Same God: **Ephesians – wk 4 – Where I Don’t Stand**

**To walk out our faith confidently, we must know who we are in Christ. This has been the focus of Chapter 1 for us.**

**Chap 1-3 Our position in Christ - God’s plan to us**

**Chap 4-6 Our practice in Christ – God's plan for us**

**MAP \*\* Ephesus was a large port city. Paul started the church, lived there 3 yrs, and wrote this letter to them while in a Roman prison.**

**Last few weeks - where we stand** **in Christ: we are chosen, adopted, forgiven, enlightened, heirs, saved, included, secure!**

**Ephesians 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins (Total depravity) 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, (Satan) the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (God’s holiness and justice)**

**4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, (Predestination) made us alive together with Christ (Regeneration) —by grace you have been saved— (Justification) 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (Glorification) 7 so that in the coming ages 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 a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Sanctification)**

**What a powerful passage today. Where you stand in Christ is essential – but equally important - where you don’t stand…**

**LIES WE’D ALL LIKE TO BELIEVE ABOUT US (even Christians)**

* **At our core, we are all BASICALLY GOOD**

**Classic humanism. We are all good – and given a chance, we will do the right thing. Society, culture, poverty, etc., create problems.**

* **The path to heaven is found in SINCERITY and MORALITY**

**All roads lead to God, as long as we're sincere. We must all find our own path – as long as it brings you peace and you are good to others.**

**Many like to believe everyone goes to heaven. That is, until you mention terrible people. Which leads us to the next one…**

* **God grades on a CURVE, and I’m clearly ABOVE AVERAGE**

**They’re not good, but I am. You are, but not them. Most of us are good people, and all good people go to heaven. We think highly of self.**

**We know what we want to believe about ourselves. Using this passage, let's see what the Bible actually says about people.**

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT US (very politically incorrect passage)**

**1. We are not God and not even close – stop acting like it**

**(1 Tim 2:5, Is 44:6, 43:10-11, 1 Cor 8:6, Jam 2:19, Det 6:4, Rev 1:8, Mark 12:29)**

**Eph 1:19 …the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 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. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.**

**Then chap 2 begins - Eph 2:1 - “But you” / “As for you” / “And you” /**

**Paul ended with a declaration of the awesome power of Jesus – he is God, holy, king, sovereign, ruler over all! \*\* “But as for you…”**

**A clear separation from what he was saying about God & you**

**We like to think we know that, but many (even Christians) live like we are our own god, on our own throne, ruling our own life – and have greater power to determine our lives and future.**

**(Job 38-41) Do you have that power? You don’t - stop acting like it!**

**“There’s only one God, ma'am, and I’m pretty sure he doesn’t dress like that.” Steve Rogers (Captain America)**

**2. At our core, we are all spiritually dead (Eph 2:1-3, 5, Gen 3:1-24, Ro 5:12, 3:10-12, 23, 2 Cor 4:4, 1 John 5:19, 1 Cor 2:14, 2 Tim 2:24-26, Proverbs 3:5-6, 14:12, 16:25)**

**Ephesians 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins…**

**Some would like to believe that we are essentially good people.**

**Semi-Pelagianism – denounced belief that we are essentially good.**

**Watch the news / read history, you see it’s not the case - genocide, abuse, torture, slavery, violence, crime, even in isolated cultures.**

**The bible says we have a fundamental problem – we are born dead- in a state of sin, selfishness, and depravity - a real issue.**

**Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, (Adam) and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned… 3:23 all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.**

**Doctrine of original sin – Adam passed down to everyone a sin nature - bent towards sin and selfishness. Born with a bent…**

**Romans 3:10 (Quoting Is 53, 64, Ps 14, Ps 53, ) …it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”**

**We are born into a fallen world, dealing with the consequences of our own sin and the sins of others – in a state of confusion.**

**Born spiritually dead – this is a problem we cannot fix.**

**Next - Eph 2:2 …in which you once walked, (before Jesus) following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, (Satan) the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience…**

**3. Satan is real and at work in the hearts of people today**

**Who and what is Satan? Is he real? Many names in the bible.**

**Devil Fundamentals / Satan Essentials (Isaiah 14:11-15, Revelation 12:7-9)**

**\*\*Satan is a fallen angel - He is a created spirit.**

**Angels are created spirits designed to be worshipers, warriors, and workers of God to the glory of God. We are not & will never be angels**

