

Sermon-Based Small Group Bible Study

Union with Christ: True Freedom in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:1–10)

Open

Select one of these “ice breakers” to get the conversation going toward the study.

- How are you different now than you were ten or twenty years ago? What do you think of that difference?
- What is the most famous place you’ve ever visited? Did you feel like you belonged there?
- When you were about ten years old, what was your answer to the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” What is your answer now? What has shaped your answers?

Dig

After reading Ephesians 2:1–10 together, discuss these questions.

1. Look at the description of life without Christ in verses 1–3. Pastor Bryan noted how these verses diagnose the human condition as caused by following the world (socialization), following Satan (the demonic), and following our passions (idols of the heart). Which parts of that diagnosis are especially insightful or helpful for you?
2. Notice “you” in verse 1, “we” in verse 2, and “like the rest of mankind” in verse 3. What do these terms add up to? What point is Paul making with the combination?
3. As you read verses 4–7, compare what you read in verses 1–3. What does God bring to our hopeless situation? How do this address our need?
4. Notice that verse 6 says we are “seated with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” as a present reality. How does it affect the way you look at your present situation to think of yourself as already enthroned with God through Christ?
5. Verses 8–10 make this text a classic description of what we are saved from and what we are saved for. What is the “from”? What is the “for”? How do you see those two going together?

Summary: All humanity is hopelessly stuck in evil, its power, and its consequences. That is, stuck apart from what God has done in Christ. Christ defeats the powers of evil, makes the dead alive, and seats us with him by the divine throne. We receive all this by faith as God’s gift, for God is kind beyond our imaginations. By this means God also empowers us to live according to his goodness, not as payback for his gift (we can’t pay him back) but as his grace changes us and motivates us to live the raised-from-the-dead life in the here and now.

Reflect

Use any of these prompts to encourage group members to apply the text to their own experiences.

- Think of the images of dead and alive in the text. Who is God for those who are spiritually dead? Who is God for those who are raised to life in Christ? What does that difference mean for you?
- Which part of this text is for you the most amazing? The most insightful? The most sobering? The most inspiring?

- Grace means we aren't earning God's favor because he gives it freely. What motivation does God's grace give you?
- What is your "idol of the heart" for which you need to experience true freedom in God's grace in Christ?

Pray

Invite the group to pray together using any of these suggestions.

- What needs have you heard from others in the group that we can pray about?
- What is a difference God's grace has made for you for which we can give thanks?
- What's an area in which you want to put God's grace into practice? Let's ask for God's help with that.