

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

EXPOSED VIII

Pastor Darren Carrington - July 08, 2012



ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. For all Rock Church events, please visit <http://www.sdrock.com/events/>.
2. Let your friends know that they can always live stream the Rock Church Sunday worship experience by visiting <http://www.sdrock.com/live/>.
3. We are currently in the process of rolling out our new Area Leader and Coach leadership team for the Small Group ministry. If you are interested in joining this team, or could use the benefits of having a Small Group Coach, please contact john.darrow@sdrock.com.

MEMORY VERSE

“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.” (Ephesians 2:1-2 ESV)

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Use one or more of the following opening discussion starters)

1. Do you view yourself as “basically good” with areas of sin and evil, or as “basically evil” with areas of good? Explain your answer.

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Sermon Review and Introduction

Sin is a human condition that we can never break on our own. Ever since Genesis 3 human beings have been missing the mark of God’s law and are in desperate need of the perfect sacrifice of God to redeem us from our sin. All throughout the Old Testament we see men and women constantly pursuing this redemptive plan and yet over and over again it wasn’t there. Finally in the New Testament we see that



the fulfillment was finally accomplished in Jesus Christ. This seems like an obvious observation at first, but often we can miss the reality of constantly being reminded of this fundamental truth.

The study this week will take the sermon from Pastor Darren a little bit further. We will examine Ephesians 2:1-10 as the text that was preached on Sunday and expose the sin in our lives, but even greater we will expose the savior we have in Jesus.

1. Examine the context of Ephesians 2 together as a group. A few key things to consider before approaching this lesson:

- Paul acknowledges that those who were reading this letter were “...dead in their trespasses...”
- This is the state of their past, not their current or future. Paul often mentions in his letters the separation between the past and current life:
 - Gal. 1:23; 1 Tim. 1:13; Philm. 11We “once” were walking in this world, but “now” we are not. We are “now” walking in a different way.
- The only way we were saved and brought together as a family of God is through Christ. Paul uses four groups of words to show the origins of God’s saving initiative:
 - Mercy (v. 4)
 - Great love (v. 4)
 - Rich grace (v. 5, 7, and 8)
 - Kindness (v. 7)
- “The whole paragraph emphasizes that he acted on our behalf simply because of his own gracious and merciful character. Our experience of salvation was totally unmerited, since we were dead in our trespasses, subject to the entanglements of the world, the devil, and the flesh, and thus destined for divine judgment.”¹
- V. 7 – The Jews believed in two ages, the current evil age (Gal. 1:4) and the coming righteous age. The new age of righteousness would be inaugurated by the coming of the Messiah in the power of the Spirit.
- “In 1:20 “age” is SINGULAR, here it is PLURAL (cf. 1 Cor. 2:7; Heb. 1:2; 11:3). This implies that (1) there are at least two ages, or (2) the plural is used to accentuate and magnify the coming age—a rabbinical idiom called a “plural of majesty.” This use of the plural in a symbolic sense can be seen in the passages that refer to the past “ages” (cf. Rom. 10:25; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2). Some scholars believe this was simply a metaphor for eternity because of the way the phrase was used in secular Koine Greek and in several places in the NT (cf. Luke 1:33, 55; John 12:34; Rom. 9:5; Gal. 1:5; 1 Tim. 1:17).”²
- V. 8 – Grace is concerned with the position of the believer according to election (Eph. 1:5-6). Grace is the threshold of belonging to God by means of God’s own anticipatory action. Since this threshold is otherwise described as “faith,” grace and faith are thus oriented toward one another:
 - Rom. 4:16, 5:2; Eph. 2:8; 1 Tim. 1:14
- “Grace is a key theme in Ephesians. According to the introductory eulogy (Eph. 1:3–14) God lavished his grace on us in the Beloved (vv. 6–8), particularly by delivering us from judgment on our trespasses. The riches of divine grace are the ultimate cause of our redemption (v.7) and provide the reason for that deliverance. Paul’s receiving the gospel, his calling to minister to the Gentiles, and his ability to fulfill his missionary task from beginning to end were due solely to the grace of God (3:2, 7–8). The significance of this grace is amplified and further explained, not least by a number of contrasts, in the immediate context of 2:7–9. In particular, it is to be noted that although Paul’s readers have experienced the reality of God’s

¹Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 164-65.

²Robert James Dr. Utley, vol. Volume 8, *Paul Bound, the Gospel Unbound: Letters from Prison (Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon, Then Later, Philippians)*, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 1997), 87.



grace in the present, according to v.7 it is his intention to lavish the full abundance of his grace upon believers in the coming age.”³

- Salvation is not by works AT ALL, but only by grace through faith. God created the good works we do in advance for us to do upon our repentance, so it is illogical for us to work toward something God created and sustains in the first place.

2. In regards to sin, what is the difference between the believer and unbeliever?
3. How does someone go from being condemned in his or her sins to experiencing God’s grace? What do we have to do?
4. How important is the grace of God to all who believe? Discuss the implications of this.

Application

1. Often we say to others, “we are all sinners.” Though there is an element of truth in that we still sin, are we to be identified as “sinners?” Explain why or why not.
Consider these passages: Eph. 2:5, 4:18-24; Col. 1:21-22, 2:13
2. If and when we do sin, how are we to respond? Is there something we do to earn back our salvation?
Note: Revisit Eph. 2:9-10 in that we were never saved by works to begin with so it is impossible to reclaim salvation by works. Also look up 1 John 2:1-2 (propitiation means that Jesus suffered the just wrath of God on our behalf on the cross).
3. Because we are saved by grace is it ok for us to continue in sinful patterns? If not, how do we stay free from these patterns?
Read Rom. 6:1-4 together as a group. It appears that Paul leaves no room for a lack of pursuit of holiness. Because we are buried with Jesus, we are resurrected with him, essentially saying we are a new people. It isn’t about “becoming” a new person, it is about “being” a new person that Christ redeemed through the cross. We need to train ourselves to understand our new nature and no longer live, entertain, or think about the old nature.

³Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 168.

