

Adult Sunday Bible Study Lesson

The Letter to the Ephesians

The First Resurrection

September 15 and 22, 2019

15-Kathy's Class

22- Pastor's Class

Situational Context: Paul has prayed for the church expressing their great spiritual need, Ephesians 1. Paul teaches that Christ has been given authority for the purposes of growing, protecting, and preparing His new temple for the age to come. **Ephesians 1:22-23 (NIV2011)** ²² **And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,** ²³ **which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.**

Lesson Theme: God loves His people of His own will. Paul excludes any consideration of merit, effort, or ability on the part of those who come to life (cf. Dt 7:7, Dt 7:8). The hopeless condition of sinners apart from Christ that Paul has described in vv. 1-3 is the basis for understanding his teaching on God's election in and on His gift of life.

Ephesians 2:4-7 (NIV2011) ⁴ **But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,** ⁵ **made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.** ⁶ **And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,** ⁷ **in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.**

1. Dead: **Ephesians 2:1-3 (NIV2011)** ¹ **As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,** ² **in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.** ³ **All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.**

Interpretation: The natural state of all human beings is a kind of spiritual death. This spiritual condition is universal: both Gentiles (v. 2) and Jews (v. 3) are "by nature children of wrath" (v. 3). Second, they are in active rebellion against God; note the use of "lived" in regard to Gentiles in v. 2 and "lived" in reference to Jews in v. 3. Third, they are subject to the evil rule of Satan. Fourth, they are totally unable to change themselves from rebellion against God. Fifth, they are exposed to the just anger of God.

Supporting Texts:

Galatians 4:3 (NIV2011) ³ So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world.

Colossians 1:13 (NIV2011) ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

John 3:3 (NIV2011) ³ Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

Romans 1:18-20 (NIV2011) ¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Discussion Starters:

What does dead mean?

Describe the bondage of the unbeliever.

How do we follow the flesh?

What do all unbelievers deserve, why?

2. Made Alive: Ephesians 2:4-7 (NIV2011) ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Interpretation: The ground of our salvation is God’s love and mercy, and its goal is the promotion of His grace and kindness. These are historical events in the life of Christ: His resurrection from the dead and enthronement at the right hand of God. But Paul also applies them to what has happened to believers. Paul teaches a union between Christ and those who come to trust Him, so that what is said of the Redeemer can also be said of the redeemed. What once happened to Jesus will one day happen to believers as well.

Supporting Texts:

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 (NIV2011) ⁷ The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. ⁸ But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Ephesians 1:4-6 (NIV2011) ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Ephesians 3:6 (NIV2011) ⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Discussion Starters:

Why is the truth that we are saved by Grace so important to grasp?

What means does God use to save us?

What does Romans 3:27 (NIV2011) ²⁷ Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith, mean?

How does God make us alive?

Why must God make us alive?

3. Through God's Gift: Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV2011) ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Interpretation: Salvation is a completed action that has a present effect. In his earlier letters, Paul usually refers to salvation either as a future event or as a present process. One exception is Ro 8:24, where Paul puts salvation in the past, but qualifies it as needing completion at Christ's return: "in this hope we were saved." And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. This parenthesis is thought by many to refer to the whole complex of salvation by Grace through faith as a gift of God. Others, however, take "this" as referring specifically to "faith." Sinners are dependent on God's gracious gift for their believing response to Christ from the moment of

conversion. Paul makes explicit here what is implicit elsewhere in the New Testament about the ultimate source of saving faith (Ac 13:48; Php 1:29).

Supporting Texts:

Romans 5:9-10 (NIV2011) ⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Romans 8:24 (NIV2011) ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?

1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV2011) ¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

John 4:10 (NIV2011) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

Acts 13:48 (NIV2011) ⁴⁸ When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

Discussion Starters:

Why won't God allow us to earn Life?

Why is our boasting such an important thing with God?

Why did God choose faith as the requirement or means for regeneration?

Faith in what or whom?

What is the work that God has prepared for us?