



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: Ephesians 2:8-10

Saved by Participation

“You are saved by grace through faith, & this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—⁹ not from works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.” (Eph. 2:8-10 CSB)

SUMMARY:

A classic statement in Ephesians says we are ‘saved by grace through faith (not by works).’ This was the Reformation’s clarion call. But let’s ask: ‘saved from what?’ Some focus solely on the legal aspect: Jesus’ death saves us from God’s wrath; he paid our sins’ penalty, so God—the Judge—can acquit & forgive us. But, being saved in Ephesians is much more—it’s being saved from spiritual death, from the domination of dark cosmic powers & from our inherited sin-nature. This happens through *union* with Christ—Christ is in us & we are ‘in Christ,’ and through *participation* ‘with Christ’—through faith we were co-enlivened, co-raised, & co-seated together with Christ (Eph. 2:5-6). Let’s learn how to apply our union ‘in Christ’ & our participation ‘with Christ’!

1. Saved by Grace Alone, thro’ Faith Alone, thro’ Christ Alone (Eph. 2:8-9)

a. Saved (Eph. 2:5, 8)

- “Saved refers to deliverance from God’s wrath at the final judgment (Rom. 5:9). “*You have been saved by grace*” (ESV)
- [“*You are saved by grace!*” (CSB)] is repeated from Eph. 2:5 for emphasis. The verb form for “you are/have been saved”(Gk. *ses?smenoi*, perfect tense–past action with continuing results) means the Christian’s salvation is fully secured. ESV

b. By Grace (Eph. 2:5, 8)

- *By grace* refers to God's favor upon those who have transgressed his law & sinned against him. But grace may also be understood as a 'power' in these verses. God's grace not only offers salvation but also secures it. ESV

c. **Through Faith** (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 10:9, 17)

- *through faith.* Faith is a confident trust & reliance upon Christ Jesus & is the only means to obtain salvation. ESV
- "Faith is not something that humans do to make themselves acceptable to God. Nothing we can do, unaided, can achieve that. If there were such a thing, it would become a matter of our initiative, & the people who had this ability would be able to [have] pride over those who didn't. On the contrary. Because it's all a matter of God's gift, there is no room for any human being to boast." [Tom Wright, *Paul for Everyone: Prison Letters – Ephesians*,]
- "Faith comes from hearing, & hearing through the word of Christ [the Gospel of Christ crucified & risen]." (Rom. 10:17)
- "Though it is a human response, *faith itself is a gift from God*; it is God who enables a person who responds in faith."

a. Faith in Jesus' death, resurrection & Lordship (Rom. 10:9)

- "For Paul 'faith' is both the specific belief that Jesus is Lord & that God raise him from the dead (Rom. 10:9) & *the response of grateful human love* to sovereign divine love (Gal. 2:20)." [Tom Wright, *Paul for Everyone: Galatians*, p.]

b. Faith is Relational

- "*Faith is Relational* describing reliance on the reliable God...God by grace makes promises & commits himself to his people. They...trust these promises & live in the light of them. God [is] faithful & people respond in faithfulness. To say 'I have faith' [implies] 'God is a trustworthy God'." [K. Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 105]

c. Faith is Adhesive.

- *Faith is Adhesive.* To believe is "not merely to assent to certain ideas, [believers] are bound to God & live in response to him. Paul's...phrases 'with Christ' & 'in Christ' [imply] that faith joins them to Jesus Christ so strongly that they are in him &...what's true of him is true of them. Christ's past is their past, & he determines their present & future. Faith is *adhesive*, it binds the believer to the one...believed. Salvation does not come from believing ideas or an emotional decision, but from being bound to Christ." [K. Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, p. 105]

d. **God's Gift** (Eph. 2:8b)

- "You are saved by grace through faith, & *this* is not from yourselves; it is God's gift" (Eph. 2:8)
- '*this*' The Greek pronoun is neuter, while 'grace' & 'faith' are feminine [in Gk.]. Accordingly, '*this*' points to the whole process of 'salvation by grace through faith' as being God's gift & not something we can accomplish ourselves. This use of the neuter pronoun to take in the whole of a complex idea is quite common in Greek (e.g., Eph. 6:1); its use here makes it clear that faith, no less than grace, is a gift of God. Salvation, therefore, in every respect, is not your own doing. ESV

e. **Not based on Works, excluding boasting (pride) (Eph. 2:9-10)**

- Salvation is not by works. If it were, then those who are saved would get the glory. *created... for good works.* Salvation is not based on works, but the good works Christians do are the result & consequence of God's new creation work. ESV

