

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes September 19, 2007

Ephesians 2: 1-10 (Part Four)

“Are You Dead or Alive”

Ephesians, chapter 2

- 1: And you he made alive,
when you were dead through 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 these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh,
following the desires of body and mind,
and so we were by nature children of wrath,
like the rest of mankind.
- 4: But God, who is rich in mercy,
out of the great love with which he loved us,
- 5: even when we were dead through our trespasses,
made us alive together with Christ
(by grace you have been saved),
- 6: and raised us up with him,
and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
- 7: that in the coming ages
he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace
in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
- 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 because of works, lest any man should boast.**
- 10: For we are his workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand,
that we should walk in them.**

Introduction:

- Are you dead or alive? This is what we've been discussing over the past few weeks, which to many might seem quite absurd. "If I'm hearing this program, then dummy I'm obviously alive!" But are you? There are people walking around today, in all walks of life, who presume they are alive, yet they are dead. But Scripture teaches that if you are in Christ, then you are alive? But don't get complacent as if you've therefore arrived, or too cocky as if you're alive spiritually because of your mental prowess, intellect, or will. Being made alive is a gift, and a gift that must be continually received. This is part of what we will discuss today on **Deep In Scripture**.

Discussion:

- Welcome....website ... Phone numbers ... special...

- In our study of Ephesians, we have completed chapter 1, which consists basically of a greeting and then two long sentences of praise to God for what He done by grace for newly baptized Gentile believers.
- Chapter 2 is a continuation of St. Paul's thoughts, beginning with 1:13-14, and this context is essential to understanding the meaning of Ch. 2:
 - "In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."*
 - In vss. 15-23, St. Paul expounds on how he prays for them, on what he hopes they will experience as they grow in grace, as a result of being sealed in baptism.
 - In 2:1, he picks up again with what they received in baptism & this context is crucial! All that is said in the following verses is in the context of baptism, and NOT merely a faith alone reception of grace!

We are looking at this section under the question: "Are you dead or alive?" & under three headings:

- (1) What were we before Baptism: dead (2:1-3);
- (2) What has God done for us in baptism: made alive (2:1, 4-7);
- (3) How did we receive this: grace (2:8-10)

I: What we were before Baptism: dead (2:1-3);

II: What God did for us in baptism: made us alive (2:1, 4-7);

- (1) Continuation of Vss 1:13-14, "heard...have believed...were sealed"
- (2) In middle of this, he clearly states, "by grace you have been saved."
- (3) God's other motive: vs. 7 ... 1 Tim 2:4
 - "...that in the coming ages, he might show the immeasurable riches of his **grace** in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."*

III: How did we receive this? Grace (2:8-10)

- 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 because of works, lest any man should boast.**
- 10: For we are his workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand,
that we should walk in them.**

(A) The importance of terms:

- "For"
- The problem of boasting
- Grace
- Saved
- Faith
- Works

(B) The Catholic understanding of these terms:

- Grace**
***1999** The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it. It is the sanctifying or deifying grace received in Baptism. It is in us the source of the work of sanctification (see John 4:14; 7:38-39):*

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself (II Cor. 5:17-18).

2000 Sanctifying grace is an habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by his love. Habitual grace, the permanent disposition to live and act in keeping with God's call, is distinguished from actual graces which refer to God's interventions, whether at the beginning of conversion or in the course of the work of sanctification.

□ **Saved**

The freeing of the soul from the bonds of sin and its consequences and the attainment of the everlasting vision of God in Heaven, not merely by way of reward but as the achievement of man's proper end. Salvation, though ultimately depending solely upon the love and mercy of God, is open to all by cooperation with divine grace according to the individual's knowledge and powers. The ordinary road to salvation is through visible membership of the Church; but "God gives light, sufficient for its salvation, to every soul that attains to the use of reason in this life" (de Ludo, De fide). (A Catholic Dictionary, 1941)

169 Salvation comes from God alone; but because we receive the life of faith through the Church, she is our mother: "We believe the Church as the mother of our new birth, and not in the Church as if she were the author of our salvation."⁶⁵ Because she is our mother, she is also our teacher in the faith.

□ **Faith**

150 Faith is first of all a personal adherence of man to God. At the same time, and inseparably, it is a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed. As personal adherence to God and assent to his truth, Christian faith differs from our faith in any human person. It is right and just to entrust oneself wholly to God and to believe absolutely what he says. It would be futile and false to place such faith in a creature.

1814 Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself. By faith "man freely commits his entire self to God." For this reason the believer seeks to know and do God's will. "The righteous shall live by faith." Living faith "work[s] through charity" (Rom. 1:17, Gal. 5:6).

□ **Works**

All works involved in the observance of the precepts and counsels though the term is usually reserved to the latter, and comprises all that falls under the three broad headings of prayer, fasting, alms – deeds. Good works are not the cause of justification. We are made just by the sanctifying grace of infused charity; but if we love God efficaciously above all things we necessarily act accordingly, and thus good works must also precede justification in an adult. The Council of Trent requires for justification, besides faith, acts of fear, hope, initial love and sorrow. In this sense also, therefore, good works are necessary to salvation as prerequisite. (A Catholic Dictionary, 1941)

(C) What does this text teach us, practically?

1. Our salvation involves the mystery of our continuing partnership with God;
2. Bottom line, it involves a humble abandonment of self;
3. Following God's will requires a surrender to His Church.