

Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 22, Salvation by Grace, Ephesians 2:1-10

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This is Dr. Dan Darko in his lecture series on the Prison Epistles. This is session 22, Salvation by Grace, Ephesians 2:1-10.

Welcome back to our Biblical Study Lecture Series on Prison Epistles.

It has been wonderful and a privilege to have you join us in this study. In the past few studies, we have been focusing on Ephesians, and you probably noticed that we have spent a significant amount of time looking at the introduction to this letter and the first chapter. I just want to pick up from where we left off in the last lecture, namely the conversation in the last part of the last chapter, talking about Paul praying that the church may understand the greatness of the power of God, the power that manifested in Christ.

When Christ died, this power was infused into his body, and the lifeless body came to life. I drew your attention towards the end that the power that was at work in Christ, that brought him back to life, that with which God raised him and subdued all principality's powers underneath, is also the power that is at work on behalf of the church. Now we begin chapter 2, which I read trying to get your mind going on what we are going to be doing.

I read verses 1 to 10, which is the central focus of our lecture at this moment. I read to you to remind you of how Paul sets the tone, that if indeed God is praised in this way if the prayer of Paul will be fulfilled, it is so important that the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ come to understand where God took them from and where God is leading them. They come to understand who they truly are and the act of God to move them from a very deplorable, sad state into where he has placed them with Christ.

The basis for which that breathless invocation could be given. But just before we go into that, you know that I'd like you to start thinking about a few things. So let me pose a few questions, three questions specifically, for you to start thinking about because the theme for this particular lecture is salvation by grace.

Salvation by grace. So, let's look at a few questions on this. If salvation is by grace, out of what are we saved? Salvation from what? Why do we need salvation? Ephesians, a very important book addressing the subject of salvation, leaves us to think about these serious questions.

Nowadays, when we talk about salvation, in fact, one of the things that comes to mind is I was always a good boy. I never did anything bad, and then somehow, God taught me I needed salvation, so he sent his son to come and die for me. So, when we talk about being saved in Christ Jesus, it is as if Christ died for nothing. In fact, it is as if we are doing God a favor that we heed his invitation to be a place where we just come and dance or clap or raise our hands or have fellowship or perhaps after church service, maybe your favorite part is going to that fellowship hall, have coffee, have some nice English muffin, and then after that hit the road.

From what are we saved? Let's think about that as we look into this text. The first question for you to reflect on. To what extent are humans subject to the dictates of the culture we live in? As we think about what we are saved, may we also ask the question, is the culture we live in, is the society we live in, shaping us, influencing us, dictating the course of life that we live? If so, is it just, just, just important that salvation ascends to that realm that God saves us from the dictates of this world? Or my next question for you to think about.

Do you, for a moment, think your pleasures or desires have the ability to control how you live your life? You know, it wasn't Jesus Christ who said these words, but it was a Greek philosopher, Socrates, who said, How can we say you are free when your pleasures rule over you? In fact, Socrates' question, implicit in that, is this. If your pleasures rule over you, if your desire for alcohol, desire for sex, desire for whatever, desire for food, desire for whatever the world gravitates towards, if that rules over you, are you not a slave to those things? But to what extent do your pleasures, or the flush-looking Pauline language, rule over you, and do we need salvation from that? Or, put it differently, does salvation in Christ ascend to that? I'm provoking you to think because you probably thought God saved you, but he did not save you from any of those. So let me ask you another serious question.

For our Western audience, this is not a friendly question. For non-Western audiences who are following this lecture series, you may find this a little bit easier. So, do you believe that evil spiritual powers are able to rob humans of all that God has for us? And do you actually believe that salvation includes God saving you out of the control and the powerful influence of evil spiritual powers? Now, before we turn to Ephesians and begin to look at chapter 2, verses 1 to 10 closely, may I pose even further questions for you to start thinking even more.

What if you don't believe that evil spiritual powers exist at all? Does that mean your salvation is limited, or does that mean you don't even understand what God has done for you? You see, this is where Paul, who gave us this important, rich theological word, grace, needs to be understood in the context of how he thinks and experiences the power of God. Let's look at Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 to 10, as you reflect on these questions I have posed. From verse 1, Paul writes, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of

this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. Wow! He made us alive together with Christ. And if I would jump to verse 8, For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God.

