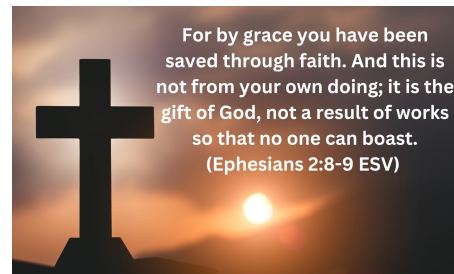


THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

“We Are His Workmanship”

Date: 7-28-24 Lesson: 12

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THE TEXT - (Ephesians 2:8-22)

- (8) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; **it is the gift of God,**
(9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
(10) For we are his workmanship, created in **Christ Jesus** for good works,
which **God** prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

(Dt 9:5; 32:6; Ps 100:3; Is 29:23; 43:7 60:21; Lk 7:50; Jn 4:10; Rom 1:17; 3:19-31; 4:2,16; 9:30;
1 Cor 1:29; 2 Cor 3:5; 5:17; Gal 2:16; Php 1:6; Col 1:10; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 2:14; 3:5;
Heb 6:4; 13:21; 1 Pet 1:5)

- (11) Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called
the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—
(12) remember that you were at that time separated from **Christ**, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and
strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without **God in the world.**

(Is 14:1; 65:1; Rom 2:28,29; 9:4; 1 Cor 8:5,6; 12:2; Gal 3:15-17; 4:8; 6:15;
Col 1:21; 2:11; 3:17; 1 Thess 4:13)

- (13) But now in **Christ Jesus** you who once were far off have been brought near **by the blood of Christ.**
(14) **For he himself is our peace,**
who has made us both one and has broken down **in his flesh** the dividing wall of hostility
(15) by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances,
that **he might create in himself** one new man in place of the two, so making peace,
(16) and might reconcile us both **to God** in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.
(17) And **he came and preached peace** to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.
(18) **For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.**

(Ps 72:7; 148:14; Is 9:6; 57:19; Mic 5:5; Zech 9:10; Mt 5:17; 27:51; Lk 2:14;
Jn 4:21-24; 10:7; 14:6,27; 20:19-21;
Ac 10:36; Rom 3:3,31; 5:2,12-21; 6:4; 7:4-6; 8:1,2; 1 Cor 12:13; 15:21,22; 2 Cor 5:17-20;
Gal 3:28; Col 1:12, 20-22; 2:14; 3:11; Heb 6:19)

- (19) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,
but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of **the household of God,**
(20) built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
(21) in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into **a holy temple in the Lord.**
(22) In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

(Ps 11:22; Is 28:16; Mt 16:18; Jn 2:19; Ac 4:11; Rom 15:20; 1 Cor 3:7-17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16;
Gal 6:10; Php 3:20; Col 2:19; 1 Tim 3:5;
Heb 11:13; 12:22,23; 13:14; 1 Pet 2:4-10; Rev 21:14)

STUDY HELPS

NOTES: We Obtain Forgiveness of Sins through Faith Alone in Christ. The Bible teaches that mankind stands entirely damned before **God**. He demands that we be righteous and holy in **His sight**, without exception. Certainly we are able to perform works that are considered worthy in the eyes of the world (Ap IV 23), but these are insufficient for **God's requirements** and cannot atone for our sins. There is nothing within us that merits His grace and mercy. As sinners, how can we stand before **a holy, righteous, and just God?** We can, but only **by His grace**. **God** restores us to a right relationship with **Himself through Christ Jesus**. By grace, **God** justifies us through faith in **His Son**.

The biblical definition of grace is **God's unmerited favor in Christ**, His love active in the salvation brought about by **Christ** (Titus 2: 11). Saving, or justifying, grace is the undeserved **kindness that God** gives sinful people because of what **Christ** has done (John 3: 16; Titus 3: 4–5). Grace stands in stark contrast to the works that human beings do. The Bible clearly teaches that since our salvation is purely by grace, all human works are entirely excluded from justification (Romans 11: 6; **Ephesians 2: 8–9**). This biblical definition of grace is important. If we relied on ourselves for justification **before God**, one of three things would happen: we could despair of our efforts to earn **God's favor**, we could become self-righteous hypocrites, or we could completely reject **our Savior**.

In the Roman Church, both then and now, “grace” is more of a quality or power that **God** infuses into man's natural goodness, allowing him to reach a point where he pleases **God**. The Catechism of the Catholic Church carefully states that man is involved in the process of his own justification. Through grace, **God** begins the process, but it is up to man to complete his justification before **God**. Man's good works, begun by **God's grace**, merit for him a right relationship with **God**. True, it is claimed that these merits are ultimately derived from the operation of **the Holy Spirit**. But in the end, man contributes to his own justification. This is a dangerous mixture of grace and works. In this system, how can we be sure of a right standing with **God?** How can we know if we are justified?

ARTICLE IV (II) Justification - Apology of the Augsburg Confession

[75] We think even the adversaries acknowledge that the forgiveness of sins is necessary first in justification. We are all under sin. Therefore, we reason as follows: [76] To receive the forgiveness of sins is to be justified, according to Psalm 32: 1, “Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven.” [77] By faith alone in **Christ**— not through love, not because of love or works— we receive the forgiveness of sins, although love follows faith.

[78] Therefore, by faith alone we are justified. We understand justification as the making of a righteous person out of an unrighteous one, or that a person is regenerated. [79] It will become easy to state the minor premise <that we receive forgiveness of sin by faith, not by love> if we know how forgiveness of sins happens. With great indifference the adversaries dispute whether forgiveness of sins and infusion of grace are the same change. Being useless men, they did not know how to answer this question. In the forgiveness of sins, the terrors of sin and of eternal death must be overcome in the heart. Paul testifies about this in 1 Corinthians 15: 56– 57, “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks **be to God**, who gives us the victory through **our Lord Jesus Christ**.” In other words, sin terrifies consciences. This happens through **the Law**, which **shows God's wrath** against sin. But we gain **the victory through Christ**. How? Through faith, when we comfort ourselves by confidence in the mercy promised for **Christ's sake**.

[80] Therefore, we prove the minor premise. **God's wrath** cannot be appeased if we set our own works against it. For **Christ** has been set forth as **an Atoning Sacrifice** so, that for His sake, **the Father** may be reconciled to us. But **Christ** is not received as a **Mediator** except by faith. Therefore, by faith alone we receive forgiveness of sins when we comfort our hearts with confidence in the mercy promised **for Christ's sake**. Likewise, Paul says in Romans 5: 2, “**Through Him** we have also obtained access” and adds, “by faith.” Therefore, we are reconciled to **the Father** and receive forgiveness of sins when we are comforted with confidence in the mercy promised **for Christ's sake**.

[81] The adversaries regard **Christ as Mediator and Atoning Sacrifice** for this reason: He has merited the habit of love. They do not encourage us to use Him now **as Mediator**. They act as though **Christ** were certainly in the grave. They imagine that we have **access to God** through our own works. They think they merit this habit through these, and afterward, by this love, come **to God**. Is this not to bury **Christ** altogether and to take away the entire teaching of faith? Paul, on the contrary, teaches that we have access to **God (that is, reconciliation) through Christ**. To show how this happens, he adds that we have access by faith. By faith, for **Christ's sake**, we receive forgiveness of sins. We cannot set up our own love and our own works against **God's wrath**.