God's Power for Salvation 1.29.12

2:1And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2in 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—3among 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. 4But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—6and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
(Ephesians 2:1-10 ESV)

Human beings are spiritually dead (2:1-3)

- We were dead in our trespasses and sins (2:1)
  - Following the course of this world (2:2)
    - This world is on a course that is opposed to Christ and his Kingdom
    - *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:15-17)*
  - Following the prince of the power of the air (2:2)
    - The power of the air is a similar expression to "heavenly places" (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12)
    - He is at work in the sons of disobedience
  - We lived in the passion of the flesh (2:3)
    - Carrying out the desires of the body
    - Carrying out the desires of the mind
- This spiritual death has disastrous consequences: All mankind exists in a state of being "children of wrath" (2:3)
  - Because of our spiritual death wrath is what we have coming to us
  - *"But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed." (Rom 2:5)*

God brings dead sinners to life (2:4-7)

- To bring a dead sinner to life you need two things
  - Power to do it (1:18; 2:5; 1:6-7; 3:7-8)
  - A reason to do it
- Two motivations in Ephesians 2
  - God loves us (2:4)
  - God wants to demonstrate his grace (2:7)

We lay hold of this life through faith, and not anything we do (2:8-9)

- God wants to highlight his amazing grace in the coming ages (2:7)
- Salvation must avoid works to preserve the display of God's grace (2:9)
  - *"Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith." (Rom 3:27)*
- So salvation comes by faith
  - It is the only thing we can do that is not a work
  - Even the faith is God's gift (cf. 1:4, 5, 11)

This salvation leads to glorious benefits for us (2:5, 6, 10)

- We were dead, but now we are alive in Christ (2:1, 5)
- We were children of wrath, but now we are raised up and seated with Christ (2:3, 6)
  - *"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." (Col 3:1-3)*
  - What is true of Jesus (1:20-21) is true of us in Jesus
- We could do no good, but now we walk in good works
  - This is crucial
    - Good works are of critical importance in the Kingdom of Jesus
    - We just need to understand them in their proper place
      - Works do not lead to salvation
      - Works flow from salvation
  - *"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may be abound in every good work." (2 Cor 9:8)*
  - *"For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead." (James 2:26)*