Let me just give you some major structural things about this particular passage, and then we'll unpack them one by one, and we'll read or look at every line carefully. In the literalist structure of this particular passage, you may want to note that it is made up of only two sentences. Chapter 2, verses 1 to 10, is made up of only two sentences in Greek.

This is important because you will notice that when Paul starts writing about the pre-Christian past of his readers, he wants to make sure he doesn't finish a sentence until he tells them what has also happened in a positive direction. So, verse 1 to 7 continues straight, and Paul will leave at the end of that a parenthetical statement indicating and showing that, indeed, the grace of God has come for those who were in this state. If you read it in English with multiple sentences, it doesn't actually convey the sense that Paul is conveying here.

In other words, looking at verses 1 to 7 alone, he probably could be saying to himself, I will not pause, and I will not end a sentence here, lest they think I have finished my talk. I don't need to leave on this negative note. My main focus is to bring them closer to the greatness of the love and mercy of God and to reach out to those who, prior to experiencing God, were subject to and being called the wrath of God.

Verses 8 to 10 then will underline salvation and where we get salvation from. A lot of Christian doctrine, especially the part of doctrine we call soteriology, is rooted in this passage. It is a rich theological text, and I hope that we think about the details of it and its implications seriously.

Chapter 2, verses 1 to 3, specifically focuses on the pre-Christian past. Paul will go on to use the language of being able to understand where we were, and he uses the contrast of then and now. We were then, but now.

In fact, in the whole of Ephesians 2, you will see that recurrent pattern. We were then this, but now we are this. In 1 to 3, Paul reminds them that a pre-Christian past is not good news.

We will look at more of that later. From verses 4 to 7, remember, as I mentioned earlier on, the same sentence beginning from verse 1. From 4 to 7, he actually makes a sharp contrast from what he had said in the past, and it shows the greatness of divine intervention just when our lives were going in the wrong direction. In verses 8 to 10, the second sentence summarizes God's work of salvation.

How God has come to reach out to humankind and given us that state that we are in. You want to note in these two sentences how the Greek word that we translate, walk or live, begins the sentence and ends in the last verse of the sentence. In other words, it shows the way of life that was lived without Christ and ends by reflecting or recalling the way of life that Christians are made to live.

From here, we can now look at chapter 2, verses 1 to 3, a little bit more closely. And I hope I don't become too passionate about this lest you think I go too fast because you will understand as we go through this how this is important to who we are as Christians. 2 verse 1, and you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you once walked following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

So, what was the nature of the former way of life? Well, it was a state of death. The metaphor used here is a state of lifeless or true sense of life. We were dead, and we were dead in a realm of sin, and we were trapped.

The two words are actually used redundantly to emphasize the immensity of the state we were in. We were dead, we were trapped, we were actually in a deplorable state of sin and trespasses. And he will unpack how that life of death was being lived.

Paul will go on to say it was a life of bondage. He highlights three specific areas in which life without Christ was being lived out. It was actually the life that is lived according to the age of this world.

Do you remember I asked you the question at the beginning? To what extent do you think our environments are able to dictate our way of life? Paul says life without Christ is a life that is lived according to the dictates of this world. The pleasures of the world, the desires of the world, what the world thinks is cool is what those people think is cool. To the extent that when they are destroying themselves, they think they are having fun.

When people are spending lots of money to sentence themselves to life on a hospital bed, to physical death, to mental disease of some sort, namely buying drugs and all that, they may think because that is what everybody is doing, that is cool. Paul said

they lived according to the course of this world, according to the age of this world. Therefore, their lives were dictated by the world.

Maybe I should pause to ask, as a Christian, if you are following these studies, do you find yourself in a place where your life is still being influenced and dictated by what society calls good and not what God sets up as the right way of life to live in this world? Think about that. Paul said this is a life that is also lived according to the flesh. He said even he himself, as a Jew, they were all subject to this, and they were subject to their passions.

Their passions were influenced and dictated how they lived their lives. Do you remember the question I posed earlier on? Do you remember the quotation from Socrates that I gave you? How can you say you are free when your passions and desires rule over you? Oh, that's a good question here. But you will soon discover even when your passions rule over you and the world rule over you and your flesh and your fleshly desires dictate the way you live, there is hope; there is grace, there is mercy.

But that is not all. Paul goes on to say, in fact, the pre-Christian past is a life that was lived according to the dictates of principalities and powers. There are evil spiritual powers that control the lives of those who do not know Christ.

