# Third Street Presbyterian Church (USA)

# Conference Call-Midweek Prayer and Bible Study

**Wednesday, March 10, 2021 - 6pm**

**Welcome /Introductions: Pastor Reid**

**Opening Prayer: Dorothy Costner and Sheila Williams**

**Opening Song: Elder Lowery with Music Ministry**

**The Word Ephesians 2:1-10 NRSV - Elder Charles Whitesides reading**

### From Death to Life

**2**You were dead through the trespasses and sins **2**in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. **3**All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. **4**But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us **5**even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christby grace you have been saved— **6**and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **7**so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **8**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— **9**not the result of works, so that no one may boast. **10**For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

**REFLECTION: Deacon Jereline Truesdale reading**

This text presents the profound nature of God’s grace which has totally changed both our reality and how we conduct ourselves as Christians forever.

Christian life is examined in terms of a “before and after” contrast resulting from divine intervention. The movement of God’s love and grace has changed everything about *who* we are and *whose* we are, about how we live, why we live, and even where we live.

In Ephesians, *“this world”* refers to the present age in conflict with God(1:21). Here *“air”* is understood to be the zone between earth and the heavens which is inhabited and ruled by evil forces controlling the world below. Later in Ephesians, this ruler is labeled the devil .The term “flesh” depicts the human condition so turned in on itself that one’s passions, cravings, and mindset are in total disobedience marking us as children of wrath (verse 3). While this was the former existence of Christians, it remains the current reality of all non-Christians.

Though we were children of wrath, God acted out of the wealth of divine mercy and abundance of love .This divine conversion had nothing to do with how loveable we were, but with how incredibly loving God is. God made us alive with Christ, raised us with Christ, and sat us in the heavenly places where Christ now rules over all powers and dominions. This reminds us of the divine solidarity shared between Christ and Christians.

The text emphasizes that our salvation is not from works, we also learn works to be an important element of God’s grace. Because we were created in Christ Jesus (we are made alive and raised with Christ), we are God’s handiwork with the goal of good works. These good works are so vital that God had prepared them ahead of time God’s actions and decisions being established before the world’s foundation.

Our works have not saved us, but they are part of the goal God had in mind in saving us. Therefore good works are not simply activities that we just “talk about” but were pre-planned by God.

 Just as we had formerly walked in our sins so now the purpose of God’s pre-planned activity is that we would walk in good works. Our reality and conduct, our being and doing, all come together both in our former existence of being dead in sin and in our life now of being made alive with Christ. Ephesians reminds us during this season of Lent and always to examine our walk with Christ. How is your walk with Christ today? God’s Amazing Grace is with us always,

**Guiding Questions for Bible Study Discussion:**

Please feel free to join in during the study discussion. We all learn and are studying God’s Word together. If you have questions or want to share, hit the **\* asterisk**  on your phone. This way the moderator will know you have comments. This conference call study is not to judge but to support and fellowship as people of faith. We all are learning from God’s Word daily.

1. What is (one) focus verse from the passages that speaks to you today? How is God speaking to you in that verse?
2. Paul reminds the church in Ephesus of their former spiritual conditions prior to coming to faith in Christ. What are these conditions? (see verses 1-3)
3. Verse 4 turns the corner from death to life. We were dead. We were sinners. What changed? What do verses 4–5 tell us?
4. What ruler is labeled in Eph. 4:27; 6:11? Where is this ruler mentioned in our text today? Eph. 2 what verse?
5. Paul sums up God’s saving work in one word. What is that word?: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_(v.5-6)
6. What does Jesus say in Matt 5:16: about “good works”? How does this passage relate to the passages today from Ephesians 2. Where in the book of James to we hear about “good works”?
7. What is a question from tonight’s passage that still is on your mind after the study tonight?

**Apply God’s Word to your Life:**

Since our very faith is itself a gift of God, we must acknowledge that we are God's workmanship. Furthermore, God's work gives us a purpose, and the purpose for God’s actions are so that we might do good works. Memorize: Ephesians 2:8–10 is an essential expression of the Christian faith. Learn it. Apply it in your life.

 **Sharing Inspiration and Mission Giving:**

What is inspiring you in these times of the new normal way of life? God is still doing a great work in all of us. If you desire to do so, share briefly with the study group tonight. Pastor will ask that you use the( \* asterisk) button on your phone to signal you want to share. Share your name and inspiration .

***One Great Hour of Sharing Offering –* March 3- April 4, 2021**-For over 70 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided Presbyterians a way to share God’s love with our neighbors in need around the world. Please mail or drop off at the church in the mail slot.

**Evening Prayer:**

#### Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16

We lift up prayer requests at this time, we lift up our joys and concerns before the Lord. Close with the Lord’s Prayer. *Our Father who art in heaven…..*

**Closing Song: Elder Lowery with Music Ministry**

**Words of Sending: - Pastor Reid-** *At the close of the day when we knell down to pray we ask the Lord to keep us strong and forgive for all our wrong…..Go in peace knowing God’s protection surrounds you, always!*

Thank you for joining our Mid-Week Bible Study and Prayer this week! Our Next Bible Study will be **March 17 at 6pm.**

With the Love of Christ,

Pastor Reid

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