

# The Book of Ephesians

## Week 5: Salvation by Grace through Faith (2:1-10)

### Overview

Just as the creation of the world was done completely by God and just as the creation of our bodies is done completely by God, without any act of our wills, so too is our new birth completely the work of God. Ephesians 2 lays out our recreation from having been spiritually dead in sins to being made alive by God in Christ. The deadness of our spiritual state is the result of Original Sin, Adam's disobedience in Eden, and is our natural inheritance by virtue of our being his descendents. This corruption of our nature disables us from keeping the first commandment and everything else thereafter. Therefore, it is necessary for God to make us alive; it is impossible for him to "coax" us or any other such notion which gives us any part to play that isn't passive.

### Dead in Trespasses and Sins (2:1-3)

What can a dead man do? Absolutely nothing. Paul's stark description of our fallen state is the necessary precursor to explain and appreciate what is done for us in Christ.

What sin and its effects are:

*"Sin does not merely terminate in death but is death in essence, because sin is estranged from the life in God, and therefore, even disregarding wickedness, cannot create anything that is abiding."* Koehler, 276

On the "passions of our flesh":

*"In Paul's vocabulary [flesh] and [spirit] are opposites, the former represents sin and death, the latter, spiritual energy and life."* Koehler, 277

The grave state of natural man, apart from being regenerate by the Holy Spirit:

*"The thinking powers, intended as a guiding light for acquiring knowledge, have been darkened. The heart, which is really the innermost or deepest fountain of the mind, has gone dry and has ceased to function, resulting in ignorance, the inability to comprehend. And though reason, thinking, still retains its outward form, it loses its real and essential function which it was divinely intended to have in communion with the life that is of God, the only life that is life indeed."*  
Koehler, 278

What do "children of wrath" look like?

*"[W]ithout difficulty a Christian should be able to comprehend why Paul speaks of the Gentiles and other unbelievers as being dead in trespasses and sins. It is this, that believing and trusting have ceased; hoping, focused on the blessed resurrection, functions no longer. Then it is only natural that love, as the*

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*dominant attitude of the heart, is lost, particularly the love for God. Hence nothing remains but a sense for things altogether vain, transient, foolish, with the result of ruthlessness...the condition of being past feeling, stupidity, lifelessness, a state of mere vegetating.” Koehler, 278*

### **God made us alive in Christ (2:4-10)**

Man is born dead and sin, separated from God and rightly deserving His wrath, displeasure, and separation from His goodness. But He is “rich in mercy” (2:4) and in His love did not leave us to die eternally by sending His Son to be our substitute.

To appreciate the depths of God’s love, one must ponder the depths of our depravity:

*“The exceeding greatness of his grace becomes apparent when the love of God is contrasted with the wrath that was our due, which love is then emphasized by this that God loved us while we were yet sinners when he gave up Christ to die (Ro 5:8). Such love is grace, and grace is the highest order of love bestowed.”*  
Koehler, 282

What does it mean that we are created for good works?

*“Thus justification and sanctification are always inseparable, both in respect to the working of the Holy Spirit as also to the actual life of the Christian. And that keeps intellectual distinction between justification and sanctification inviolate. Justification is always complete. God either forgives all sins or none at all. Sanctification ever remains incomplete, so far as we Christians are concerned. Sanctification is a matter of growth.”* Koehler, 288