

September 24 - Ephesians 2:1-10

Opening

What is one low (negative thing) that happened to you this past week? What is one high (positive thing)? Write them down. If you're meeting with a group, take turns sharing them with one another.

Where have you seen the Holy Spirit at work in your life over the past week?

Name an example of God's grace and kindness that you have seen or heard about.

Prepare

Spend 1 minute in silence to center yourself and prepare to hear God's Word.

Read

Read Ephesians 2:1-10 twice. If you are in a group, have two people read it, one after the other, with a brief silence in between. As you read and/or listen, look for a word or a phrase that catches your eye or moves your heart. Circle it or jot it down. Linger over it and give it your attention. If you are in a group, take turns sharing your word or phrase and what it means to you.

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil-- the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Reflect

How have you experienced being once dead (line 1) and now created anew (line 13)?

What does it mean to you that you are united with Christ Jesus? How do you nurture this relationship?

What are some of the “good things” (NRSV: good works) that God planned for you to do long ago?

Pray

Spend time in prayer for yourself and others. If you are meeting in a group, share prayer requests and pray for one another.

Practice

Even though we were dead...God gave us life.

Each day this week, set aside time to receive God’s gift of life. Here are some ideas to try:

Sit outside for 15 minutes with no agenda except to enjoy God’s creation.

At the end of each day, write down three things you are grateful for.

Do a decade-by-decade review of your life. Notice the things you have done or that have happened to you that were life-giving and life-enhancing.

Spend one minute paying attention to your breath and the next minute paying attention to your heartbeat. Wonder at how your body was created to do these life-giving actions on its own without your conscious thought.

Closing blessing

You are God’s masterpiece, created anew in Christ Jesus!