



The Life-Changing Christ

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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AM Assembly



Introduction:

What is Christianity all about? **Ephesians 2** provides a profound answer. Christianity is about transition, about change. It is not about changing the world or the church. It's about changing us. Examine the transition **Ephesians 2** teaches, and then notice the three-pronged process smack in the middle of it.

Discussion:

I. The transition in Christ

- A. As Christians, we talk a lot about being saved. However, that word gets used so much, I rarely consider what being saved really accomplishes. **Ephesians 2** demonstrates a series of at least 10 transitions that occur in Christ. Salvation is not simply a propositional status. It is not the change of a label saying we were once lost, but now we are saved. It is about actually changing us.
- B. Notice 10 transitions we can find in **Ephesians 2**.
 1. A transition from death to life (**Ephesians 2:1, 5**).
 2. A transition from sinfulness to holiness (**Ephesians 2:1, 21**).
 3. A transition from flesh to spirit (**Ephesians 2:3, 18, 22**).
 4. A transition from hostility to peace (**Ephesians 2:14-16**).
 5. A transition from division to unity (**Ephesians 2:14-18**).
 6. A transition from alienation to fellowship (**Ephesians 2:19**).
 7. A transition from strangers to household (**Ephesians 2:19**).
 8. A transition from the present age to the age to come (**Ephesians 2:2, 7**; see also **Ephesians 1:21**).
 9. A transition from this world to heavenly places (**Ephesians 2:2, 6**; see also **Ephesians 1:18-21**).
 10. A transition from the spirit of this world to the Spirit of God (**Ephesians 2:2, 18, 22**).
- C. When we talk about moving from lost to saved, we need to see these transitions. But, we need to understand this doesn't just happen. Smack in the middle of this discussion, Paul demonstrates a three-pronged process that accomplishes this shift.

II. Grace

- A. According to **Ephesians 2:4-5**, the transition from death to life comes by grace. He enlivened us because of His great mercy and love. According to **Ephesians 2:8**, we have been saved by grace. It was not our doing, but God's gift to us. We who are saved cannot boast. We are not saved because we have done something better than anyone else. We are not saved because we measured up while others didn't. When we enjoy life, holiness, peace, unity, fellowship, we cannot glorify ourselves, but only God because of His gift to us.
- B. This grace was meted out by the blood of Jesus' cross (**Ephesians 2:13-17**). The blood of Jesus' cross brings those of us who were far off near to God. The blood of Jesus abolishes the commandments of the Old Law that demonstrated our sinfulness. The blood of the cross reconciles us to God. The blood of the cross dismissed the hostility and brought peace to us, between us, and between us and God.
- C. No doubt, in a moment we are going to talk about our involvement. But we must first recognize the great magnificence of God's grace. We must not dismiss it before we appreciate it. The unity most highlighted in this text is between the Jews and the Gentiles. What had kept us Gentiles separated from the Jews was the "law of commandments expressed in ordinances." What brought us together, however, was not a new law that everyone can follow. What brought us together, is the blood of Jesus' cross. We have not reconciled ourselves by keeping a law expressed in ordinances. God has reconciled us by Jesus' blood. That is grace.

III. Faith

- A. If we are saved, brought to life, reconciled, made holy, united by grace, how do we access that grace? Even in the context of **Ephesians 2**, this isn't happening for everyone. **Ephesians 2:2** says there are still "sons of disobedience." Reconciliation, life, salvation come by grace, through Jesus' blood. But upon whom?
- B. **Ephesians 2:8** expands the point. We who are in Christ are saved by grace *through faith*. Back in **Ephesians 1:11-14**, Paul talked about believing in Jesus. He said those in Christ heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, and they believed it. But they didn't just believe the message, they believed "in him."

They believed in Jesus. He actually takes it further talking about those who “hope in Christ.” Their faith was not in themselves; it was in Jesus. Their faith was not in their working; it was in the work of Jesus on the cross. Their faith was not in their ability to obey; they obeyed because their faith was in Jesus.

