

The Lord's Message: Rest in the Lord

Date: October 3, 2021

Where: Tilghman UMC

Scripture Reference: Ephesians 2:4-9

What if I were to tell you to I am giving you an island in the Chesapeake Bay. No strings attached. You would have your own island. The island is Bloodsworth Island. You would probably be thinking what is the catch? No catch. Bloodsworth Island has been used by the US Navy for target practice for over 70 years. Better yet, how about if I were to give you your own bridge. The bridge is a cantilever bridge. The bridge is located at the Knapps Narrows. The bridge is yours. Now, you know I am putting you on. I do not own the bridge. How can I give you a bridge that I do not own? We are not going to be talking about islands or bridges today, but we are going to be talking about God's grace. GRACE – God's Redemption At Christ's Expense. By understanding God's grace, then we can rest in the Lord.

Let us pray.

With your Bible open to **Ephesians 2:1**, this is where we are going to begin today. In verse 1, it says that we were "dead." The meaning of "dead" is to not be alive. We can be "dead" to many things and "alive" to others. Paul is talking about us being "dead" to a relationship with God. This death was caused by our sins, our disobedience. We were made "alive" by Jesus giving His life to be an atonement for us. Jesus death on the cross paid the price that you and I should have paid for our sins or disobedience to God. The Bible use other ways to describe our "dead" condition. In **2 Corinthians 4:3-4**, we are described as being blind. Slavery is another condition. Found in **Romans 6:17**. Another condition is a lover of darkness in **John 3:19-20**. In **Mark 2:17**, we are lost. In the three parables in **Luke 15**, the condition is describe as being lost. In **Ephesians 2:12, 19**, we are describe as being an alien, a stranger, and a foreigner. Also, in **Ephesians 2:2-3**, we are describe as being a child of wrath. Finally, in **Colossians 1:13**, the condition places us under the power of darkness. You may describe you "dead" condition in other ways. The Bible clearly wants us to never forget the condition of being "dead," so that we will not fall back to our sinful ways.

So, now that we are “dead” because of our sins, how can we be made “alive? The answer is that we cannot by our own efforts be made “alive.” We cannot save ourselves. The Good News is that what we cannot do, God has already done for us. You might be thinking to yourself, why would God do this for us. We are the ones that were disobedient. We are the ones who have wander away from God. Why would God do this for us? The reason is found in **Ephesians 2:4**. God’s reason for reconciling us, bring us back into relationship with Him was because of God’s mercy and love. This is the same reason given in **John 3:16-17** is because of God’s love. You can deny it. You can try to run away for it. You can ignore it, but in the end the reason why God would go through all the trouble to reconcile us is because God loves us.

You may be saying to yourself, will God start to love me when I get cleaned up, when I stopped sinning, when I accept Him. You would be 100% wrong. God started loving you when you were dirty, when you were sinning, and before you accepted Him. Look what the Bible says in **Ephesians 2:5**. For you see, God did not wait until your life was cleaned, when you committed no sins, and even before you accepted Him. God can never stop loving you. God is our Father. I am only an earthly father. My children, Davey and Grace, have made and will make bad choices, but I could never stop loving them. I may not be happy with their choices, but I will never stop loving them. I am not God. God loves them more than I do. So, God loves us in spite of our choices. We should love others just the same.

God loves us so much that God wants us to be in community with Him. Do not take my word for it, look at **Ephesians 2:6**. We have the same position as Jesus. Our citizenship is not all this earth, but in heaven. Paul says in **Philippians 3:20**. Let me see if I can explain this, so that you have a clear understanding. One day we will sit in the heavenly place with God and Jesus. At this point in our lives, we who are believers have Jesus living in us. Our life and identity are found in Christ, as Jesus dwells in the heavenly place with God.

This is not a one-time deal, but a lifetime commitment. Jesus lives in us every day. Every day through out our lifetime, God will continually to be with us as it says in **Ephesians 2:7**. God will continue to bless us, so that in turn God can use us to pass on this blessing to others. God wants our lives to reflect the light of Christ in us. God wants to us the Church to display His glory. Charles Spurgeon says this about this verse, “When all the saints shall be gathered home they shall still talk and speak of the wonders of Jehovah’s love in Christ Jesus, and in the golden streets they shall stand up and tell what the Lord has done for them to listening crowds of angels, and principalities, and powers.”

In **Ephesians 2:8-9**, we have gained all of this Grace, not by anything that we have done or could do for ourselves. We cannot save ourselves, but God did that for us. We have received reconciliation and salvation through and only through God.

I can give you nothing that you do not already have. You are not an island. You were created to be in relationship with God. God design you to be in community with God and with each other. We are only filled with joy when we are in relationship with Him.

You did not need a bridge, because Jesus is the bridge between us and God. Jesus gave His life. Jesus paid our debt. Jesus bridge the gap between us and God that was caused by our sin. It is by Grace, God's Redemption At Christ' Expense, that we have been saved. The only reply that we can give is to say come in and stay in my heart, Lord Jesus. This is the Grace that joins us all together with God and with each other. This is what the Body of Christ is celebrating today on this World Communion Sunday! Amen.