



IN CHRIST (EPH 1-2) - EASTER

(from 4/16/17 sermon - Spencer Teal)

I. **OPEN** - See if anyone wants to share a short testimony, or if there are specific praise updates to begin CG.

II. **PRAY**

III. **READ ALOUD Ephesians 2:4 -6**

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² 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— ³ 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. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 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.

Q - Sermon takeaways from those who were in attendance?

IV. **REFLECT**

As we reflected upon the death and resurrection of Christ we were reminded that things which are empty...a cup, a plate, and empty nest at home...are usually seen as a negative, but no so with the empty tomb. It is because of the empty tomb that we have hope, and it is because of Christ's death that we have life. We were also reminded that almost all good things have an ending to them, whether that be with a sports dynasty, a season of good health, a season of peace, or just life itself. But in Christ we see that 2,000 + years after He lived, died, and rose from the dead the growth of Christianity continues to grow and grow.

Tonight we are going to take our time and slowly walk through Eph 2:4-6. Have members of the group take 4 minutes to slowly read through these verses on her own, marking their papers up (handouts) as the Holy Spirit illuminates the passage. Pause, pray, and then take an additional 4 minutes to do the same...marking things that you maybe didn't see in your first reading. Lastly, after praying, have everyone take 3 minutes to meditate on and read through the passage one final time, but after the last reading answer the questions: **Q1)** What is this passage saying to me personally and **Q2)** what is this passage asking of me? **Afterward, discuss findings together or in small groups.**

The exercise above could take the majority of the discussion time. If time permits, continue on with the last two exercises.

As your group members slowly walk through vs 4-6, be sure to answer these questions:

WHO? (V. 4 describes the WHO as “God”...the God who is “rich in mercy.” “But God...” Amazing. Take time to discuss the mercy of God.)

WHY? (V. 4b says that it was “because of the great love with which He loved us.” It’s important that everyone in the group takes the time to process that critical bit of information...the God of the universe really does love us. It’s because of His love for us that He came. Understanding and accepting the love of God is truly a game-changer.)

WHEN? (The first part of v.5 says that God pursued us “when we were dead in our trespasses.” It’s critical that we don’t move too quickly past that important point. As humans, we always want to contribute in some way to our being accepted by God, through our good works, religious practices, etc. It’s one thing when we feel good about ourselves and see that it is because of us that He receives us. However, we need to take the time to really look back at our hearts, our minds, our actions, all of the ugly stuff that we’d like to forget and realize that it was then...when we were completely “dead in our trespasses” that He pursued us...and that He loved, and loves, us in spite of our sins.)

WHAT? (What exactly did he do? V.5 and following says that a) He made us alive...b) He united us with Christ...c) He saved us...d) He raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly places.)

As a side note, Ephesians 2:1-10 would be a great passage to commit to memory. In doing so, it will be much easier to use it in sharing the Gospel with others. If time permits the final section of time will once again be used to allow community group member to practice sharing the Gospel.

Practice time for sharing the Gospel - In Eph 2:1-9 we clearly see the Gospel...the good news of Christ loving us and coming to save us...presented. We were dead, “But God” sought you out and brought you back to life. Look through this passage and use it as a guide to share the Gospel. Remember, the Gospel only makes sense if we help people to see that they are dead spiritually...separated from God and without any hope on their own. **Q)** How can you use these verses to help someone who is dead to understand the Gospel and to share how He saved you. **Have 2 individuals volunteer to share the gospel using this passage as a guide.** Others are to take notes and to provide feedback afterward.

V. FURTHER APPLICATION -

Prayerfully make a commitment to share the Gospel using this passage with one person this week. Or, if you are not ready for that yet then commit to practicing it on a fellow Christian.

VI. CLOSE - Final thoughts?

VII. LOOKING AHEAD -

April and May are typically busy months for families, students, and even at work. Take the time to understand the prayer needs of your group during this season.

Eph 2:4-6

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