

From sinner to saint

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Ephesians / Salvation / Ephesians 2:1–10

From sinner to saint through the power of God

Introduction

Most Christians do not truly comprehend the power of the gospel.

They don't contemplate how the infinite power of Christ was displayed in the gospel and they don't realise how that same power is utilised every time God changes a sinner into a saint.

Knowing this may encourage you as a believer to grow in confidence to proclaim the gospel, but it also will grow your confidence in overcoming the world, the devil and the flesh in your walk with God.

The gospel message is not only the good news of Christ death and resurrection for the sins of the elect, but it is also the power of God for salvation.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **Romans 1:16***
ESV

Meaning that the power that was used in raising Christ from the dead is utilised by God to raise spiritually dead people from the walking zombie state.

Eph 1:3-14 Paul calls the believers to praise God for the spiritual blessings every believer has in Christ

Eph 1:15-23 is a prayer of thanks giving and a petition to understand these spiritual resources and specifically the hope, the spiritual inheritance and the greatness of the power directed towards the believer.

The power is illustrated in that it was used to raised Jesus from the dead, seat him in heavenly places far above all rule and authority, subject everything to Christ and ultimately made Christ the head of the church.

Ultimately it brings about Gods cosmic plan to unite or subject all things in heaven and earth under Christ. (Eph 1:9-10)

In Chap 2:1-10 we see how God utilized that power through the gospel to change the nature of the sinner to a saint, to make them alive, to raise them up and to seat them with Christ in heavenly places.

2:1-7 is the third long sentence and at its main idea shows how God made the sinner that was spiritually dead, alive, raised them and seated them in the heavenly places to show the riches of His glory.

Passage Eph 2:1-7

Proposition

8 Truths that explain how God transformed sinners into saints through His power to display His grace

1. The unbeliever's nature
2. The unbeliever's ruler
3. The unbeliever's life
4. The unbeliever's destiny
5. The believer's nature
6. The believers condition
7. The believers position
8. The believer's destiny

1. The unbeliever's nature

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

Paul does not explain the grace of God until he explained the desperate condition of mankind.

And you

You= The readers, the saints

were dead

better translated "being dead" = reveals the unbeliever's nature or condition before salvation

Adams sin resulted in every human being a sinner by birth and being spiritually dead to God from birth.

For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:19 ESV

Gk term dead= implies the lack of spiritual life, being completely indifferent to God and unable to respond to matters relating to God.

Recently I found a dead mongoose in our back yard.

I first probed it with a stick and I noticed that there was no response, no reaction.

Unbelievers are unable to respond in faith and obedience to God.

They are like spiritual walking zombies.

The grammar indicates that they were not dead because of their trespasses and sins, but because they were in sin.

Committing sinful acts do not make you a sinner.

You commit sinful acts because you are a sinner by nature.

The unbeliever sinful nature causes them to practice sin.

in the trespasses and sins

Trespasses means that a person **oversteps moral boundaries**, means to violate Gods moral standards.

Sins means to **act contrary to Gods will** and law and to engage in wrong doing.

The unbeliever **is dead to God** and operates in the **realm of violating Gods moral standards and act contrary to Gods will.**

Principle

The unbeliever **is spiritually dead** (completely indifferent to God) **by nature** and **lives practically in a world of violating Gods moral standards.**

Salvation requires not only **a change of behaviour**, but also a **change of nature** which requires the **power of God** to change you.

Application

You may be a good parent, a good worker, a great humanitarian, **but you need Christ just** as much as the bad person, drunk, murdering people even though they don't **live equally sinful lives.**

The good and the bad person **are both spiritually dead**, separated from God by their nature as sinner.

This means that you can pray a **1000 sinners prayers**, you can attend a **1000 church services**, and read your bible every day, you could be a pastor or a theologian, **your life could look like godly Christians life**, but **unless your nature is changed from being spiritually dead** to being spiritually alive, your destiny will be hell.