**\*\*Satan is not equal to God - in any way**

**Like all angels, he is a created being with very limited powers & abilities. Motivated by pride and self-glory, he seeks to discredit God.**

**\*\* Satan is not in charge of this world or hell**

**Prince of the air (demons) - works to control the systems of this world. Satan’s final place will be hell as an inmate; he does not want to go there. Matt 25:41 …the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.**

**Eph 2 calls Satan - “the prince of the power of the air…”**

**\*\* This does not mean Satan is a king – If I might quote the great theologian Elf, “He sits on a thrown of lies”**

**2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age (the false god) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (1 John 5:19)**

**Understand this… All gods are false gods.**

**Like a dog - that thinks he is in charge of his master.**

**Jesus crushed Satan at the cross – and is victorious now. (Eph 1, Ro 8:37-39, 1 Jo 3:8, Heb 2:14-15, Ps 7:10, 18:2, 1 Jo 4:4, Col 1, 2:13-17, 1 Cor 15:56-57, Jude 1:9)**

**\*\* Satan’s greatest weapons are deception & fear (2 Cor 11:14-15)**

**He does not seek for you to worship him – he is happy if you worship anything other than the Lord God Almighty. Lies, temptation, & fear!**

**Next thing – Ephesians 2:3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.**

**4. Left to ourselves, we self-destruct**

**(Pro 16:18, 2 Tim 4:3-4, Pro 18:12, Gal 5:19-21, Heb 10:39, Lam 3:37, 1 John 2:16, Phil 2:3, Rom 12:1-2)**

**Notice - Eph 2 says there are three things at work against us**

**\*\* The world- Eph 2:2 …you once walked, following the course of this world**

**\*\* The Devil- Eph 2:2 following the prince of the power of the air…**

**\*\* The Flesh (self)- Eph 2:3 …carrying out the desires of the flesh and mind**

**The result = All of mankind, apart from Jesus, are children of wrath.**

**Eph 2:3 …and (we) were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.**

**Rom 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God…**

**Rom 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death…**

**Well, it feels right to me…This is what I think is okay… I deserve it.**

**Jeremiah 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? / Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end, it leads to death. (Left to ourselves, we are not better, but worse…)**

**Progressive Christianity, self-worship, and the idol of self-esteem are creeping into churches. “Universalism, self-reliance, and determination are not your hope – you are not good!”**

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

**5. Our only path to heaven is through Jesus (Ma 8:36, John 1:4, 17, 10:9, 11:25, 3:16-36, 17:3, Acts 4:12, 10:43, 1 Tim 2:5, Romans 3:22, 5:2, 10:9, Heb 10:20, 1 John 5:20)**

**God, in his RICH MERCY, GREAT LOVE, and SAVING GRACE, raised us from our spiritual death. Only Jesus was able!**

**“That is narrow-minded and judgmental!” Talk to Jesus. He said it.**

**John 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (No other religion, person, faith, or system – no other way. Satan’s goal is to get you to not believe this.)**

**Why does the Apostle Paul bring up that we were dead in sin, following selfishness and fleshly things, and worthy of wrath? Two reasons…**

**6. When it comes to our salvation, all credit is God’s alone**

**(Colossians 2:13-14, Isaiah 64:6, Matthew 18:21-35)**

**Eph 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.**

**This salvation is a gift from God that rescues one thru faith in Jesus. Not good works, efforts, a good person, the right family, church attendance, bible knowledge, eschatology, or denom…**

**It is all - in, through, and by Christ. He gets all the credit! While you were dead, not interested, and lying at the bottom of the ocean of your depravity – Jesus jumps in, brings to life, and saves! \*\* Soli Deo Gloria**

**Next - Eph 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world… 3 among whom we (the redeemed) all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (This part tells us a couple things.)**

**7. Never forget where you were before Jesus (v.2-3)**

**(2 Cor 4:4, Matt 15:14, 2 Cor 4:3-4, John 8:12, 9:39, 1 Cor 2:14, 4:6, 1 Pet 2:9)**

**The enemy is a liar, and he is lying to them - that was you once. You were once blind - have grace, mercy, and patience with others.**

**2 Tim 2:24 And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25 Opponents (non-Christians) must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance, leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.**

**We are wasting our time if we are trying to get non-Christians to act Christian. They are spiritually blind - we are to be patient**