2. **Reformed Theology vs. Ephesians A. Five 'Solas' & Penal Substitution central to Reformed Theology**

- a. Reformed Theology "affirm[s] the five *solas* [Scripture, Christ, grace, faith & God's glory—alone] (*sola Scriptura, solus Christus, sola gratia, sola fide, soli Deo Gloria*)...the doctrine of predestination & the importance of Penal Substitutionary Atonement as a crucial (though not exclusive) understanding of the atonement." [Michael Allen, *Reformed Theology*, p. 6]

b. **"Saved" in Reformed Theology—Penal Substitution**

- "Saved refers to deliverance from God's wrath at the final judgment (Rom. 5:9)." [ESV Study Bible note on Eph. 2:5, 8]

- “Since...we’ve now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be *saved by him from the wrath of God*” (Rom. 5:9)
 - In Penal Substitution “the result of Christ’s [redemptive] work is a change in the *forensic* [legal] status of human beings ...[They were] guilty of sin before God or God’s law. [Since] Christ endured...punishment in their place they are no longer subject to divine condemnation. Salvation is...equated with the remission of sins.” [David A. Brondos, *Jesus’ Death in NT Thought*, Vol. 1, p 21] o “Justification’ in Paul is forensic [legal], not transformative...’Righteousness’ rectifies the status of God’s people, it has life as its final goal...” [Michael Bird, *Saving Righteousness of God*, p. 181]
- c. **“Saved” in Ephesians—by Participation** (Eph. 2:1-6)
- You were *dead in your trespasses & sins*² in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the *ruler of the power of the air, the spirit* now working in the disobedient.³ We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh & thoughts, & we were *by nature* children under wrath as the others were also.⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us,⁵ *made us alive* with Christ even though we were *dead in trespasses*. You are saved by grace!⁶ He also *raised us up* with him & *seated us* with him *in the heavens* in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:1-6 CSB)
 - a. With trespasses & sins, under wrath (Eph. 2:1, 5)—Christ as our Redeemer/Substitute
 - b. “*Dead* in trespasses” (Eph. 2:1, 5b-6) –God made us alive, “quickened” us
 - God “*made us alive* with Christ even though we were *dead*...⁶ He also *raised us up* with him...” (Eph. 2:5-6)
 - In “Eph. 2:5-6...the Apostle is saying we have been made alive, raised up, & seated with Christ & these actions...require that they be performed only once.” [Melton B. Winstead, “*Participatory’ Language in Eph.*,” in *NT Philology*, 239]
 - “The three [Gk. ‘co-compounds’—co-enlivened, co-raised, & co-seated] in these two verses [Eph. 2:5-6] express accompaniment, & association, indicating *participation with Christ* in his being made alive, his ascension, & his being seated in the heavens ...Believers partake of these central Christ-events, so what is true of Christ in his resurrection & ascension is true also of those who believe in him.” [Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul & Union with Christ*,] a. Recalling Ezekiel’s Vision of Dry Bones (Ezek. 37: 1-14)
 - “Paul [casts] conversion in terms of resurrection. Eph. 2:1-10 states believers were dead & made alive in Christ. The motif recalls Ezek. 37, in which dry bones live. This connection extends beyond...shared language, including the terms ‘peace’ (?????) & ‘make alive’ (????????). Structural parallels also exist. In Ezek. 37 God resurrects Israel so that his people may know that he is the Lord. In Eph. 2 God raises the believers so they may know the riches in Christ (Eph. 2:7)...Taken together these elements form distinctive associations between Eph. 2 & Ezek. 37...Eph. 2 expands on...Ezk. 37...[in terms of] a spiritual transformation...Paul does not claim that [Ezekiel’s] prophecy is fulfilled. The dry bones only become living people when the ‘spirit’ enters them (Ezk. 37:8-9). The Spirit’s indwelling facilitates a spiritual... resurrection...in Ezek. 37. Paul’s description of spiritual rejuvenation in Eph. 2 shows... such work has begun. Eph 2 shows believers the significance of conversion in light of the larger motif that it participates in: resurrection, the presence of God, & the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s vision....” [Abner Chou, *I Saw the Lord: Biblical...Vision*, 170] b. Echoing the theme of Jesus’ ‘Enacted Parable’ (Jn. 20:22)
 - On the day “of his resurrection, Jesus appears to his disciples &, after commissioning them to continue the mission he has inaugurated, engages in *an enacted parable*: “He breathed on them & said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22).” [Gregg Allison, Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Holy Spirit*, p.]
 - The Gospel of “John uses the language of breathing out the Spirit to evoke Ezekiel’s... vision (Jn. 20:22; Ezek. 37:11-14)...John sees Jesus bringing new life through the life-giving...Spirit.” [Gary T. Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet*, p. 171]
 - The [infusion] of the Spirit in Jn. 22:22...evokes the re- creation envisaged in Ezekiel 37:9. These verbal allusions virtually assure that John 20:22 depicts Jesus re-creating the disciples by imparting the life-giving Spirit. This interpretation fits in well with John’s presentation of the Spirit in relation to life (John...) Although [Gk.] *pneuma* can mean

