

Ephesians 2:1-10

22 November 2020

ICE BREAKER: Describe a recent time you were angry.

LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS:

(Read verses 1-3) **Christianity** is **unique** among all the religions of the world in its **view of humanity**. All other religions and philosophies regard humanity as morally good by nature or neutral, being born with a blank moral slate. The decisions we make determine whether we become good or not. The difference is receiving key information and acting on that information.

The Bible charges that no amount of information or right action can save humanity. Humanity is morally **'dead in...transgressions and sin'**. We are **by nature 'disobedient' to God** and can't help ourselves.

1. Why is the Bible's **teaching** that we are **by nature sinful rejected by other worldviews and modern man**?

(Read verses 1-2) If hearing that we are by nature sinful is **bad news**. It gets **worse**. Not only are we naturally bent to disobey God and pursue a self-centered life, we are under the influence, **demonic influence** 'of the **ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit** who is now at work in those who are disobedient'.

Not only do we have an **enemy from within**, our sinful nature, we have a powerful **enemy from without, Satan** and his **army of demonic spirits** that seek to infiltrate every part of our lives. What's **Satan's goal**? To **keep us busy 'gratifying the cravings of our flesh, and following its desires and thoughts'**.

2. How have you seen **demonic oppression in your life, in society now or in human history past**?

(Read verses 3-4) In the past sermon studying 'the cup of wrath', we found that the **wrath of God** is **rooted in the love of God**. In this passage, Apostle Paul declares 'all of us' are guilty of 'disobedience' to God and have become accomplices in disobedience with Satan. We 'like the rest' are 'by nature **objects of wrath**'.

After condemning us all as objects of God's wrath, Paul declares the Good News! **'But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ** even when we were dead in transgressions.'

3. In the Cross, how can you understand the **wrath of God in relation to 'His great love for us'**?

(Read verses 4-9) **Christianity** is **unique** among all the religions of the world in its **view of righteousness**. Other religions regard humanity as capable of achieving righteousness through good deeds and obedience. Islam requires the submission of all believers. Hinduism requires obedience so one may climb the caste system from the lowest level of the "untouchables" through the highest level of "Brahman."

Buddhism requires the strict discipline of denying all of one's desires to achieve Nirvana. Mormonism requires obedience to good works (tithing, being baptized in the Temple, going to Temple to be sealed, not smoking or drinking alcohol or caffeine, etc.) to become righteous.

The Bible, however, states salvation is only "by God's grace...**not from yourselves, it is a gift of God—not by (your good) works.**"

4. After Jesus took the **cup of wrath** for our sins on the Cross, why would it be an **offense to God** to believe we can **become righteous by just doing good deeds**?

Cut along Dotted Line & use Notes as Book Marker

PRAYER GROUP TIME

(Make a list of people whom those in your group plan to witness Christ to this week.)
