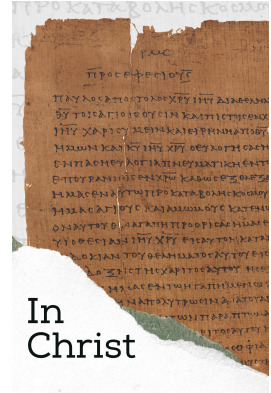


“In Christ” Self-Starter Summary

Ephesians 1:15-2:10



Introduction

In today's section, Paul begins with a prayer of Thanksgiving. He is grateful to God for all the good blossoming of the gospel in Ephesus. But the work isn't finished! His desire is that the Spirit will give those in the church of Ephesus an even deeper insight into just how powerful the Lord's working is, and the extremely rich gifts that he gives "in Christ."

1. Thanksgiving, Prayer, and a Promise!

- a. Read 1:15-23
- b. Paul heard of their faith and their love toward each other.
- c. He tells them about his prayers for them.
- d. He then makes quite the statement! The same thing that happened to Christ—his resurrection—is going to happen to them (and us).
- e. And the Father gave him to the church as head over all things!
- d. There's no reason for the Ephesians to get distracted. There's no reason for them to move on to other things. They have all the promises that come with being "in Christ."

A question to ponder: How many of us claim the promise that we are "in Christ" but don't really act like it or live that way?

2. The Hammer of the Law...But...

- a. Read 2:1-3
- b. Paul reminds them (and us) that once we were spiritually dead; children of wrath; sons of disobedience.
- c. Paul is not subtle here. Prior to conversion, this was who we were. We were under the law's condemnation unable to move

towards God. Yes, our nature is to rebel and this is not good!
See **Romans 5:12; 6:13; 6:23.**

d. And yet there is good news because Paul knows where to put the “but.”

3. In Christ, God made us alive together with Him!

- a. Read 2:4-9
 - b. God, rich in mercy, even when we were dead in our sin, made us alive in Christ. “By grace you have been saved.”
 - c. What is grace? Not deserving what one gets.
 - d. He raised us up with him. This means that, because of Christ’s resurrection, those who believe in him are given new life spiritually in this age. They will also be given renewed physical bodies when Christ returns.
 - e. Paul doubles down: “By grace you have been saved through faith. And it is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God, not result of works.” This is the essence of what we preach and teach—God’s generosity towards the undeserving.
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- d. It’s not that grace is God’s part and faith is our part. Faith is given by grace. This wasn’t the Ephesian’s doing and it’s not our doing! It’s the gift of God—His work!

4. The faith is not about our doing and neither is work.

- a. Read 2:10
- b. Even those good works accomplished through us—works that God prepared beforehand—all of them belong to him.
- c. As Luther once said, “**God does not need your good works, but your neighbor does.**” Good works—those that the Ephesians did and those that we accomplish have to do with other people.
- d. As we walk...as we live life as those who are “in Christ,” there are unlimited opportunities to love and serve others.

How do you respond to that which God has done for us in Christ Jesus?