Think about Christians living in Ephesus. We spent two hours or so just going through the discussion on the introduction of this particular letter, showing you some of the background issues. They live in a harbor city and all the high life you can think about.

They live in a city that is jammed with religious activities. They live in a city with magic and all forms of spiritual powers and their influences. Paul says life without Christ was also life that was lived.

In fact, the language he used is, according to the ruler of the power of the air. And consequently, we, when we did not know Christ, have become objects of wrath. You once walked, following the course of this world, following the priest of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

Well, let's unpack some of these things in this verse a little bit more closely. Let's look at the word dead in trespasses and sins. And I like to quote what one commentator, Lincoln, says to try to explain the Old Testament background to all this sense of the metaphor of death in sin and trespasses and how, outside the Old Testament, this was also prevalent.

Lincoln puts it this way. Outside Judaism, Stoic writers use the term dead in a figurative sense since they considered that what did not belong to the highest in a person, to the mind or the spirit, was not worthy of being described as alive. That which a person had in common with the animal world and which separated him or her from the divine was deemed to be dead.

I will not be able to tell you here some of the harsh things the Stoics have to say when human beings move away from decency and begin to live lives that they sometimes characterize as animal-like behavior. Reading Epictetus yesterday, it was very interesting to read some of these philosophers and look at how religious they are. And yet they are also quick, even in their pagan framework, to say a life that is lived not to the expectation of a reasonable human being is a life of death.

Paul says that is where we were before Christ saved us, and that is where all unbelievers are as we speak—the age of this world. The age of this world gives scholars a few points of discussion because the Greek word that is translated age sometimes leaves us with a lot of conjecture or choices to make because the word can translate differently depending on the context.

For the word for age, I use the English transcription I own, and because I figured out that it is also in the English dictionary, I thought I would cheat a little bit and sneak some Greek in there. The word I own, which is age, sometimes has a temporal sense, talking about a period of time or a time framework. Sometimes, it has a special cosmic understanding and refers to the spiritual or some cosmic forces.

The temporal usage, however, is what we find when we move from Ephesians chapter 2 verse 1 to 3 to look at Ephesians chapter 2 verse 7. And so, we do not find in Ephesians and elsewhere in Paul for him to be using the word to refer to the special cosmic nuance even though in classical Greek and in other Greek texts, it was not uncommon for the word to be used to refer to some special or cosmological worldview kind of concept to refer to the age as a cosmic realm. So, Paul is saying here that Paul is saying here is the age here is not an age that is some abstract spiritual metaphysical realm, but the age being spoken about here is the world in which we live. And so to say that those who did not know Christ when they were unbelievers actually lived according to the age of this world is to say that they lived according to the dictates of the world they live in.

They lived according to the standard of the world they lived in. Their time frame shaped the way they lived. And I like how some of my colleagues have explained this.

Clint Arnold, who was my mentor, actually put it this way. The age of this world is the unhealthy and ungodly social, cultural, economic, and political environment in which we live. It represents organized evil in the form of peer pressure, ideological systems,

and structures that provide us with a script of living life totally apart from God and his purposes.

I have found it to be so true, no matter which country I am in, that living according to the age of this world is best seen when there is a form of a political enterprise, whether it is a campaign or something. Suddenly, people are more evangelists for a political party than they are for Christ Jesus. Living according to the age of this world also becomes very interesting, especially when I'm in Africa, to see how politicians are teasing out what is the moral ideal for Christians and what they choose to emphasize, what they don't choose to emphasize because they are guilty of, and how still Christians jump over to say, oh, we are on your side, and emphasize the one or two things that are on the side of Christians, leave the three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten that are on the godly side.

The age of this world has its own way of taking hold of our thoughts, of taking hold of our minds. Paul said that in pre-Christian life, our lives were consumed by that, and we didn't have the moral sense of judgment to decipher what was godly and what was ungodly in the world we lived in. Paul also used another word in this first one to three that I need to unpack a little bit, and that is the word, the ruler of the power of the air.

You know what I mean? We're dealing with Africans. It is very, very interesting how the African looks at, read this and say, oh yeah, yes, yes, I think I understand exactly what is going on. And you know, the trappings of African Christians I find is when we start reading Ephesians, suddenly my friends, these pastors and students, they see demons everywhere.

