

To the Saints at Kossuth Street . . . Be a Remembering Community!

Ephesians 2:4-7 November 14, 2010

Intro. What happened to you when God saved you? Think about it. Describe it, using all the words, phrases and concepts you can muster. What did God do? What did you do? Describe why you needed saving. What did Jesus do? What happened inside you? Why did God rescue you? Describe how great your salvation is. Describe the feeling of being 'born from above' . . . what is it like?

The Psalmist both directs and describes the new self talk of the church when he concludes Psalm 107 with these words . . .

Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things; Let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord.

The heartbeat of a church or a professing Christian is heard and felt in the responses to the above questions. Any one of those questions or requests should easily draw a response, maybe even a song, that is Christ centered, truthful, humble and life transforming. The sad dilemma that we face today is that our reflections on our salvation have become more man-centered, traditional, self promoting and shallow.

Consider a few illustrative or diagnostic illustrations that help us define more clearly how we think about God's life transforming power. What do you think of these popular ways of expressing our faith?

God has cast his vote for your soul. Satan has cast his vote for your soul. Now you must decide.

A good motto for the church is that of Home Depot: You can do it, we can help.

A.W. Tozer quote . . .

All unannounced and most undetected there has come in modern times a new cross into popular evangelical circles. . . This new evangelism employs the same language as the old, but its content is not the same and its emphasis is not as before . . .

The new cross does not slay the sinner; it redirects him. It gears him into a cleaner and holier way of living and saves his self respect. To the self assertive it says, "Come and assert yourself for Christ." To the egotist it says, "Come and do your boasting in the Lord." To the thrill seeker it says, "Come and enjoy the thrill of an abundant life."

Ultimately, it does not really matter what you think of these expressions, we must have our thinking shaped by the words of God found in scripture.

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

How easy it is for us as the church of the living God to forget the greatness of the rescuing kindness of God in and through Christ Jesus. So we are called and commanded to remember (2:11) that God saved and transformed us by grace, through faith in Christ Jesus.

Remember what you were . . . Facing the truth about yourself . . .

Ephesians 2:1-3

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| 1. You were dead toward God. | 2:1 |
| 2. You were enslaved to compelling forces. | 2:2-3 |
| 3. You were condemned by God. | 2:3 |

This morning from 2:4-7 we want to stir our hearts and minds to rich appreciation regarding why God saved you and what happened when God saved you. Finally the subject and main verb of this long sentence appear in vs. 4-5 . . . ‘God made us alive.’ Between the subject and the verb are two descriptive clauses that explain the action of the subject for the reader. Why he made us alive is given in the clause ‘being rich in mercy.’ That mercy of God is further described by his great love and our absolute helplessness.

Remember why God saved you.

2:4-7

What prompted or motivated God to save you? The contrast is clearly seen as four terms are used to describe the heart of God in response to our being dead in sin, enslaved by compelling forces and condemned under his just wrath.

God saved you in order to display his enormous kindness . . . in a sense to show off. Terms piled up in 2:4-7 that explain why God saved you . . . these are the terms that should dominate your thinking and talking about your being rescued by God:

- He is rich in mercy 4 an expression of love and generosity where none is expected. goodness toward those in misery and distress.
Psalm 103:8ff Jonah 4:2ff
- His love is great 4 God gives of himself for your benefit.
Measured by gift of his unique Son Rom.8:32
Psalm 107 – steadfast/loyal/persevering love
- His grace is immeasurable 7 God’s goodness toward those who deserve punishment
Free/unearned; opposed to any idea of merit
E 1:6-8 Rom.3:23-24
- He is kind 7 Kindness is a summary term for God’s graciousness to sinners
God’s kindness is rejected by condemned sinners Rom 2:4
Luke 6:35-36

God saved you to display/make known his extravagant, extraordinary love and grace. God is for you in every way even though you were against him in every way. Remembering why God saved you . . .

- Invites you to trust him.
- Assures you he will help and complete what he has started in you.
- Gives you confidence to seek him and ask him for help.

