

## STUDY THREE | EPHESIANS 2:1-10

### RESTORED

This passage is written so that we would begin to understand the depths of God's grace and the purposes for which we have been saved. To do this we first need to see that the diagnosis of humanity is far worse than we would ever like to admit. In v1-3, we see a description of our slavery to both ourselves (our flesh) and also to forces outside ourselves (the ways of this world, the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit at work in the disobedient). We also see the reality of life without Christ described not simply as *broken*, *sick* or *weak* but as *dead*. And to be dead is, well, a dead-end. Isn't it?

Worse still, those without Christ are described as being by nature deserving of wrath. This is more than hopeless, it's almost too harrowing to contemplate. And yet of eternal importance, this is *not* where we're left! The grace and goodness of God is far, far greater. In these verses, we're shown much more than a rescue plan. It would be enough 'good news' just to hear of even the slightest relief of the bleak reality described in the verses above (v1-3), but our good God goes so much further! He doesn't just rescue and save us in a short-term, limited sense, he raises us with Christ and seats us alongside him, in royalty! He gives us an incredibly high status and a divine purpose.

The 'heavenly realms' is not a reference to 'heaven' as it has been traditionally understood (in the sense of 'heaven' and 'hell'), rather it is a reference to where Jesus is now, where he is ruling from and where the stuff of eternity is being worked out. Spiritually speaking this is where all of us in Christ are also seated now, not just in the future.

Why is Paul telling us this? This really flows directly out of his prayer and desire expressed in the previous passage, the prayer the '*eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe*' (1v18).

He is telling us this so that with renewed hearts, we can align our horizons and purposes with God's purposes and that we will delight in the fact this glorious salvation is a sure, unearned gift from God for all who trust in Jesus. This means we are now free to serve God, to do 'good works', not to earn salvation, but because of it. The catalyst for our good works comes from the grace of God, not from our desire to prove ourselves. We are not saved by good works, but God saves us for a life of great significance and purpose, a life that transcends the temporary, the here and now, a life that looks beyond ourselves and instead glorifies Jesus.

## A NEW HUMANITY

APRIL 25

EPHESIANS 1:1-14 REDEEMED

MAY 2

EPHESIANS 1:15-23 RESURRECTED

MAY 9

EPHESIANS 2:1-10 RESTORED

MAY 16

EPHESIANS 2:11-22 RECONCILED

MAY 23

EPHESIANS 3:1-13 REVEALED

MAY 30

EPHESIANS 3:14-21 RENEWED

JUNE 6

EPHESIANS 4:1-16 REBUILT

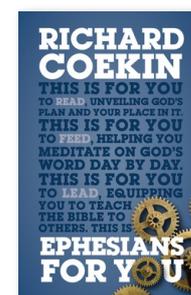
JUNE 13

EPHESIANS 4:17-5:2 REPENTANT

JUNE 20

EPHESIANS 5:3-20 REGENERATE

## RESOURCE



RICHARD COEKIN | EPHESIANS FOR YOU

(GOD'S WORD FOR YOU SERIES)

## GETTING STARTED

1. When you talk about your life, do you tend to tell ‘sob stories’ at the expense of expressing gratitude for the good things in your life, or ‘gloss stories’ at the expense of being real about your imperfections and the other dark parts of your life?

## INTO THE TEXT

### READ VERSES 1-3

2. If Paul wanted to make the point that things outside of Christ are not good, he could have just said that (and saved some precious first century ink!). What specific lessons is he teaching us about the particular reality of life without Christ?
3. Which lessons do you find most difficult to believe? Why do you think this is?
4. Sometimes we tend to take credit for our good decisions, and blame others for our bad ones. How do these verses teach us that our transgressions and sins are both the result of our own choices and also a consequence of the activity of others?

### READ VERSES 4-6

5. God’s *great love* and the richness of his *mercy* are two reasons given that we can experience his salvation. How might things be different if God was loving, but not rich in mercy? How might things be different if God was rich in mercy, but not loving?

## READ VERSES 7-10

6. God has done an incredible work in saving us, read carefully v6-7. According to these verses, what was his purpose in doing this? Is this how you typically view the reason you have been saved?
7. In what ways do we find psychological and spiritual comfort, reassurance and security in carrying out 'good deeds'? Where does this passage direct us to find our comfort, reassurance and security?
8. Is there a place for doing 'good works'? What is it?
9. What do you think is the practical difference between doing good deeds for the purposes of salvation and security, and doing good deeds as a result of our salvation? Do you think there is a difference between the kind of good work we get involved in when we try to earn our salvation, and the kind of good work we get involved in that is a result of our salvation?

## TAKEAWAY [CHOOSE ONE]

10. If you were to paraphrase this passage as a summary of the story of God's work in your life, how would you do it? Take a few moments to jot down some key things you would include and share with your group.
11. How does this passage correct a tendency towards apathy in thinking and talking about the story of God's work in your life? What is one particular conversation you would now like to have with someone else at church as result of today's study?