They are ready to bind and lose everywhere. They may be guilty of that. A student once told me recently, when I was teaching Paul at a school in West Africa; he said, this part I don't think we need a lot of explanation because it is very real in our context.

But for those of us who are in Western countries, this is where it becomes challenging. What if you know that your unbelieving friend or relative is actually subject to the control or the dictates of evil spiritual powers? Would you find a reason to dismiss that even though you think the person needs salvation? Think about that. When we talk about the ruler of the power of the air, Paul says this about them in Ephesians 2:1-3.

They have influence in the cosmic and human spheres. They are in the heavenly realms, and yet they influence the way human beings live. They are spiritual entities, yet they have power and control over the lives of human beings.

Paul points out in verses 2 and 3 that these are spiritual powers that are working right now. They are currently operative in the lives of unbelievers. In other words, according to Paul, there was never a time when these evil spiritual powers ceased to exist or ceased to control the lives of unbelievers.

So, in Paul, actually, a person's life is controlled by two spiritual forces, and there are no middle grounds. For the Christian, the Christian's life is controlled by the spirit of God, and the unbeliever's life is controlled by the evil spiritual powers. I find it fascinating whenever the discussion on salvation comes up, and I'm in the United States, and I share it with my friends.

If only we knew that the devil was manipulating the lives of people and we would agree with Paul, what sense of agency would we have to want to help them out of that situation? Would we still compromise knowing that the very lives of our loved ones are in the wrong hands? The priests of the power of the air are powers who exercise, and they exercise their powers in the sense of disobedience. And Paul, when he called the sense of disobedience, these are people whose lives are characterized by disobedience. I like it when Tillman explains the nature of how the ruler of the world works and further goes on to explain how it is linked to these activities of the evil spiritual world.

The age of this world is a powerful mode of existence characterized by rebellion against God. It is the cause that a world is rebelling against God. And I'll put it this way: it is not only the age and the spirit, but it is also the flesh.

The flesh is the inner propensity and inclination to do evil. It is our creatureliness infected by the implications of the fall of Adam that propels us to act in ways contrary to what God would have us do. So it is on this note that you say the spirit that is at work is a personal and clean evil spirit.

But when it says the spirit, the ruler of the power of the air, is at work in the sense of disobedience; when it qualifies to say this is a spirit, scholars spend a lot of time arguing what spirit means. Does it mean the human spirit? Does it mean the attitude or what? Whether you use the human spirit, which is possible, or you say it is a spiritual force that is at work in the individual, it does not still negate the work of the prince of the power of the air at work in the lives of the unbeliever. Why is Paul trying to scare you to death? You think Paul is trying to scare you to death, isn't it? He is saying that if somebody is not a believer or for the believer, or should look back and say their life has been lived according to the dictates of this world, according to the flesh and its desires, and according to the principalities and powers who have been influencing you all this while.

He says this so that you may understand that, indeed, God saved you from something. Do you remember the third question I asked you? Do you believe that

there are evil spiritual powers at work able to influence your life? Paul says it is obvious. I have often made a case like this.

How can we believe that there is a Holy Spirit when we don't believe there is an evil spirit? How can we believe there is a mighty God when we don't believe there is evil God? In other words, why do we want to believe that there is only a good God, a good spirit that is working out there and is only working for our good, neglecting the fact that we have brothers and sisters, siblings, friends, relatives who can benefit from all the goodness God has for us. Paul says, remember where you were saved from and the conditions out of which you were saved. And he actually goes on to say, you know what? We have been reduced to objects of wrath.

Arnold and others would say, don't underestimate the power of the evil spiritual forces at work in the way Paul thinks. For Paul, the ruler of the realm of the air, the devil, is an intelligent and powerful spirit being who is totally evil and intent on perpetrating as much evil in the lives of individuals and true individuals to society as he possibly can. But this is where the good news occurs.

When Paul lays out this, you remember I mentioned to you that from verse 1 to verse 7 is one sentence. So, all these sad parts of pre-Christian life are just one-half of the sentence. Paul doesn't want to end that unless you go to bed and think the devil is coming after you in your dreams.

Verse 4, but in Greek, we call this contrastive conjunction. It draws a sharp contrast to what is going on. While you were in this horrible state, let me tell you something that has radically happened to intervene.