- “wind,” “breath,” or “spirit,” with the exception of the phrase “Come from the 4 winds,” the other eight occurrences [in Ezek. 37]...arguably refer to the divine Spirit.” [Max Turner, *Spirit & Christ in the NT.*, p. 95] Key to participation in Christ—the Spirit
- “The Spirit is, in a very specific way, the key...in participation: it...put[s] to death its evil deeds and at the same time vivifies [enlivens]...The Spirit’s part...is to ‘infuse’ [believers]...with Christ’s dying...and at the same time [to ‘infuse’] with the life of Christ’s risen body...” [Colin D. Miller, *Practice of the Body of Christ*, 102-3]
 - “The Holy Spirit...as the giver of life...is the divine point of contact wherever new life is taking place...The same power that raised Christ from the dead is at work in believers—to co-quicken, co-raise, co-exalt, & co-enthroned (Rom. 8:11; Eph. 2:5-7).” [Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, p. 195]
- c. Under “the Ruler of the Air”—Satan & his subordinates (Eph. 2:2; Col. 2:15)
- “On the cross [God] disarmed the rulers & authorities & disgraced them publicly; he triumphed over them...” (Col. 2:15)
 - “A ‘physical’ understanding of Christ’s work [sees] his incarnation, life, death, & resurrection [as]...*bringing about some ontological change* in the nature (Gk: *physis*) of human beings or the created order...[relative to] some power...to which human beings have become subject & [need to] be delivered. NT allusions to Christ’s defeat of evil principalities & powers...[his] conquering the Devil & other demonic beings in order to liberate human beings from bondage [gives rise to] the [*Christ the Victor*] idea.” [David A. Brondos, *Jesus’ Death in NT Thought*, 1, pp. 49-50]
- d. *Delivered from the Devil*: “Human nature & the world are...subject to ‘sin’...a power that must be overcome. This power [is] an impersonal force [‘Sin’] residing in human nature [&] or a...being such as the Devil...exerting influence... from *within* them [‘Sin’] or *outside* of them [Satan & his subordinates]...Human beings are incapable of saving themselves from these powers [so] Christ must save them...[Here] Christ’s incarnation, death, and resurrection effect an *ontological [organic]* change in human beings...i.e., a change in their *being*...God alone effects this change...[a] deliverance...[that] must be fully realized...by means of their faith... The [*Christ the Victor*] and participatory understandings of Christ’s work...can be understood in terms of Christ defeating evil & the Devil ‘physically’ so that human beings are delivered from the [cosmic] powers,...Sin & Death...[Plus, the organic] transformation may be seen as the result of...the work of the Holy Spirit.” [David A. Brondos, *Jesus’ Death in NT Thought*, 1, pp. 21-23]
- God “raised us up with [Christ] & seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus.” (Eph 2:6)
 - “The phrase ‘seated us with him in the heavens’ in Christ Jesus goes beyond other texts that speak of the believers’ solidarity with Jesus’ dying & rising.” [Peter S. Williamson, *Ephesians*, 61]
 - “In Ephesians...we find the highest spiritual truths concerning the Christian life...The letter reveals our life in Christ to be one of union with Him in the highest heavens... Note to word ‘sit’ (Eph. 2:6) which is the key...& the secret of a true Christian experience. God has made us sit with Christ in the heavenly places, & every Christian must begin his [her] spiritual life from that place of rest.” [Watchman Nee, *Sit, Walk, Stand*, 6]
 - “The belief that a Christian is seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6)... is *the* distinctive teaching of Evangelical Christianity.” [Gerald Bray, “*Filioque Clause in History & Theology*,” Tyndale Bulletin, V. 34, p. 143]
 - Paul makes a “link between Christ enthroned (Eph. 1:20) & his people...graciously enthroned with him (Eph. 2:6)...This means, for those who have been joined in union with Messiah...that, having been *incorporated* into Christ, ‘*what God did for Christ he did at the same time for believers*’.” [Matthew Friedman, *Union with God in Christ*, p. 86]
 - ‘*seated us with Christ in heavenly places*’. God has allowed his people even now to share in a measure of the authority that Christ has, seated at the right hand of God, [‘far above’ above principalities & dark cosmic powers] a truth that would be especially important in Ephesus with all of its occult practices. ESV
- e. Having a fallen ‘Sin’ nature —“we were *by nature* children under wrath” (Eph. 2:3)
- “Sin came into the world through one man [Adam], & death through sin, & so death spread to all people...” (Rom. 5:12)

