

Welcome and Introduction by Andrea Moises

Hello and welcome to our time together to praise and worship our faithful God! After the preaching today we're going to have a moment to celebrate Holy Communion so if you are not ready, why don't you stop right now and grab a piece of bread and a little cup of wine or grape juice so you can participate with us at the Lord's table. Tomorrow is Women's International Day so I would like to take this chance to pray and encourage all women, in all ages to celebrate yourself and know that God loves you and made you just the way you are. David says in **Psalm 139:13-14** **"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."** God has made each one of us women in our unique way and He loves us just the way we are. He made you with your specific traits and gifts, so be blessed. I love the way Jesus embraced and gave value to women, no matter how they looked like or where they came from. There are several stories in the Gospels registering Jesus encounters with women who needed to be affirmed, embraced and forgiven, and He really did it with His amazing grace. In Christ we have a new identity and we are blessed and secure. In Him we find the hope, the joy and the strength to fulfil our purpose here on earth. I would strongly recommend you all to look at women as Jesus did and to accept and love them as He did. Don't forget to send your love to all the women in your lives.

Let's pray,

Father God, thank you for creating each of us the way we are and for embracing us with your unfailing love. I ask you to bless us all with a real sense of your presence so we can truly know you and trust in your power. Lord I also pray for you to heal those who are sick, those who are wounded and bring comfort to all those who are suffering and mourning the loss of loved ones. Father, help us to obey you all the days of our lives and to follow Jesus example of grace and acceptance. Only in Him we can find hope, joy and true peace. In His name we pray. Amen.

Song 1 – Amazing Grace / My Chains are Gone (Chris Tomlin)

<https://youtu.be/YrwkCOUOlil> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

*Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see*

*It was grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed*

***My chains are gone
I've been set free***

***My God, my Saviour has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace***

*The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures*

*The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbears to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine, will be forever mine
You are forever mine*

**Preaching and Teaching by David Herring
Our Past, Present and Future / Ephesians 2:1-10**

Introduction

A very good morning to you in Leicester from deepest and darkest Somerset! My name is David Herring, a friend of Claudio and Andrea since the mid 90s and it is a joy to be sharing your service with you this morning. Thank you also for your lovely welcome and fellowship with the Moises' family and we trust that their work with you and your love for them will be a great blessing in the work of your church and their ministry there in Leicester. We can highly commend them to your love and care as your interim pastor and the family that is with Claudio. So, we are going to share together the word this morning and it is an honour for me to have been given this opportunity and I have been asked to look into ***Ephesians 2:1-10***, so we will read those verses first of all. ***1As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 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. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*** A lovely portion of scripture, a very familiar to us I am sure. But it is going to be good for us to try to open up what the Lord is saying to us through this scripture this morning. I believe you have possibly in recent weeks been looking on Ephesians chapter 1, which shows the Christian life in a glorious and very full way. Paul was overjoyed to be writing to these dear people in Ephesus that he knew so well and pointing out again the wonders of what Jesus has done for us and is doing for us. The position they were in, in Christ following their conversion to the Lord Jesus. So that was chapter 1 by a way of an introduction. Now, in these first 10 verses

of chapter 2 Paul is just giving a very quick summary of the history of the Christian from the past, the present and into the future. A history for each one of us, a pattern of life and hope for the future if you like and also a recognition of what we were like before we met the Lord. So, we are going to be looking into this passage into three different sections, and the first section is in verses 1, 2 and 3 our past.

