But when Christ returns in glory we will see the fullness of our blessings in God.

We will be with him forever more for all eternity. Now we experience it partly we have the reassurance through the Holy Spirit in our lives then we will experience it in all its glory.

We will see clearly and we will know all. And verse 8 reminds us once more for by the grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your doing it is a gift of God.

[ 23 : 33 ] Gift of God. A gift that is something that is given freely. Something that is given without condition. So Christ was not given to us because of our good works.

because of our piety and prayers. He was given as a gift. Something which we had no control over. Something that came from God's love and God's grace towards us.

And the final verses show our good works are nothing for us to boast in. yes even the non-believer does good works.

But the non-believer normally is looking for something back. There are many great people who do great works but they are looking for prestige.

They are looking for praise. They are looking for their own rewards. the Christian does good works not to earn salvation but because of his faith in God.

[ 24 : 42 ] Because of his faith in Christ. So that he reflects Christ back to the world. The Spirit brings a change to our hearts. That we don't do things for our good and for our reward.

We do it to bring glory to God. That people see in our actions God's love reflected back to them. What he has done for us we do for others so that they can see something of God in action. That he's not just words in the book. He's not just some character in history but he's a living God who's alive through us and through him through us he can witness to them. For the believer it is for the glory of God. It's for his honour not for Owen. James writes in his epistle in chapter 2, 17 that our faith without works is dead. The two have to go hand in hand. So just as we are not saved by our works so also faith without works doesn't really exist. [ 25 : 58 ] Christ. I'll give an example. If there is no change of heart has anyone really come to Christ?

If someone continues to lead their lives unchanged, unaltered, have they come to Christ? For example, let's just say we have a man called in Glasgow, we'll call him Jimmy, who says that he has come to Christ.

He makes a statement he has come to Christ. He reads scriptures and he has without doubt a head knowledge of God. But if he continues in his old life, if he continues to pursue the things of this earth and shows no fruits of the spirit, can we say that he's truly saved?

Well, that's perhaps a question that we can't answer directly about a particular person, but God can. Because God knows our hearts. We see the outward person, but God knows the heart.

He knows if we've changed or whether we haven't. But if we've accepted Christ as our saviour, if we are being led by the Holy Spirit, then there should be a change in our lives.

[ 27 : 28 ] Not so that we look good in the eyes of others, but so we can witness God's love in action. So that we see Christ living through us.

The final point to take us back to the idea this morning of adoption. adoption is to become part of a family. And that is one of the blessings which we have as believers in Christ.

We are adopted into his family. We looked at it this morning. But it's also important here that as we are adopted into Christ's family, we have a new life.

We are no longer dead. We are now alive. Our old life is beyond us, it is in the past and we have a new life. And similarly we should show the characters of that family.

The characteristics of that family should be reflected in us. Now I don't mean our physical characteristics, whether they're black hair, brown eyes, or six foot, or five foot.

[ 28 : 40 ] But rather the ways of that family should be reflected in the adopted offspring. They should start to reflect the teachings and the values that they see in that family.

And if we are adopted into God's family, so again it should be reflected in our lives. It's something that should come alive within us.

So people see Christ through us. We are now in the family of God, but do we reflect Christ to the world around us?

Do we reflect the joy of salvation? Or are we like that, I am jolly, and looking depressed and sad, and got more to worry about than the rest of the world put together?

We should have joy in our hearts, because we have salvation, and we're something we should be happy to share with the world. The final part, as I was saying about the bit of adoption, came to us this afternoon, I was having lunch with Norman and Sheila, and Norman and I were just briefly talking about his garden.

[ 29 : 57 ] And I remember how he had moved to the house and he planted out trees, and it made me think about being adopted, about being grafted into a family.

And if we think about grafting fruit trees, you take sort of a branch to be grafted onto the rootstock. It's not the new branch that is grafted in that influences the character of the tree.

It doesn't influence the rootstock. it's a rootstock that influences the new branch that you have grafted in. So if you put it into a small rootstock, you can take that branch from the biggest of trees, it will be a small tree.

And if you take it from the smallest of trees and put it into a large rootstock and graft it in, you will have a great tree. So it is with God.

We have been adopted, we have been grafted into Him through Jesus Christ. And as we are grafted into Him, so it's Him who influences our lives, not us who influence God.

[ 31 : 20 ] Too often in society today, we see the desire to move God's teachings to reflect what man desires. God's love for man becomes a byword for man living the way that he feels free, rather

than God's word.

The root in which we should base ourselves being the thing that directs our lives. So we see here that we have been dead in our old lives.

We are dead. But God has offered us a new life through Christ. A life that is for all eternity when we accept Christ as our Saviour.

And the purpose we have is to praise His name, to reflect His glory to the world, God. And to proclaim the good news that we have experienced to all whom we meet.

For those who have yet to know Christ as their Saviour, that offer is still open to them today. It's something that God has not withdrawn.

[ 32 : 40 ] It's not something that was for 2000 years ago. It's not something that was for last week. It's something that's still available tonight. If you do not know Christ, you are dead in your life at present.

But God gives you the opportunity of life through His Son. And to come to Him and to give Him praise and glory for all life, for all eternity.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, we thank you that our lives are transformed through your grace or by your grace and through faith in your Son.

Our lives are transformed by the aid that you have gave us, by the helper that you have gave us in the Holy Spirit who leads our lives and who teaches us each day to become more Christ-like.

we pray Lord for our world that still does not know you, that you by your grace will open folks ears, that they will hear your word and that they will see through their blind eyes your work in action.

[ 34 : 10 ] We pray Lord that your Spirit will move across the world, it will move hearts and bring people to you. These things we ask through Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior.

Amen. Thank you. Amen. . .

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