



Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians

**SIT
WALK
STAND**

WEEK THREE – OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST JESUS

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

ALIVE IN CHRIST

There is no equivocation in Paul's message to the Ephesians regarding their (and our) need for salvation.

- We were sinners.
- We obeyed the devil.
- We followed our own desires and inclinations.
- We refused to obey God.
- We were subject to God's anger!

Let us think about these five points. Are there any that you would dispute?

"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." Romans 3:23

"Jesus turned around and said to Peter, "Get away from me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my way, because these thoughts of yours don't come From God, but from human nature." Matthew 1:23

"Once you were dead, doomed forever because of your many sins." Ephesians 2:1

Having told us all the things God cannot stand, verses 4 and 5 show us hope:

But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) (Remember, Grace is the unmerited favour of God).

There's nothing that can clear our painful past
 bear our bitter pain
 Or could ever take our place,
 Except for grace.

The price is much too high
 For us to ever pay we could try forever,
 And find no other way
 Except for grace

So then, it is only through the grace of God that we can be alive in Christ.

- What do verses 8 and 9 tell us about our salvation?
- Why do you think God wants us to realise we cannot take any credit for our salvation?

I remember teaching year 8 pupils about how, in the Middle Ages an apprentice became a master. An aspiring master would have to pass through the career chain from apprentice to journeyman before he could then apply to become a master craftsman. He would then have to produce a sum of money and a masterpiece before he could actually join the guild. The guilds were a little bit like trade unions used to be. You couldn't progress on your own, you had to go through the system. Young boys would work from around the age of seven until they had thoroughly learned their trade. Their parents would often have had to pay for them to become an apprentice and it would take them, in general, about fourteen years to become a master. Entry was very strict because if you had too many masters, they wouldn't be able to charge high prices for their work. There is nothing new under the sun!

Verse 10 tells us: *"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the things he planned for us long ago."*

- One of the main occupations of the Christian should be sharing the wonderful news we have received with others. We do not have to wait fourteen years before we start in our role!

ONE IN CHRIST

Ephesians 2:11-18

In these verses, Paul addresses the Ephesians as Gentiles, outsiders. They were described in that way because the Jews considered themselves God's Chosen people. At first, they thought they were the only ones who could be part of "The Way", as the early Christians were called. However, Paul reminds them that they have been united with Christ Jesus (verse 13).

- How does Paul describe the Jews in verse 11?
- What does he mean by this?
- He agrees that when the Ephesians were living apart from Christ they were excluded from citizenship. What does he give as the reason for this?
- What enabled them to be united with Christ Jesus?
- In what way had Jesus brought Jewish and Gentile believers together?
- What enables all believers to come together. Is that still true today?

JESUS CHRIST OUR CORNERSTONE

A cornerstone forms the base of a corner of a building, joining two walls. It is the key to the building. In 1 Peter 2:4 it says this: *"Come to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by the people, but he is precious to God who chose him."*

In the Bible, the cornerstone is the rock upon which the weight of the entire structure rests. Scripture describes Jesus as the "Chief Cornerstone" of our faith. As the Chief Cornerstone, Jesus ensures the stability of the whole system of our salvation. Jesus was and is the only plan of salvation.

Verse 5 of 1 Peter 2, says: *"And now God is building you, as living stones into his spiritual temple."*

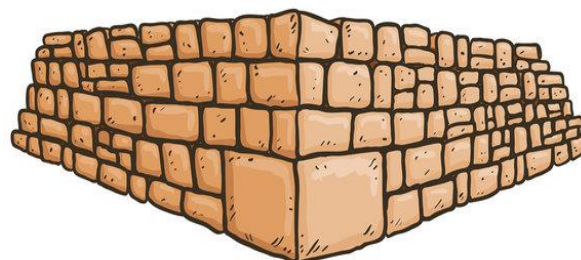
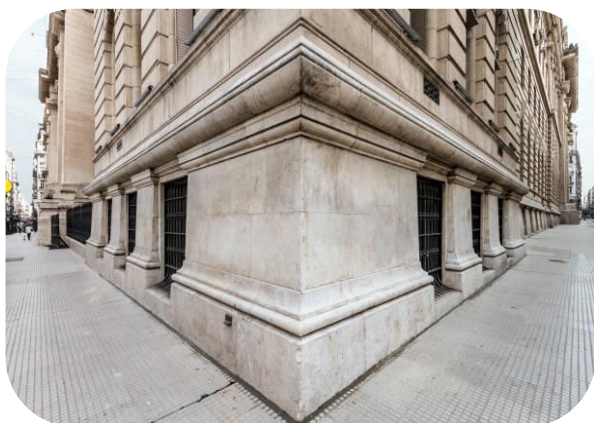
And again, in verse 6, *"I am placing a stone in Jerusalem, a chosen cornerstone, and anyone who believes in him will never be disappointed."*

It is so important to realise that we are not an afterthought. We were part of God's plan way back in eternity. We are crucial to the building of his body, the Church! Each one of us has a role to play that God has specifically allocated to us.

"So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are a member of God's family."

I trust that these scriptures encourage and bless you as you meditate on them.

If you have never felt genuinely wanted, read, and read these scriptures until they are engraved on your heart. We can be confident of who we are, and that we are: **ALIVE IN CHRIST!**



Prayer:

Father, makes us willing to be shaped to fit into your building.