I - Our Past – verses 1-3

The people in Ephesus, which is located on the western side of what is today Turkey against the Aegean Sea, was a cosmopolitan sea sight port city. There were a lot of people from different nationalities coming and going because of all the commerce and trade. But the core population would have been those very much affected by the Greek Empire and its philosophy and now the growing Roman Empire, and its views and understandings as well. Really cosmopolitan, but very pagan as we would see as Christians. Paul reminds them that they were first of all in v.1 spiritually dead before they met the Lord. They were mainly gentile people. There would have been some Jewish folk around. But basically they have had very little knowledge of Christian teaching. Of course we are in very early days of the church, but that was the point of Paul's ministry to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ into a pagan, hostile and predominantly gentile world in that region. So in verse 1 we read: ***"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,"*** When the bible talks about death and for that matter talks about life as well, we need to understand that it is not primarily talking about physical death. Throughout the bible, when talking about spiritual life and death it is talking about our relationship with God. It has to do with how we relate to God. And if we have no relationship with God at all, and people have a very haze understanding of who God is and no real relationship or peace with God (Indeed may worshiping all sorts of other gods, superstitions riddled with guilt and fear as to their deities. This was the background of the people in Ephesus with their multi deities) we are then described in the bible as dead, spiritually dead. It is all about our relationship with God. If we don't have one we are dead and if we do, we have life. We remember what Jesus said: ***"...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."*** **John 10:10b** Meaning, I really want you to come close in your knowledge and walk with God. So, Paul is saying you come from a position where spiritually you had no relationship with the true and living God. We remember in the Garden of Eden where God had told them and warned them that at the day they ate at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they would die and spiritually they did die according to the idea of death in scripture. By the way, eternal death is to be eternally separated from God and of course which is that sadly a lot of the unbelievers of those who turn their back upon the offer of God's mercy. And so, Adam and Eve did die. They were suddenly scared to meet God and we remember they had hid themselves, when God appeared. They lost that wonderful relationship they had with God. And even as Christians that remind us that we may well have had a very good relationship with the Lord and we felt full of spiritual life, the life that only Jesus can give. But there is sadly the possibility of us as Christians loosing that sense of God's presence. We became complacent, we became spiritually careless and it is almost like a renewed death and that's what we sometimes think. 'Ah, I don't really feel very close to God and I wonder where He is'? And once again we are tasting that sense of spiritual death. Now, don't take me wrong. I believe once we were saved we are eternally saved. I believe in the eternal security of the saints, but it is possible to have a feeling of being away from the Lord. And if there is anybody listening to this message and if that is the situation you find yourself, God just wants you to come back to him, back to life, back to a fullness of

abiding in Christ and walking with the Lord. So we were spiritually dead, we didn't know God, we didn't care, we had no interest at all. Paul says in verse 2 ***"in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."*** So, there was this sense of being not in a relationship with God and alive but being subject to all the temptations, failures of human nature. There was no redeeming power in society and in the world to bring us into a state of fullness and peace knowing that our sins were forgiven. We were just subjects to all the passion of the flesh. In fact in **Galatians 5:19-21a** We were told what they were like. Maybe we before we became Christians weren't subject to all these things, but different facets of them certainly categorize the people who were not being given new life in Christ. ***"The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like"*** And as we look around to our society today, which has turned its back on God, without hardly any thought of where people are heading, we see that far from being alive in Christ, they are dead according to the passions of this world. And that was the way we were and under the influence of Satan, who is described here as the ruler of the kingdom of the air. Someone has said: *'since the advent of radio and all that has come out of that, the wi-fi, all the things that are happening through the air with radio and television, and the internet and so on and all the evil that they bring. Satan seems more powerful than ever as being the prince of the power of the air.'* So we were under the power of Satan, the evil one. He is the greater opposer of God and His people and all goodness, wrecking and havocking people's lives. Just as I speak and record this video, in the last few days, I heard of the suicide of a young man, in his mid thirties. Nothing to live for, got involved with drugs, got with the wrong crowd and he then just could not take it anymore. Unmarried, living with his father, who was separated from his wife (the boy's mother) and it was the father that found the body, when he got home from work. Very, very sad and you just think what a waste! That is the situation that we used to be in. I think that sometimes it does as good for us as Christians just to remember how much God has saved us from and give value of being alive in Christ and not dead in the ways of this world. And in verse 3 goes on the same light: ***"All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath."*** So we were like the rest of the world involved in all the things that pertained to our own lust, our own desire, our own passions without any restraining influence. In our nation I feel that has been a restraining influence over the generations, the Christian tradition and the heritage we have, particularly since the great awakening under the Wesley brothers and early Methodism, the Baptists, but you know all that Christian influence is sadly dying away. We can't get the children into Sunday school now. There is a very great antagonism towards Christian truth and the bible in the days in which we live. But that was how we were once upon a time. The second section of our passage is from verses 4, 5 and 6 where we will look at what is happening in the present to us, what we just looked at in verses 1-3 was our past now we are looking at our present.

II – Our Present

"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy" So, something has happened. God has not given up on us. Even though ever since Adam and Eve fell in the garden into sin. God has not given up on us. I just want to address one or two questions here that people raise. Well, if God is a God of love, why did He leave all this