- “I don’t do the good I want, but the evil I don’t want...I keep doing...Its sin that dwells in me that does it.” (Rm. 7:19-20)
- “God...by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin,...*condemned sin* in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3)
- “Christ’s death deals with the indwelling sin-nature. J. Dunn “claims Paul understood sin as...analogous to a...virus, or a malignant cancer dwelling within the flesh of human beings. According to Paul, ‘there is also a violent toxin within, whose poison, if...unchecked, will slowly kill the whole organism.’ In order to overcome this malignant power, God sent God’s Son in the flesh. Through his death, Christ puts an end to the ‘infected’ flesh of human beings and through his resurrection brings a ‘new creation’ into existence.” [David A. Brondos, *Jesus’ Death in NT Thought*, 1, p. 51]
- Like a “Vaccination. In vaccination germs are introduced into a healthy body in order that by destroying these germs the body will build up its strength...We might say [on the cross] the ‘germ of sin’ was introduced into Jesus, the only one ‘healthy’/whole enough to let that sin run its full course. The ‘vaccination’ seemed to fail, because Jesus died. But it did not fail...he rose again; & his new humanity is ‘germ-resistant,’ sin resistant...He offers to share it with [people].”
- [James D.G. Dunn, “Paul’s Understanding of the Death of Jesus,” R. Banks (ed.) *Reconciliation & Hope*, p. 140]

3. Change in constitution (being), not merely (legal) status

- Sanders stresses “Paul spoke of ‘*real participation in Christ*, real possession of the Spirit.’ He says...it’s ‘best to understand Paul saying what he meant & meaning what he said: Christians really are one body & one Spirit with Christ.’ ...This involves taking Paul’s participatory language *literally*.” [D. Brondos, *Jesus’ Death in NT Thought*, Vol.1, pp. 57, 74]
- “Christ’s death...brings about a *change in the ontological condition of human beings* rather than [merely] in their forensic status before God...If the powers [of] sin, death...& the curse are involved, what is removed is their actual *power*...rather than their *right*...as in the Penal Substitution view...Instead of a change taking place *in God* [his attitude, etc.], physical interpretations posit a change in the natural order [of the cosmos].” [D A Brondos, *Jesus’ Death in NT Thought*, 1, p. 54]

4. Saved by Participation—Union with Christ

- “*You were included in Christ* when you heard the...the gospel of your salvation...when you believed...” (Eph. 1:13 NIV)
- “It’s *from [God]* that *you are in Christ Jesus*, who became...our righteousness, sanctification, & redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30)
- “I’ve been crucified with Christ; *I no longer live, but Christ lives in me*...I now live...by faith in the Son of God.” (Gal. 2:20)
- “I am the true vine...[remain] abide in me, & I in you...⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches.” (John 15:1, 4-5)

a. Union with Christ—Christ in us, we ‘*in Christ*’ (Eph. 1:13; 1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 2:20; Jn. 15:4-5)

- The Gk. phrase “*in Christ*” occurs 83 times in Paul’s letters (not counting ‘in him’) “*in the Lord*” occurs 47 times “*In Christ*” denotes transfer of lordship & existential participation in the new reality brought about by Christ.” (James Dunn)
- “Anyone joined to a prostitute is one body with her¹⁷ But anyone *joined to the Lord is one spirit* with him.” (1 Cor. 6:16-17)
- “If anyone is ‘*in Christ*,’ he is a new creation; the old has passed away, & see, the new has come!” (1 Cor. 5:17)
- “To be ‘in Christ’ is to...be caught up in God’s mission and thus in...God’s very life...[It is] participation in the life and mission of God.” [Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel*, p. 7]
- “Paul’s union-with-Christ [concept]...represents a pillar of his...teaching...[It’s] a ‘key to Paul’s theology’...Through union-with-Christ, a believer experiences new life...that has its source in participation with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. Believers have died with Christ (Rom. 6:8;