When at the end of verse 3, Paul actually said that these conditions have placed us to be objects of God's wrath by nature. But, verse 4, but God being rich in mercy because of the great love which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace, you have been saved. And he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

This is where Paul puts the footstool. Wow, this is our horrible past, but don't wallow in pity, don't wallow in fear, don't get trapped with all kinds of fear because something has happened. But God, who is rich in mercy, decided to act, decided to intervene.

That reminds me of Romans 5.8. God demonstrates his love towards us. I like that. In that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Wow, a radical change. Let's look more closely at the radical change. The radical change here, I would unpack it in three ways, showing you the character of God in bringing this into effect, the act of God to bring that change, and the purpose of God in the process.

The radical change occurred—the act of God. The character of God, excuse me.

God is a rich God. You know, when I'm in more of a church setting, I like to set the church up when I'm talking about this kind of thing, especially if it's the non-denominational charismatic church. I like to say that God is a rich God.

And I get amen. Because sometimes they think I'm going to talk about prosperity. That's not the point here, though.

But God, who is a rich God in his character, is rich in mercy. He has; I don't know how to explain it in English; his storehouse for mercy is so great and powerful. He is so rich in mercy that the degree of your sin, the trappings of the age of this world, the desires of the flesh that has so controlled you, and all the rulers of the powers of the air, and all the assault on your life, your dignity, and your spiritual life, in God's rich mercy, just when you were by nature objects of his wrath, he turned around and said, I have enough mercy to show mercy unto you.

A rich God intervened. He is rich in mercy. Because of his great love, which he loved us, he is rich in love in his character.

Here, Paul shows the character of God, which is important to reflect on as you think about Ephesians. Because when we think about salvation, sometimes the concept we get is when we talk about sin, God is always looking for opportunities to punish people. That is not God.

God is looking for an opportunity to save sinners like you and me. In his character, he is merciful. In his character, he is loving.

It is love that will make him reach out to you. And just imagine you drowned or getting drowned in deep waters, and someone shows up to save your life. Is your response that of, leave me alone and let me die? Who told you I need your help? Or is your response of that of gratitude and saying, please take my hand? In his mercy and love, Paul will tell us that he expects us to believe and accept what he has for us so that he may pull us out of all those situations.

For those who are reading Paul's letter to Ephesians, he said, your past was like this, but let me just open your eyes to what God did. In his mercy and great love towards us, he saved us. Lincoln puts it this way: God's mercy is his overflowing active

compassion and is freely exercised, excluding all ideas of merit on the part of its objects.

We could do nothing to merit God's mercy. It is out of his rich mercy and his great love that he loved us. And let's look at the act of God.

This God, who in his character has mercy and love, also acted. He loved us, Paul says. Out of this, he loved us.

He made us alive with Christ. Remember the metaphor in the beginning? We who were dead, he did not leave us in that state of death. He made us alive with Christ.

He raised us up with him. And he seated us with him in the heavenly realms. Let me show you how this compares to chapter 1, how Paul was handling all this.

In chapter 1, you see chapter 1 verse 20, he presents Christ as one who was dead. Chapter 2, verse 1, in the pre-Christian past, the believers were dead in their trespasses and sins. Chapter 1, verse 20, God raised Christ from the dead.

Chapter 2, verse 6, God raised us with Christ. 1 20, he seated Christ at his right hand. 2 verse 6, he seated us with Christ in the heavenly places.

Christ died. We were dead in trespasses and sins. Wow.

What was God's motive for doing all this? Did he come to save us so that he could get us and use us like slaves? Or what? No. No. No.

His purpose was to manifest the riches of his grace towards mankind. Wow. He wanted to make plain the riches of his grace.

And he did so in kindness towards us. All this in Christ Jesus. Not only in this age but also in the age to come.

Setting this framework, showing our past, showing what God has done, and how in his mercy and great love, he saved us. Paul will go on to say, from verse 8, For by grace, we have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing.

It is the gift of God. Not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should work in them.

Wow. By grace, you have been saved. Before we look at this passage more closely, let me refresh your mind on how the word grace may be understood.

In the Old Testament context, the word, when it is used in the Septuagint, is used to express God's gracious approach to his people. And sometimes, it refers to favor that is found in the eyes of another person. But to take that comprehensive look, bring the Old Testament Jewish context to the New Testament context.

Sorry about that. In classical Greek, it is the charming quality that wins favor, grace. Sometimes, the word is used for benevolence, showing favor to the inferior.

