

THE REASON FOR THE CROSS

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Ephesians 2:1-10

1. Paul prayed that the Ephesians would come to know what is the surpassing greatness of God's power toward us who believe. Power that was manifested in accordance with the working of the strength of His might. 1:19
2. In Ephesians 1:20-23 Paul pointed out that God:
 - a. Raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.
 - b. Exalted Christ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.
 - c. Put all things in subjection under Christ's feet. (Quoted from Psalm 110:1 and referenced by Peter on the Day of Pentecost.)

"The Lord said to My Lord, sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." Acts 2:34-35
 - d. Gave Jesus headship over all things related to the church.
3. With these great truths in mind let us consider the reason for the Cross.

I. Man's predicament.

A. Our problem traces back to the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve made a fatal moral decision to listen to the Devil and disobey God. Gen 2:15-17

Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. 16 The Lord God commanded the man, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

B. Later Eve listened to Devil, enticed Adam to join her, and both ate from the tree, and from that moment on mankind became a doomed race on a doomed planet.

C. Note Paul's description of the Ephesian Christians prior to their conversion.

NOTE: What was true of them is true of every one of us.

1. They were dead in (by reason of) their trespasses and sins.

NOTE: From a spiritual perspective every person you and I meet that has yet to repent towards God and embrace, by faith, Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord could be described as the walking dead.

2. Being dead to God because of their trespasses and sins they lived their lives according to:

- a. The course of this world.
- b. The prince of the power of the air.
- c. The spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

3. Their problem had once been Paul's problem.

- a. He too had lived in the lusts of his flesh.
- b. He too had indulged the desires of the flesh and the mind.

c. He too had been by nature a child of wrath (subject to the wrath of God) along with everyone else.

NOTE: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son (repent and believe the Gospel) will not see life, **but the wrath of God abides on (rests on) him.**" John 3:36

NOTE: Due to the church's current approach to evangelism, with its constant emphasis on the love of God, many lost people have little concern related to their life now or in eternity. Ps 5:4-6

"For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; no evil dwells with You. 5 The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; **You hate all who do iniquity.** 6 You destroy those who speak falsehood; **the Lord abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.**"

II. God's provision.

A. The Cross of Calvary is God's answer to man's predicament.

B. The Cross is a visible manifestation of the richness of God's mercy and the greatness of His redemptive love with which He has loved us. Rom 5:8-11

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.** 10 For if while **we were enemies** we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

NOTE: Those who refuse to repent towards God and embrace Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord **WILL NOT** be saved from the wrath of God. **They are and remain God's enemies.**

C. While still dead in our transgressions God made us alive in Christ Jesus, raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

III. Our position.

A. We who are in Christ have been delivered from man's predicament through God's provision.

B. For by grace we have been saved through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.

C. Not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

NOTE: **Apart from Jesus Christ works have no meaning or value whatsoever.**

D. Life now has purpose and meaning because we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

E. Not only does our life have meaning and purpose now, but also for eternity, in that all God has done for us He has done so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

APPLICATION

1. God's mercy and redemptive love are the motivation behind His provision in Christ Jesus.
2. Because of Jesus Christ, and His sacrificial death on our behalf, we who were dead in our trespasses and sins, separated from God and without hope in this world, and objects of God's righteous wrath can be reconciled to our offended God through repentance towards Him and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Those who delay and presume upon God are taking a terrible chance.
4. No aspect of our lives is more important than where stand in relationship to God.
5. We are either alive in Christ Jesus, or dead in our trespasses and sins.
6. How is it with you?