2. The unbeliever's ruler

*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— **Ephesians 2:2 ESV***

in which you once walked,

Paul refers back to how the Believers walk before their conversion

This is what they did.

following the course of this world,

They walked like the world.

The world refers to:

1. the Satanic organised system that opposes everything Godly.
- 2, the worlds values, standards, lifestyles, attitudes, habits, preferences apart from God
3. The ideologies and philosophical systems of thought in opposition to God.

Some elements characterise this current world system is humanism, materialism and illicit sex.

- Humanism places man above all else
- Materialism places high value on material things esp. money
- Sexual perversion dominates our modern-day society (MacArthur)

The unbelievers walk is characterised by selfishness and the pursuit of money and illicit sexual pleasures.

The world's values and pursuits rules over and has authority and power over the unbeliever's life.

following the prince of the power of the air,

The unbeliever is ruled not only by the pursuits of the world but ultimately by Satan, who rules over this evil world.

Air in ancient times was that which filled the space between the earth and the moon.

Here it refers to the place or sphere in which the devil is active.

Satan controls the external environment (the realm of the air)

We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. 1 John 5:19 ESV

Satan has his own kingdom called the domain of darkness.

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, Colossians 1:13 ESV

Satan rules and has authority (the right to command and the power to enforce) over those in his kingdom.

He also rules the human spirit of the unbeliever.

The grammar indicates that the next phrase functions in a subordinate role to the prince of the power of the air.

Here the term spirit most likely refers to the inward immaterial part of a person.

Like we find in

*The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
Romans 8:16 ESV*

This means that Satan not only rules the immoral worldly system, but also rules the inward part of an unbeliever.

Satan blinds their minds from the gospel.

In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4 ESV

Since Satan rules both the world system, but also the mind of the unbeliever, their lives are characterised by disobedience (called the sons of disobedience) and they can only be delivered by the power of God.

In summary

The unbelievers are under the power of the world, and ultimately by Satan.

Application

This passage tells us:

1. That the power controlling this world system is Satan.
2. That every child born is a child under the power, rule, control of Satan and is a sinner by nature.

3. That cute cuddly baby is called a child of disobedience, ruled by Satan until God saves them through the power of God (the gospel).
4. That your first priority as a parent is to pray and share the gospel with that child

That brings us to the next point:

3. The unbeliever's life

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. Ephesians 2:3 ESV

Paul reveals a disturbing picture of the life of the sons of disobedience(unbelievers).

among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh,

We = Paul and His readers

lived= refers to the conduct, the behaviour of a person

Passions= to strongly desire to have what belongs to another, it's a desire for something forbidden, a craving or a lust.

The moral character of a desire is determined by the object you desire.

Desiring what is allowed by God is not sinful

Desiring what is forbidden by God makes the desire sinful

Paul referred to sinful desires.

Flesh= refers to sinful human nature. It's the source of sinful acts, the whole human being that is affected by the fall.

(Word Biblical Commentary) the flesh = the sphere of humanity in its sinfulness and opposition to God. It is the sphere in which a person not only displeases God but is also in fact incapable of pleasing God (cf. Rom 8:8). It is the sphere in which life is lived in pursuit of one's own ends and in independence of God.

The grammar implies that the unbeliever does not live **but is lived**.

They are governed by the **strong cravings or desires** coming out of their sinful human nature (the flesh).

They don't control their desires; **their desires control them**.

carrying out the desires of the body and the mind,

Gk **carrying** = to **perform an action or course of action**, to practice something, to carry out an **obligation of moral or social nature**.

The grammar indicates they practice **these desires in an ongoing manner**.

The **unbelievers practice the wishes of their flesh and thinking**.

The unbeliever is not **only controlled by His desires**, they also **perform actions driven by their flesh and depraved thinking**.

*The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. **Genesis 6:5 ESV***

Application

You and I should know that unbelievers **live and act not only according to their nature, but also according to their sinful desires** and thinking.

You should not be surprised when **unbelievers worship Satan, or becomes totally immoral sexually**.