- C. **Ephesians 1:18-22** shows this faith in action. As Christians, we are being built into the temple of God. The Old Covenant had a building in Jerusalem. The New has Christ's church. We are the bricks in that temple and we are being joined together, growing in the Spirit, that God may dwell in us by the Spirit. Notice Jesus is our cornerstone. Our lives are being built with Jesus as the guide. We measure from Him, from His life, from His Word. We measure every aspect of our lives from Him. That is living by faith.
- D. In **Romans 5:2**, Paul said we have access to grace by faith. In **Galatians 2:20**, he said we need to live by faith, letting Jesus live through us. Here in **Ephesians 2**, he shows we are saved by grace through faith, and that faith allows us to be built into God's dwelling. Without faith, we cannot go through these transitions.

IV. God's workmanship

- A. Too many people stop too soon. They hear saved by grace through faith and think we're done. But Paul had a third prong in this transition process. As I said earlier, salvation was not merely a propositional standing. It wasn't merely having a new label placed on us in a moment of salvation. Rather, it is a process. Thus Paul can say we have “been saved” in **Ephesians 2:5, 8**, but in **I Corinthians 1:18** say we are “being saved.” The process is seen in **Ephesians 2:10**. We are God's workmanship. We are being recreated in Jesus.
- B. This harkens back to the first creation. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God (cf. **Genesis 1:26-27**). Sadly, we allowed that image to be marred by sin. Instead of walking in God's image, we allowed the “prince of the power of the air” to govern us, change us. Through God's grace, we have been brought into Jesus Christ. But simply bringing us into Christ was not the goal. The goal was to recreate us, to make us something new in Christ. God plans to restore us to our true image in God. As Paul said in **Romans 8:29**, He plans to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ. In other words, if you and I claim to be in Jesus, but nothing is changing in our lives, we're deceiving ourselves. Entering Jesus does not give us permission to continue living like we did when we followed “the course of this world...the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.” Rather, it gives us the power to live God's way in the Spirit of God.
- C. If you don't want to live God's way, **Ephesians 2** holds nothing for you. If you want to live according to the spirit of this world, there can be no new creation, and no salvation for you. However, if you long to be like Jesus, conformed to His image, **Ephesians 2** explains how that happens. It happens in Jesus. It happens by surrendering to the grace of God through faith in Jesus to allow God to work on you, in you, and through you. In **Ephesians 1:15-23**, Paul explains when Jesus was raised from the dead, God sat Him “at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.” Do you see what that means? Jesus is more powerful than the “prince of the power of the air.” In other words, you and I think we can't be different than we are. We think we have gone too far, done too much, gotten too entrenched. But Jesus is more powerful. If we surrender to God's grace in faith, He will work on us. Thus the text says He has “raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” That is, He has set us above the prince of the power of the air as well. We can be victorious. We can walk in the good works God has created for us. Not because we are so awesome. Not because we are better than everyone else. We can do that simply because God has set us above the powers that have driven us in the past.
- D. But please notice another aspect of this point. Many of us live under the delusion that God's purpose in sending Jesus to the cross was to get us to heaven despite ourselves. Not true. God's purpose in sending Jesus to the cross was so we could be recreated in Jesus to walk in good works. Paul conveyed this same truth in **Titus 2:11-14**. God sent Jesus to purify a people that belonged to Him rather than belonging to the prince of the power of the air. He sent Jesus to purify a people that would be zealous for good works rather than works of disobedience. And we can be this people. You can be part of this people. Not because we are so awesome, but because God is so awesome and powerful that He has set Jesus above all other powers. Based on this, I have a question for you. Are you letting God work on you through Jesus Christ?

Conclusion:

Christianity is about transition, change. It is about taking us from what we were to what we long to be. It is about moving us from the control of the spirit of this world to the control of the Spirit of God. It is about moving us from sinfulness, hostility, and death and moving us to holiness, peace, and life. This happens through the three-pronged process of God's grace through Jesus' blood on the cross, our faith in Jesus' work on the cross, and God's workmanship in our lives. Will we allow God to work in our lives? Of course, many of us are willing to do that. But are we willing to let God work on our lives? Are we willing to let Him change us?