So, when you find someone who is in need or who is lower than you and you help them, it is expressed as showing grace. It is a response of gratitude for a favor given. For Paul in Ephesians, it is important to know that Paul sometimes used the word grace contrary to legalistic expectations of the law.

And for Paul, grace carries the sense of favor that no one could have done anything to merit. In fact, Lincoln puts it this way: The reality and generosity of grace is appreciated all the more after a statement that shows how seriously God has taken human sinfulness. The necessity of an intervention of grace is underlined when set in contrast to the bankruptcy and doom of humanity left to itself, left to what is by nature.

By grace, you have been saved, which draws the reader's attention to God's sovereign freedom from obligation to save them. It is not by works, it is by grace. It is not by works; it is not something that is qualified by the works of the law but works here carry the sense of human effort.

It is not any of your human efforts to find reasons to boast. No one could ever have done anything to merit God's grace. So when Paul actually establishes here to summarize his point from verses 1 to 10 in 8 to 10, he is actually saying salvation is by grace through faith.

You remember, in the course of this lecture, I took time earlier on to explain faith. So, remember that faith here is not something you believe only intellectually, but it is believing and trusting. Salvation is a gift of God, Ephesians 2 verse 8. Salvation is not by works or human efforts.

Salvation is a new creation for good works. God saved us to prepare us for good works. It is not by works, but it is for good works.

Let me read this quotation. The purpose of God's creative activity is not merely to have a people as if he were constructing a work of art. Rather, this new creation is to be active and productive like the creator.

Christians are to do good works which God prepared in advance for us. In advance for us to do. Salvation is not from works.

It surely is for work. That is, living is living obediently and productively. And in trying to close this discussion on amazing grace, let me take a brief moment to refresh your mind on an important event.

The young British boy, John Newton, was born and raised in England; he lost his mother at six. John got himself into all kinds of nefarious activities. We are told that he served on a slave ship and perhaps took advantage of some of the slaves sexually.

John surrendered his life later when he was reading Thomas a Kempis' book *Imitatio Christi*, in Latin, *Imitation of Christ*, translated. At 39, John Newton became a minister and served, among other parishes, the Alnay Parish Church of St. Peter and Paul, which is a small town between Oxford and Cambridge. Today, the 14th century church standing next to a cemetery at Alnay has this inscription on the wall.

John Newton Clark, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy. John Newton, who believed that he deserved all the punishment God can give to people, who believed that his sins were so heavy, inspired by this test of efficiency, understood the grace of God, penned many hymns, the famous one of which you know well, is *Amazing Grace*, in which Newton writes, *Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found.*

I was blind, but now I see. It was grace, grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace, my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed.

Then, he goes on to talk about God's promise. The Lord has promised good to me. His word, my hope, secures.

He will my shield and portion be, as long as life endures. In Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 to 10, I call this salvation by grace because there you have a good picture of what salvation by grace is about. Verse 1 to 3 reminds us of the pre-Christian past.

Verses 4 to 7 spell out the divine intervention. All this in one sentence. So in the sharp contrast of what we deserved and how God acted.

He acted only out of his riches in mercy and great love towards us. And yet we are not saved by grace to fool around. We are saved by grace to live a life that is characterized as good works which God prepared beforehand so that we might live in them.

The Greek word translated prepared is the artisan imagery. He constructed and molded beforehand that we might live in them. I hope understanding where God took you from makes you appreciate what Paul is saying to the believers.

But I don't want you to forget one thing that we will be dealing with in our next lecture. Paul is setting the stage to remind the church that we have done nothing to end our salvation, and that should affect how we relate with each other in the community of faith. We have done nothing to deserve inter-ethnic politics in the church.

We have done nothing to claim superiority over the other. All of us shared in common the sins, the subjugation to the powers of evil, and the control of our flesh, and God intervened. I hope just having this window of chapter 2 sets you to be open to follow the rest of the discussion from chapter 2, verses 11 to 22.

By grace, we are saved. It is not out of work. It's a gift of God.

We cannot boast. We should only greet this with gratitude and live lives of appreciation for what God has done for us. Thank you for following these lectures with us, and I hope you continue to learn with us.

Thank you very much.

This is Dr. Dan Darko in his lecture series on the Prison Epistles. This is session 22, Salvation by Grace, Ephesians 2:1-10.