The Bible tells us.

*Therefore God gave them up in **the lusts of their hearts** to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie **and worshiped and served the creature** rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. **Romans 1:24–27 ESV***

*For this reason, God gave them up to **dishonourable passions**. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were **consumed***

with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

4. The unbeliever's destiny

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. Ephesians 2:3 ESV

and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

The grammar reveals that every believer prior to salvation, was by nature a child of wrath in an ongoing basis.

Wrath is Gods holy emotional extreme anger response because of sin.

Just like the rest of mankind.

Because of Adamic sin, the unbelievers have a relationship towards God's wrath instead of towards God Himself.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
Romans 1:18 ESV*

The unbeliever is under Gods wrath fundamentally because there are unrighteous in nature.

And so, because they are unrighteous by nature, they suppress the revealed knowledge of God in creation leaving them without excuse.

The canvas picturing the unbeliever's life, paints a picture of them ruled by the world, Satan and the flesh desires, doomed to experience Gods eternal wrath.

The wrath is not only experienced in this life by God, as He hands them over to their own sins and sinful desires, but also in the life to come, an eternity of Gods wrath undiluted in hell.

A hopeless situation, were it not for the power of God, the gospel

Thankfully God acted.

5. The believer's nature

*But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— **Ephesians 2:4–5 ESV***

The main point of this whole sentence is that God:

1. made them alive
2. raised them up
3. seated them with Christ.

Let's look at the 1st point.

But God,

In contrast to man's condition as unbelievers, God's character and act of grace and power is explained.

being rich in mercy,

vs 1-3 the unbeliever is described as being under the power and rule of Satan, the world and the flesh destined for God's wrath and the readers expect God's response to display His wrath.

But indicates a contrast as you are introduced to a God being rich in mercy.

rich= meaning in large amounts, being valuable and in abundance

Mercy means to show kindness, compassion or leniency towards offenders.

Jesus described the good Samaritan compassion in contrast to the Jewish religious leaders' response to an undeserving man as a demonstration of mercy

*He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise." **Luke 10:37 ESV***

God is described as being rich (abundant, with vast amounts) of compassion or pity on sinners suffering the plagues of sin.

The reason for God being merciful

because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses,

The cause for God acting out of His Mercy in an ongoing basis is because of His great (remarkable, out of the ordinary, deep and profound) love (agape, sacrificial love) with which He loved spiritually dead unbelievers.

We = includes Paul + all believers prior to salvation= dead in trespasses.

What did God do?

made us alive together with Christ

Whiles you and I were dead, God being rich in mercy, caused by His abundant love, changed your nature.

He made you alive spiritually alive, how: with (in association, together, in union) with Christ.

So, the power used to make Jesus alive was used to make you alive.

Your nature was changed from being spiritually dead, unresponsive to God to being spiritually alive and responsive towards God.

*For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. **John 5:21 ESV***

Paul described this change in nature as newness of life

*We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. **Romans 6:4 ESV***

—by grace you have been saved—

This is an explanatory remark assuring those who had been made alive in Christ that their salvation is based upon God's grace (unmerited favour, His good will, beneficent disposition towards those deserving only wrath.).

The power of God was used to change your nature and make you spiritually alive.

Application

If you are a believer,

1. Know that God driven by His love showed you mercy.
2. God used His power to change your nature and make your spiritually alive.
3. You now:
 - a. have access to the throne of grace in prayer
 - b. have the glorious spiritual inheritances, every believer has in Christ
4. If your nature has not changed, then by implication God has not yet used His power to save you, and you should fall on your knees before him acknowledging your wretchedness and appeal to Him to save you and make you spiritually alive.
5. repent and trust in Christ's death and resurrection for the forgiveness of your sins.

6.The believer's condition

and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2:6 ESV

Paul parallels what happened to Christ with what happens to the believer at salvation.

