

2. Before putting our faith in Jesus, we might have been rule keepers or rule breakers, but our neediness was the same. Let's explore what Paul's phrases mean by using some cross references. How is neediness demonstrated by those without Jesus who are...

...following the ways of this world?

Lk. 18:9-14

Gal. 5:17

Gal. 5:19-21

1 Jn. 2:15-16

Rev. 21:8

...following the ruler of the kingdom of the air?


Jn. 8:44

1 Jn. 3:8-15

1 Jn. 4:2-3

EXALTATION

Take a moment to reflect on your own life before accepting God's gracious gift of salvation in Jesus.

3. Okay, that's the bad news; it's not something we need to stay focused on because Jesus' blood cleanses us from all sin,¹ but it helps us to see just how good the good news (the gospel) is! With the little word "but" (at the beginning of verse 4), Paul now turns a corner. What two things bring hope to our hopeless state? (v. 4)
4. Verse 5 shows us why God needed to use "his incomparably great power for us who believe" (Eph. 1:19). What dramatic change took place when God saved us? (v. 5; * Jn. 5:24; 2 Cor. 5:17)

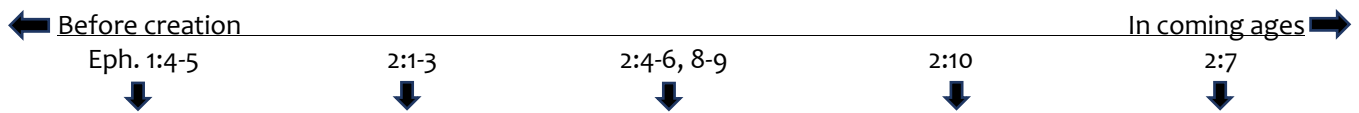
And there is more! "God raised us up with Christ, and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (v. 6). What do you think this means for us currently and in the future?

5. Paul says that "in the coming ages [God will] show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (v. 7). Can you imagine God showing us the countless ways that he demonstrated his undeserved kindness to us, ways we never saw or understood? What are some of the "incomparable riches of his grace" that you can boast about now?

RAISED AND SEATED

We are so united to Christ that in his death we died, in his resurrection we were raised, and in his exaltation we are seated "with him in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 2:6). Now our "citizenship is in heaven"² and so we "set [our] hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God [and] set [our] minds on things above, not on earthly things."³

6. In Ephesians, Paul shows us the goodness of God from our perspective of time. Under each verse, jot down what's happening.



7. Why should we never boast or take pride in our salvation, or look down on others who have not yet believed? (vv. 5, 8-9)
8. Again, Paul emphasizes God's hand on our lives saying, "we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (v. 10). What are ways that you've seen God work through you (or others) that seemed like just the right "good work" for a particular need or occasion?

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

How do you respond to the idea that God has prepared good works for you to do? Is it welcome news or burdensome? Why?

9. Allow yourself to take in the wonder of God's hand on your life from start to finish and respond in a way that seems appropriate.

PAUSE TO WORSHIP

Re-read Ephesians 2:1-10. Take time to interact with the Lord about the passage.

“Once we’ve meditated to focus, understand, and remember, we will normally find our hearts inclined to worship. So, we pause to lift our gaze to the excellencies of Christ, to bend our eyes off of the world, to express thanksgiving and adoration when we pray. Meditation leads to delight when the Holy Spirit inclines our hearts to see and savor how glorious God is.”⁴

- ❖ How do I respond to the beauty I see in God’s will, work, and ways in this passage?

- ❖ In what ways do I see Jesus, “the One [God] loves” (v. 6), more clearly through this passage?

- ❖ Is there a song or hymn that comes to mind that helps express my response to the passage?

REFLECT & PRAY

- ❖ How can I take what I’m learning from this passage and make it my own? Is there something specific to believe, do, not do, be grateful for, etc.?

- ❖ How does this passage help me see myself and others differently?

- ❖ Pray the passage: Use the passage as a basis to talk to God about the things you are learning, seeing, and longing for as well as ways the passage speaks to your current life experiences.

*📖 Indicates passages for further study

¹ Jn. 1:7

² Phil. 3:20

³ Col. 3:1-2

⁴ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/5-steps-to-meditating-on-your-bible/>