## "Saving Grace" Immeasurably More #2 • Ephesians 2

# INTRODUCTION

How often do we take the time to reflect on the immeasurable grace God has extended to us? Apart from God's grace we would be lost and without hope. But when we were dead in our sins, God's love reached down and saved us. We see in this study that it was through God's love and grace that He reached out to us even when we were dead in our sins, to create one body of believers, unified through Christ's sacrifice.

## Ice Breaker (Optional):

Have you ever been involved in a rescue party?

# Study Questions (45 MIN)

### Q1. Read Ephesians 2:8-10

If ever we thought our salvation was somehow a result of our own efforts, Ephesians 2:8-10 should set the record straight. Where does grace<sup>1</sup> come from? How do these three verses make it clear that we do not earn salvation? <sup>1</sup> charis-good will, loving-kindness, favour

### We are no longer Dead but Alive.

#### Q2. Read Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 10:4; Ephesians 2:11-16

What condition did God find us in according to Eph 2:1? The Jews of Ephesus were struggling to attain righteousness by keeping the law. How does Romans 10:4 release us from that impossible task? Before coming to faith, did you believe that you could earn your salvation by living a virtuous life? If so, what was it that changed your understanding of salvation?

The Gentiles (non-Jews) generally were not aware of the commandments of God. What did Christ accomplish that made it possible for both Jews (attempting to follow the law) and Gentiles (who were unaware of the law) to attain righteousness and unity? (Eph 2:15)

# Because of His Abundant Love

## Q3. Read Ephesians 2:4-7; Exodus 34:6-7a

If God did not save us because of what we did, why did He save us? (Eph 2:4) Consider the attributes God proclaimed about Himself as He passed in front of Moses in Exodus 34:6-7a. How does recognizing God's nature help you to understand what motivated Him to save you, even when you didn't deserve it? What are some of the times you have experienced the outpouring of God's abundant love?

## We are One in Christ.

#### Q4. Read Ephesians 2:14-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5; John 17:20-23

A barrier of hostility existed between the Jews and Gentiles. This passage tells us that Jesus <u>is</u> peace. Why do you think it is significant that he didn't "negotiate" a peace, or "give" them peace, but rather is himself the embodiment of peace? How do we acquire the peace of Jesus? In verses 15 and 16, how did He go about breaking down that wall of hostility? Jesus announced this good news to both those who were spiritually far off (Gentiles) and spiritually near to God (Jews) because the same solution was now available to both. What was the solution to peace with God and unity with one another?

Peter echoes Paul's image of the body of believers built together into a dwelling place for God. (1 Peter 2:4-5) How does Peter describe our purpose of this "spiritual house" in verse 5? In John 17 Jesus prays for unity among all believers. What does the unity of believers signify to the world (John 17:21)? What are some of the sacrifices we may have to make in order to advance peace with other believers and reveal Jesus to the world?

## Wrap-Up

Without God's saving grace through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, both the Jews and Gentiles would be without hope. But because of the immeasurable grace and love of God toward all of us, Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the law in a way we would never be able to do, and granted us access to God through faith in Him. In doing this he broke down the barrier between Jews and Gentiles, creating one unified body of believers, who form a spiritual dwelling place for God. The unity that we have within the body of Christ is itself a revelation of Jesus to the world.

## **Memory Verse**

For by grace you 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. Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV

## Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more notes)\_\_\_\_\_

**Challenge:** Make an extra effort to promote peace within the body of believers this week, even when you may have some significant differences of opinion.

#### Q1

Ephesians 2:8-10 ESV - 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

#### Q2

Ephesians 2:1-3 ESV - 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 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-- 3 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.

Romans 10:4 NIV - 4 Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Ephesians 2:11-16 ESV - 11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands-- 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

#### Q3

Ephesians 2:4-7 ESV - 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved-- 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Exodus 34:6-7a NIV - 6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished...

#### Q4

Ephesians 2:14-22 ESV - 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in

one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

1 Peter 2:4-5 ESV - 4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

John 17:20-23 ESV - 20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

#### Prayer Notes cont.