- Jesus died physically
- Unbelievers were dead spiritually
- Jesus was raised physically
- The elect was raised with Jesus spiritually

But more than that in the near context, Paul had connected the resurrection of Christ with the power of God in Eph 1:19&20

You may recall that his death was connected with weakness but his resurrection with power

For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God. 2 Corinthians 13:4 ESV

I believe that Paul was emphasising that the believer was transformed from being spiritually dead, weak, under the power of the world, Satan and the flesh to being raised in union with Christ by the power of God.

The implication is that the believer is now to live in the power of God, because the power of God the Gospel, has raised them to live in total dependence upon God's infinite power in Christ.

application

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. Colossians 3:1-2 ESV

Believer:

Since you have been raised with Christ, you should pursue the things above and direct your attention to the things above.

Since you have been raised with Christ you should live your life in dependence upon the power of God, as displayed in the gospel.

Since you have been raised by Christ do not allow sin to rule in your members.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as

instruments for righteousness. Romans 6:12–13 ESV

7. The believer's position

and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2:6 ESV

God in His power not only:

- **changed your nature** making you **alive spiritually**,
- **raised you up with Christ to** live a live-in dependence upon His power
- but also **seated you spiritually** in a **position or a heavenly status** with Christ in the heavenly places (spiritual realm).

In Jesus you are in the same position of authority as Christ has.

that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. Ephesians 1:20–21 ESV

In Christ, **under His authority** you can overcome the **world system, Satan and the flesh**.

The power of God changed **your spiritual status to be in Christ** position of authority.

He is the **highest authority**, but as child of Jesus you represent that authority.

It is through **your union with Jesus that** you have this **status, position and privileges**.

Application

1. Even though you have not yet seen your spiritual inheritance, this position implies that you are not seated in Satan's kingdom anymore, but spiritually seated with Jesus in His kingdom.
2. It implies that in Christ you are in a position of authority over any spiritual demonic entity in the spiritual realm.
3. It implies that you have the freedom to choose not to sin.
4. It implies, you should not fear, whatever the world, Satan or the flesh throws at you:
 - Opening a satanic church in Cape town, should not cause alarm, simply remember that Satan is under Christ authority and you are in Christ
 - A world system that hates Christ, that states that should Jesus come again, they should kill Him again, do not need to fear, for Jesus overcame the world.
 - That sin that you are struggling with, in Christ and independence upon Him, you can simply choose to walk away from it. You have been set free from by the power of God, the gospel.

8. The believer's destiny

so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:7 ESV

The reason God used His power to change your nature, raise you in power and changed your status was to show the immeasurable riches of His grace towards us.

immeasurable= extraordinary, in great scale, surpassing, to do something of greater degree.

God intention is to be a cosmic show master that will display the surpassing, extraordinary riches of his Grace (His unmerited favour).

The believer is destined to an extravaganza of Gods glory.

What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his

power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—
Romans 9:22–23 ESV

The timing of this display: in **the future coming ages.**

This **realm of this display**: the **kindness** (the quality of being warm-hearted, considerate, humane, gentle, sympathetic, providing something beneficial, goodness and generosity) **on us (the** believers)

Those in Jesus Christ.

Application

You were saved to **be Gods display of Grace and goodness in** Christ.

Praise God for His **unmerited** favour, for His display of goodness.

And for those this morning, who do not know Jesus as saviour and Lord, contemplate this invite from Jesus.

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11:28–29 ESV

In closing

8 Truths that explain how God transformed sinners into saints through His power to display His grace

1. The unbeliever's nature was spiritually dead
2. The unbeliever's ruler was Satan
3. The unbeliever's life was controlled by sinful desires of the flesh and mind

4. The unbeliever's destiny is the wrath of God
5. The believer's nature is changed by the power of God to being spiritually alive
6. The believer's condition is transformed from weakness to walking in the power of Christ
7. The believer's position is changed from being in Satan's kingdom to one of being in and under Christ in His infinite authority
8. The believer's destiny is to be a display of Gods abounding riches of Grace and goodness.