Illus - Intoxicating grace . . . this surpassing mercy, love and grace compels and controls the believer who chooses to allow them to do so. Just as the world, the devil and your flesh compelled and controlled your choices before salvation, God’s Spirit helps us respond to life in a new way . . . as beloved children.
E 4:1; 5:1-2; 5:18ff

Remember what happened when God saved you.

2:4-7

What took place inside you when God saved you? What buttons were pushed, powers disabled, new gadgets installed, barriers removed, new lines established, new options became available? A shallow or inadequate answer here is devastating to the advance of God's glory and gospel. God did a lot when he saved you. In our verses today we see that God united us with Christ in his resurrection, ascension and exaltation. His uniting you with Christ was directed at rescuing you from every aspect of your lostness described in verses 1-3.

'together with' is a prefix added to each of three verbs which describe what God did to transform you from what you were to who you are as a saved person. God united you to Christ so that all the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection have become yours. This union with Christ is an experiential union that is crucial to your understanding and living your faith.

- You were made alive together with Christ. 2:5

What was dead has now been made alive.

A profound transformation –you are alive to God just as Jesus is.

New disposition; not new faculties/members. Rom.6:1-14

Col. 2:13

Hearing ill . . . dead nerve endings God's words, Spirit, Son, prayer

- You were raised up together with Christ. 2:6

What was enslaved to world, devil and self has been released to new values/environment.

A powerful ascension/breakthrough to new realities . . . outside of self, pleasure, evil

Newness of life of Romans 6:4

Set free to a living hope . . . 1Peter 1:3 Col.3:1 . . . set your mind on things above

- You were seated with Christ in heavenly places. 2:6

What was condemned is now seated in a place of intimacy with God through Christ.

Cmp E 1:20-23 A powerful transformation from wrath to intimacy.

Cmp John 15:4-6 Abide/remain is the choice to live in the new freedom and power available to you by your union with Jesus Christ. It is the living out of the powerful rescue provided to you by God.

This powerful union with Christ produces in us . . .

- Praise and thanks with fresh insight. E 1:18ff Psa 107:43 Hosea 14:9
- Satisfaction and desires with new joy. E. 4:17-24 Psa. 107:9
- Obedience and worship with new found energy. E. 5:18-21 Col. 3;10

Born again – born from above . . . John 3:7; 6:34,44

Remember why God saved you.**2:4-7**

God saved you to display/make known his extravagant, extraordinary love and grace. God is for you in every way even though you were against him in every way. Remembering why God saved you . . .

Remember what happened when God saved you.**2:4-7**

God united you to Christ so that all the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection have become yours. This union with Christ is an experiential union that is crucial to your understanding and living your faith.

Ways to remember . . .

1. Immerse yourself in the new concepts and vocabulary of your union with Christ.
2. Humbly die to yourself every day by acknowledging that your salvation is all of God.
3. Ask God to open the eyes of your heart to know him more.
4. Turn from your sin and cry out to God today to save you in Christ.

Study Questions

1. Read Ephesians 2:1-10 together. These verses seem to break down into three sections of 1-3, 4-7, and 8-10. Come up with a title or descriptive phrase for the content of each section.
2. Have the group share some thoughts/responses to the questions of the opening paragraph of the sermon intro in the notes. What are some subtle and seemingly innocent ways that we minimize God's saving us when we remember it?
3. Review each of the three truths about you before your salvation. Encourage one another to list them without looking at the notes. How can these truths be expressed in the way you think and talk about your salvation without seeming too harsh or insensitive?
4. Why did God save you? Is the answer 'to show off' inappropriate? Why? If not, what did God want to 'show off?' How does remembering God's kindness in all of its expressions encourage you to submit control of your life to him?
5. What happened when God saved you? Can you explain what it felt like to be dead toward God, enslaved to compelling powers and condemned? Using the same concepts or application points, what is it like to be alive to God with Christ? What are you alive to . . . new what?
6. What does it mean in practical terms for you to abide in Christ? John 15:4-6
7. Read/review the 4 cycles of Psalm 107. Pray and praise together as commanded in the Psalm.
8. Ask your group to pray for you as you attempt to talk about/remember your salvation with someone this week. Pray that you will be able to remember it with new insight and energy from God.