Col. 2:20), & through their identification with Christ at baptism they participate in his death...& they also *participate in his resurrection* (Rom. 6:4-5; Eph. 2:5...). *In addition believers have also been seated 'with him in heavenly realms' (Eph. 2:6)...* Because of all [this]...a believer is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). Christ lives in believers (Gal. 2:20)." [J. Scott Duvall, J. Daniel Hays, *God's Relational Presence*, pp.]

a. Christ in Us; We in Christ—like the Air

- Just as *the air of life, which we breathe is 'in' us* & fills us, & yet *we* at the same time *live in this air* & breathe it, so it is also with the Christ-intimacy of the Apostle Paul: Christ in him, he in Christ." [Adolf Deissmann, *Paul* (1926) p. 140]
- By the indwelling Holy Spirit: "The phrase 'in Christ' is used to describe that *participation in and union* with Jesus Christ that's effected for every believer by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit." [Timothy George, *Galatians*, 275]

b. Jesus is the intersection heaven & earth (God's space & human space)

- "...Jews considered the Temple in Jerusalem to be where God dwelt [the intersection of heaven & earth]. God dwelt [above] the ark [in the Temple's Holy of Holies]. Remember...Isaiah (Isa. 6) saw the Lord [and His robe filled the Temple]...That was where the barrier between heaven & earth seems very thin....Heaven & earth intersect (& overlap) in the temple...But the locus of that intersection changed when Jesus died & rose...'*In Jesus...heaven & earth came together once and for all*' (T. Wright)." [Ian Lyall, *Gospel of the Kingdom*, p.]
- "*What does it mean to be 'in Christ'*? How can the [Christian] be in Corinth, or in Chicago, and at the same time be seated with Christ 'in the heavens' [Eph. 2:6]? ...It is not a matter of having one foot on earth and the other in heaven; as embodied creatures [we] can't be two places at once. But *we can be in overlapping domains: we can be in Chicago, [IL., USA] & North America at the same time*. Similarly, we are 'in the heavens' in the same way we [are] 'in Christ,' namely, *in the domain that Christ personally rules*...Disciples are [not] 'in Christ' the way coins are in a piggy bank or milk is in a carton. Rather, disciples are 'in the sphere of Christ's control.' The [Greek] preposition 'en' ['in']...denotes a sphere within which some action occurs...As baptized saints we are transferred into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13). 'To be baptized... mean[s] to be transferred into a sphere or space determined by Christ, [hence, to be] 'in Christ' as a space or sphere'." [Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Faith Speaking Understanding*, pp. 176-178]

c. Jesus—the fulfillment of 'Jacob's ladder' links heaven & earth (Jn. 1:51; Gen. 28:12)

- "The [Jerusalem] Temple was where heaven & earth met...The Temple, & before it the...tabernacle, were thus heirs, within the biblical narrative, to moments like Jacob's vision [Gen. 28:12], the discovery that a particular spot on earth could intersect with & be the gateway, into heaven itself." [N. T. Wright, *Paul & the Faithfulness of God*, p. 967]
- Jesus told Nathaniel: "'Truly I tell you, you'll see heaven opened & the angels of God ascending & descending *on the Son of Man [matching 'Jacob's ladder']*." (Jn. 1:51) **Note:** Jesus recalls the story of Jacob in Gen. 28. Jesus will be a greater way of access to God than the heavenly ladder on which angels traveled between God & Jacob (Gen. 28:12), & wherever Jesus is, that place [is] the 'New Bethel' where God is revealed. [ESV Note] Today Jesus is that ladder/link
- A "really important reinterpretation...in Jn. 1:51...is the recognition that the 'gateway to heaven' (Gen. 28:17) is no longer a place, but *a person—Jesus the Son of Man*. Thus...everywhere in the world...has the potential to be a 'thin place' (...gateway...) made so by the presence of Jesus...the true gateway to heaven." [Paula Gooder, *Heaven*, 102]
- "The idea of being 'in Christ' conveys the idea of being under the Lordship of Jesus Christ." [T. Salazar, *Mystical Union with Christ In Ephesians*, 5/16/2019, p. 21]
- "The Christian believer...has been joined to Christ in an *organic, vital, spiritual and indissoluble union*. The Christian mind [can] now...function within the orbit of...that union." [Douglas Vickers, *Discovering the Christian Mind*, p. 108]

b. Participation—co-enlivened, co-raised, co-seated 'with Christ' (Eph. 2:5-6)

a. Christ's death & resurrection—epoch-changing, cosmic-altering events!

