

This is a Great Mystery

A Study of Ephesians

Week 10 – Ephesians 2:6-9

Prayer

Lord, your grace is amazing. It's no wonder we have so many songs that marvel at it and so many ways that we can praise your gracious and glorious name. Thank you for telling us about your grace. May we never grow tired of hearing about it; may we never fail to share it with others. Amen.

From Last Time

We will do a little bit of review on the fly as we get into the next verses. Still, I feel like I should check to see what comments or questions you have.

Verses 6 and 7 - καὶ συνήγειρεν καὶ συνεκάθισεν ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ⁷ ἵνα ἐνδείξηται ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσιν τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις τὸ ὑπερβάλλον πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἐν χρηστότητι ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

He also raised [us] and seated [us] in the heavenlies with Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might display the surpassing riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

1. Recall the string of συν- verbs; in verse 5, God made us alive with Christ. We experience that through baptism, according to Romans 6:4. In verse 6, God is raising us and seating us with Christ. What are some differences between being made alive and being raised?
 - a. What does it mean for us to be seated with Christ?
 - i. What do we make of 1 Corinthians 6:2-3? Could that have anything to add with being seated with Christ?
2. ἵνα ἐνδείξηται – “so that he might display” – Most translations will translate this “so that he might show.” The idea is the same, but I have a hunch (and that’s all it is at this point) that the purpose for showing his grace is more than just “here it is.”
 - a. I think of it as a trophy case. Trophies are things you are eager to display. What is God most eager to show to others, that he displays it for everyone to see? His bountiful grace, mercy, and kindness.
 - b. Plus, what people display is usually so that they can show something that they did to make themselves look more powerful (look what I caught, look what I killed—not a knock on outdoorsman, just an illustration); God displays his grace because it benefits all people—it’s completely selfless!
 - c. Thoughts on that?

3. Verse 2 talked about the age of this world—the time from the fall into sin until Judgment Day; verse 7 talks about the coming ages. What timeframe does Paul refer to here? *Hint: think about when and how God displays his grace and kindness.*
4. Χρηστότητα – “kindness” – What comes to mind when you think of kindness? What do kind people do?
 - a. In what ways is God the ultimate kind person?

What comments and questions do you have?

Verses 8 and 9 - τῆ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ πίστεως · καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον · ⁹ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἵνα μή τις καυχῆσθῃται

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not from you, it is the gift of God; not by works, so that anyone could not boast.

5. This is one of the key verses in all of Scripture; that’s because it helps us define and understand grace. What are some ways you could describe grace using these verses?
6. I’ve never thought of this before, but something I came across made me think about it: it’s a little odd that Paul simply says, “you have been saved.” To the Christian, it’s obvious what we are saved from; to the unbeliever, that might not be so obvious. Imagine you use this verse in sharing your faith with someone and they respond, “Great, but what am I being saved from?” What answers could you give?
 - a. The verb construction of “you have been saved” (ἐστε σεσωσμένοι) indicates a completed action that has present and ongoing effects. It’s also another wrinkle to what we read in the rest of these verses. How do you feel knowing that your being saved is complete?
 - b. How might you use that detail in helping someone understand grace, salvation, and forgiveness?
7. “This is not from you” – We can easily point out how other churches fall into thinking that they can contribute something to their salvation: purgatory, works righteousness, conditional forgiveness (you can be forgiven, but only if you live a good life), etc. But we can fall into this trap, too. Satan wants nothing more than for us to slowly, but surely, think that we’ve done something to be saved. What might be some of the ways that Lutheran Christians think they contribute to salvation?

8. When I hear “gift,” my mind goes to Christmas. From Christmas, I remember one of the most beautiful pieces of Christmas poetry that speaks to how grace and love are gifts, the fourth stanza of Where Shepherds Lately Knelt (CW 54):

Can I, will I, forget how Love was born, and burned
Its way into my heart unasked, unforced, unearned,
To die, to live, and not alone for me,
To die to live and not alone for me?

- a. In what way do the underlined words speak to different aspects of God’s gift of grace?
- i. Unasked –
 - ii. Unforced –
 - iii. Unearned –

9. “So that no one can boast” – What specifically is Paul saying that we cannot boast about?

- a. Still, there are a number of things that we can (and ought to) boast about:
- i. Jeremiah 9:24 –
 - ii. 2 Corinthians 12:9 –
 - iii. Galatians 6:4 –
 1. Does this verse remind you of a specific Lent hymn?

What comments and questions do you have?

Notes for upcoming weeks – We should be able to continue for a couple consecutive weeks after adjusting our schedule for a couple other ministry-related events. We are not yet halfway through the letter but, as long as everyone is learning and growing through our study, I won’t change a thing.

Closing Prayer – When I Survey the Wondrous Cross v. 1 and 2

**When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.**

**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my God.
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood. Amen.**