to happen at the first place? Why didn't he stop it all? But one they He will actually. But when people ask those questions of God, I really wonder whether they understand who really God is and who we are. We are able now as Christians to call Him Father. We say in the Lord's Prayer "**Our Father**" we call him "**Aba Father**". And this is the way of understanding God that Jesus teaches us, but also the whole bible teaches us really, but the Lord fully, is that this is a family relationship, God and humanity, like father and children. Now, God could have had created us so that we would never have had the capacity to disobey him. We would be like robots, puppets, if you like. We would have had never gone astray. We would have had been programmed only to do exactly what he wanted us to do and wouldn't have had been no other way we could had done it. If you were parent and you brought up children, do you really want to have a robotic relationship between you and your children? You have had a child that when they were growing up was an absolute perfect baby. Never gave you a night bad sleep. As they grew up they did everything you have ever asked and they didn't cheek you off. They always did homework and tidied their room. Always helped with the chores, always came in when you asked them to come. Always asked your permission to meet and pursue any friendship. So concerned, always doing exactly what you want them to do. By the time they got into teenager they never had that teenager uncast or rebellion and you begin to think. Hang on a minute. There is something wrong with this. What is going on? Surely we expect when we bring children into the world that they have their individuality, a personality of their own, that they have minds of their own, and our training of them, going through all the ups and downs of bringing the child up is to hopefully to bring them into a maturity, where they have learned their lessons. They have to go to discipline into mature adults in their own rights and we can relate to them and feel very proud of them, but it doesn't come easy. As parents we made ourselves vulnerable to all the tears of parenthood as well all the joys. Why should God be any different? And if He had made us as puppets where would heavenly eternity be for Him if we were just robotic. What He wants are people who love him just because they chose to love him, because they want to, because they respond to Him. The same as we want our children to learn to love us, not because we order them to love us or because they don't have any other choice, but because they learned to love us and appreciate all we have done. Wouldn't that be wonderful perhaps sometimes after some upsets in the family, maybe as they've been growing up, they come and say sorry. 'You were right after it all. Thank you for bearing with me. That is precisely what we do with God. God's love is like a father's love. The Lord has told us the wonderful story of the prodigal son, which perhaps should be called not the prodigal son, but the forgiving Father. It tells us of the heart of God. And this is exactly what Paul says here in verse 4 "**But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,**" Like any other father, yes he has to be strong, he has to correct us, he has to tell us off, but he wants us to come to Him with that forgiveness based on His love. The forgiveness that he can give to us is because He is merciful, which He withholds what we deserve. And it is the nature of our God. I wonder if there is somebody listening to me and you have never seen God in that light. He is not chasing you with a big stick, He maybe had to get your attention, but He wants to show you that He loves you. "**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**" **John 3:16** It is based on God's love and our response. And again in verse 5 then we continue looking in our present. "**made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.**" And again Paul points out the difference of spiritual death and spiritual life and we have been changed from one to the other. Paul puts in another occasion like this... Once I

was blind, now I can see, once I was dead now I am alive. I have a relationship with God and it is the most wonderful thing in the world. And the fact that we can come into this is not just His mercy keeping us from that what we deserve, but His grace given to us, that which we did not deserve. – It is by grace you have been saved. Unmerited favour! Come just as you are, we come with all our need and we say Lord sorry. Sorry for all the things we done following the ways of this world and our sinful nature, but we thank you that you are still lovingly calling us to yourself and we come to you through Jesus Christ who died upon the cross to take away our sin, to bare our punishment and to bring us into a relationship with you Father. Then in verse 6 **“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,”** So in other words when we come, we are not then let us to get on with it. He doesn't pat us on the head and say: 'Oh that is nice, thank you, yes I forgive you, now run along and don't be naughty boy or girl. No, no...He gives us a position, He give us a place of security, we are seated with Christ, we are in Christ and the rest of our Christian experience from the moment of conversion onwards is to come into a deeper and deeper relationships with Jesus. To abide in Him, to rest in Him, to looked at Him, to just trust Him and to follow Him. That is what it means when Paul says we are seated in the heavenly realms with Him. We are in a place of utter security. We belonged to the Lord and all things are working together for our good. As we follow Him, some of us older Christians know this, we just find our whole attitudes and our way of life changing coming to a higher and higher level and that doesn't make us better than others, it just means that we became less and less involved with all the pettiness of this life and more trusty in the Saviour and what He has stored up for us and instead of the worries of this world we know that we all heading to heaven and Jesus is the one looking after us. We find ourselves more and more taking up with the blessings and thoughts of heaven. Now the final section from verse 7 to 10 He is looking at our future

III – Our Future

“in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.” I love that expression, which we find a couple of times in scripture **‘Eyes has not seen, ears has not heard, neither has entered into our thought the things that are laid out for us’** And you know the things that await us, to see what God has got for us in the spiritual realms. And that does include the Lord physical return to us into this world, when He's carried out all His messianic work in creating an amazing redeemed world and then after that when the ages of time had finished and time shall be no more. We reach the ages of eternity, when we shall be forever with the Lord, not only just in some sort of spiritual ether, but with a physical body like the Lord's physical body. I often said and I say quite purposely, I am looking forward to explore the universe with joint hand with Christ and we are going to inherit the whole of His wonderful creation. And then in verse 8 **“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”** So Paul goes again, all His blessing came because you exercise that faith in the one who did everything for you. And it is the Christian's currency if you like in the spiritual world not to do the things to earn our salvation. We can't do that a top lady has said **‘Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling’** It is by faith, and we trusting in Him. Faith has a cross stick...Is forsaken all I trust Him, the meaning of faith. Then we find that faith is continually being refining further. Job said: **“when he finished with me in my present trial I shall come forth as gold, tried in the fire. Job 23:10** Peter said: **“Your faith shall be like a precious gold refined by the fire or**