**It is foolish to expect non-Christians to act like Christians (swearing, opinions, sex). Listen, we are not asking you to act like a Christian. We are simply asking you to listen to the message and make a decision.**

**But if you decide to follow Jesus, realize this…**

**8. A new life in Christ, results in living a new life through Christ (v1-3,10)**

**Eph 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins… 2 …you once walked, following the course of this world… 3 …we all once lived in the passions of our flesh… (NIV - at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh)**

**You used to liven act, talk like that, at one time… but now…**

**In Jesus we not only think and believe diff – we live diff.**

**Check out - Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

**In Christ, we are remade with a purpose to do amazing good!**

**When you know who you are not (you’re not good in yourself and not able to save yourself) then you can discover yourself in Christ!**

**In Christ, you are God’s masterpiece – remade & designed for good works (not saved by being good, but reborn to do good).**

**One more thing - Eph 2:6 (But God) …raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (“already and not yet” of our hope of Glory in Christ) 7 so that in the coming ages (for eternity) he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**

**9. There is a great day coming for all of us. (V.3, 6-7)**

**Great and wonderful for some – Great and terrible for others**

**Paul mentions the reality of Hell for those without Christ**

**Eph 2:3b Like the rest, (BC Jesus) we were by nature deserving of wrath. (Hell)**

**Hell was talked about by Jesus more than anyone in the Bible.**

**It is a real place, an eternal place, a conscious place, and a reality.**

**(Matt 5:27-30, 25:41, 10:28, Luke 16:23, Col 3:6, 2 Thes 1:8-10, Rev 14:10-11, Luke 16:23-24, Mar 9:48, Rev 21:8, 20:10, Mat 13:41,42, Luke 13:28, Revelation 20:10).**

**Jesus created it - rules over it – and is Lord of it**

**(Matt 11:27,** **John 3:35, Eph 1:22, Acts 10:36, Col 1:17)**

**He is there, but not in the way you would want. He is there with righteous justice & judgment (Jo 1:3, 10, Col 1:16, Rev 14:10)**

**So, the question is... Who deserves wrath (hell)? Everyone w/out Jesus**

**All who fail to respond to God’s saving plan (Ro 6:23 – wages of sin)**

**Revelation 21:7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, (kingdom of Heaven) and I will be his God and he will be my son. 8 But as for the cowardly, (those who reject Christ) the faithless, (unbelievers) the detestable, (corrupt) as for murderers, the sexually immoral, (people who live outside God’s design) sorcerers,(pagans, wiccans, pantheists, those who practice the occult) idolaters, (literal idols and those who worship any god other than the Lord God) and all liars, (the deceivers) their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”**

**\*\*I thought just bad people go to hell… let’s see that the bible says…**

**Rev 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. / John 3:3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.**

* **But – what if we are sincere – there is no area in life where sincerity ever makes a bad choice right. (Wrong medicine, surgery, flight route, etc., why do we think it does in our spiritual life?)**
* **But – what about those who never heard?**

**(John 3:3, 14:6, Ro 8:1, 10:13-16, 11:6, Act 8, Eph 2:17, Acts 10, Acts 4:12)**

**This goes back to what we would like to believe (God grades on a curve), but remember the bible says there is a fundamental problem - we are all spiritually dead in sin and rebellious in heart.**

* **Jesus did not come to make bad people good – but to make dead people alive.**

**- Sins we commit are a result of the sin nature we are all born with…**

**- Because of this sin, we all are due punishment - as is every crime.**

**If they were not judged, God would not have perfect justice**.

**- Because of this judgement and wrath, we are all in need of salvation.**

**God, through Jesus, extends to us perfect justice and mercy**

**Psalm 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne. Love and faithfulness go before you.**

**We will either give account for our sins - OR – through faith we look to Jesus who paid the debt. The account is paid through his blood.**

**Hell is a place of wrath, justice, and love… how is it love?**

**Hell's reality and pain are what lead Jesus to the cross.**

**Hell, points to the cross (God’s love rescue from wrath).**

**(Ez 18:23) God does not enjoy seeing the wicked perish**

**Eph 2:3 …and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved…**

**God is good, perfect in justice and mercy, and everyone will answer to God – even you.**

**Paul mentions the reality of Hell for those without Christ and reminds us of the reality of Heaven for those with Christ!**

**Who we were, who we are not, and who we are now. Understanding this brings clarity to our lives and purpose.**