- For Paul "*Jesus Christ is the key pivot of the ages*, the means whereby *the new age has broken into the present* through the death & resurrection of Jesus." [Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, p. 87]
- Paul uses '*with Christ*' "to describe sharing in Christ's death & life...[It reflects a] claim that with Christ's death a whole epoch has passed & a new age begun...['*With Christ*' conveys] a profound sense of participation...in a great and cosmic movement of God centered on Christ & effected through his Spirit." [James D. G. Dunn, *Theology of Paul...*, pp. 402-4]

- God “*made us alive* with Christ...He...*raised us up* with him & *seated us* with him *in the heavens* in Christ...” (E. 2:5-6) 2. Participating in Christ’s death & resurrection radically changes us!
- “The belief that a Christian is seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6)...is *the* distinctive teaching of Evangelical Christianity.” [Gerald Bray, “*Filioque Clause in History & Theology*,” Tyndale Bulletin, Vol. 34, p. 143]
- “For what took place in Christ to...effect...others some...link between Christ and other [people] must be posited... ‘*participation*’ [is used] to speak of this link...Many scholars attribute to Paul an *ontological*... participation...’A kind of ontological union with Christ is presupposed by Paul’...For Paul this union involves a ‘radical ontological transformation of the person’ (Campbell)” [David A. Brondos, *Jesus’ Death in NT Thought*, 1, p. 55]
- “Jesus’ death for Paul is...about the transfer from one sphere to another...The believer acquires this transferred existence by inclusion in the...2nd Adam, in Christ, & by participation in the death & resurrection of the Representative One, i.e., by *co-crucifixion & co-resurrection*’ ...The believer participates in the finality of Jesus’ death & resurrection. That participation...places that person in a new era and sphere of life.” [Scot McKnight, *Jesus & His Death*, p. 351]
- “Our citizenship is in heaven, & we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Phil. 3:20)

5. The Issue—God’s Masterpiece, walking in God-prepared Good Works (Eph. 2:10; cf. James 2:14-17)

- “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.” (2:10)
- “Messiah’s people [are] a new creation, God’s [workmanship/masterpiece] *poiema*, the word from which we get ‘poem,’ rescued in order to model and take forward God’s good purposes in the world.” [N. T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography*, 296]
- “A masterpiece is ‘an outstanding piece of artistry or workmanship; a person’s best work.’ The church is the best work of *three* persons: Father, Son & Holy Spirit. It is a triune masterpiece, an outstanding piece of creative artistry. ‘We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works’ (Eph. 2:10).” [Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 457]
- T.Wright says: “For Paul ‘faith’ is both the specific belief that Jesus is Lord & that God raise him from the dead (Rom. 10:9) & *the response of grateful human love* to sovereign divine love (Gal. 2:20).” “Faith is not JUST belief, it is also response. Consider Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. 2:8-10)” adds Rachel M. Stone, *Telling God’s Story*, Year 4, p.
- “Good works may not merit salvation, but they are inextricably bound up with it. Thus good works ought not to be excluded from the discussion of people’s authentic faith & salvation...” [Craig A. Boyd, Don Thorsen, *Christian Ethics & Moral Philosophy*,]

QUESTIONS Read Eph. 1:3-14 note (perhaps underline or mark) each time the phrase “*in Christ*” or “*in him*” occurs.

1. In these verses, who does what “in Christ” or “in him”? Does God do some action “in Christ,” or is it humans (us)?
2. What does it mean for us to be “*in Christ*”? How do we get to be “*in Christ*”?
3. 1:13 in the NIV reads: “you...were included in Christ when you heard...the gospel of your salvation... when you believed...” According to this how do we get to be “*in Christ*”? Do other verses help answer? Which?
4. How has (or should) realizing you are “*in Christ*” and Christ is “*in you*” (Col. 1:29) impact your life?
5. 2:1-4 says we were in a desperate situation, with multiple problems; what were those problems? Enumerate
6. In Eph. 2:4-7 what has God done to resolve each of those problems (you’ve identified in Q4)?
7. In Eph. 2:5-7 has the phrase “*with Christ*”/“*with him*.” What 3 actions has God done to us when he acted on Christ?
8. What is the impact (effect) of each of those 3 actions upon us? How has (or should) each one affected you?

9. 2:8-9 says we are 'saved by grace through faith (*not by works*); yet Eph. 2:10 talks about "*good works*."
How do you reconcile these 2 statements?