even more precious than that.” The Lord gives us opportunities to develop a deeper and deeper faith. Dear friends if you are going through difficulties right now then maybe the Lord is giving us the opportunity to let go some thing of the world that we have been hanging on and trusting in Jesus instead. And I am finding that as we go through the problems of life, our normal reaction is to engage with human agencies or abilities, and trying to work it all out, doing it all ourselves. God is saying trust me I am the only one that can sort it out, whatever it is that you are going through and that is your opportunity to build up faith. Then He goes on by saying in verse 9 **“not by works, so that no one can boast.”** If we have our salvation because we have worked for it then we would be smug, would be unbearable. Certainly we would be comparing ourselves with others and we would do this so well, no it is not by works and it is not by any effort of ours, but simply by trusting in the Lord, so it is all His doing and not ours. Indeed we can even wonder why He was so good to us allowing us to come to Him in the first place. And in verse 10 says: **“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”** So then Paul finally, don’t go to the other extreme saying because your salvation it is all guaranteed by the finish work of Jesus, that then He lets you out of the hook, now go and have a nice life. Well the Christian life is a nice life, but it is not without good works. We do good works not in order to earn our salvation but because we have salvation it is the outworking of our love for God and our love for other people. We do good works not because we have to, but because we want to, not in order to go to heaven, but because we are in our way to heaven. And that is what God is doing in your life and mine! We are God’s workmanship and he is showing us the things we can do while we are here for His glory and for the blessings of many others around us. May the Lord bless you as you walk with everyone else in the Christian pathway abiding in Christ more and more as you enjoy being a child of God for Jesus’ sake, amen.

Holy Communion by Claudio Moises

Having gathered around the Word of God I would like to invite you now to gather with me around the Lord’s Table. Here we have the two elements: the bread and the wine, which helps us to remember Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. We remember His death and we celebrate His life in us. And Jesus said to them, **“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. John 6:35 we also read “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”Romans 5:8** Come to this table, not because you must but because you may, not because you are strong, but because you are weak. Come, not because any goodness of your own gives you a right to come, but because you need mercy and help. Come because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more. Come, because He loved you and gave himself for you. Come and meet the risen Christ, for we are his Body. The apostle Paul in **I Corinthians 11:23-26** he says: **“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.**

Let’s pray:

Dear God, we thank you for your love shown to us in Jesus Christ. We thank you for His life and ministry, announcing the good news of your Kingdom and demonstrating its power in the lifting of the oppressed, and the healing of the sick, and the loving of the loveless. We thank you for His sacrificial death upon the cross for the redemption of the world, and for your raising him to life again, as a foretaste of the glory we shall share. We give you thanks for the bread and the wine, symbols of our world and signs of your transforming love. Send your Holy Spirit, we pray, that we may be transformed and renewed in our relationship with Jesus and grown in our love for him and your kingdom. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

After he had given thanks he took the bread and broke it and gave to his disciples and he said: ***“This is my body which is for you; do this in memory of me.”*** Take this in remembrance that Christ died for you and feed on him in your heart by faith and thanksgiving. Let’s eat the bread together. In the same way, he took the cup after they had eaten and said: ***“This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this in memory of me.”*** Drink this and remember that Christ’s blood was shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins and that you could experience this new life in Him. Let’s drink together with our hearts full of joy and thanksgiving.

Song 2 – You are my King / Amazing Love by Christy Nockels

https://youtu.be/yKJnxA_3AY8 Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

I'm forgiven because You were forsaken
I'm accepted, You were condemned
And I'm alive and well, Your spirit is within me
Because You died and rose again

Amazing love, how can it be
That You, my King, should die for me?
Amazing love and I know it's true
And it's my joy to honor You, in all I do to honor You

You are my King
You are my King
Jesus, You are my King

Final Words and Announcements

There are zoom meetings for the adults and for the youth every Wednesday at 7:30pm. Sandy and Andrea are also meeting with the juniors at 7pm. Gifts and tithes can be sent directly to the church’s bank account and the details are as follow: A D L Memorial Buckminster – Account Number: 13749406 Sort Code: 09-01-51

Let me finish by praying and apostolic blessing

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen

See you all Next Sunday!