

Thursday, May 4th

Books and Bagels

7:30 – 10:30am

Between LB and LOB near Bridge

National Day of Prayer Service

Halifax Mall

12:00-1:00pm

(Rain Location Edonton Street UMC)

Tuesday, May 23rd

Prayer Breakfast

7:30-9:00am

Member's Dining Room

Legislative Cafeteria

Date changed from Tuesday, May 9th.

taught us and now we have to work hard to grow our faith. We can't obtain faith on our own and even when Jesus rescues us; it is still unnatural for us to follow Him.

There are three main points that we can see from this passage: The nature of mankind, God's character and how actions play a role in daily lives.

The Nature of Mankind

You never have to teach a child to lie, selfishly grab for toys or cry and scream when they don't get their way. Have you ever thought that if man is inherently good, why do kids naturally do bad things even at the beginning of their life? The truth is we are by nature sinful and evil. Verses 1-3 of Ephesians chapter 2 portray man correctly. We are all dead in our sin. Dead men can do nothing to save themselves. Romans 3:23 says: *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

Paul quoting Psalm 14 writes this in Romans 3:10-12: *"...None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."* Many of us are tempted to believe that we can somehow pay for our sins; but these verses tell us otherwise. Maybe we go to church, give money to charities or do some other good deeds. The Bible does not discourage these good acts; it just states that they can't save us.

The concept of man's depravity is crucial to understanding Christianity and why we needed Christ to save us.

We need someone who can save us, someone who can make us alive again. This leads us to verses 4 and 5. If we just talked about the first three verses in Ephesians chapter 2, it would be very hopeless. But we have verses 4 and 5 that give us eternal hope.

Please Note: This week's Bible study is written by Jake Zilli, Capitol Commission High School Intern. It is the desire of Capitol Commission to invest in young lives. Jake completes his internship this week.

"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ; by grace you have been saved." Ephesians 2:1-5 ESV

Introduction:

What foreign language or difficult subject did you learn in high school? It didn't come naturally right? Somebody had to teach you and then you had to work hard at it. In a similar way, Christ saved us and

God's Character

God is “rich in mercy” and He loves us. Even though we were “sons of disobedience... and by nature children of wrath” God has made a way for us to be reconciled to Him. God is holy and we are not so the only way for us to be made alive again is through Christ. Verse 5 says we are saved by grace, not by works. We just have to accept the free gift of salvation. Christ makes us alive in Him if we put our trust in Him. Paul talks about Jesus bringing us from death to life in Romans 5:17-29 which says: *“For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.”*

That is the awesome power of God’s unconditional and perfect love; it even overcomes death!

Actions in the Role of Life

The last thing I would like to point out in these verses is man’s actions and God’s actions. The text presents several actions of unbelievers. They walked following the course of the world and their lives were guided by an ungodly spirit. This spirit led them to carry out the desires of their physical cravings, and follow (following is mentioned twice) the ways of the world and Satan. Unbelievers are characterized by practicing sin and following their passions before Christ came to save. Paul wrote in Romans, “but thanks be to God, that you were once slaves of sin...[but now]...having been set free from sin have become slaves of righteousness,” 6:17-18. As unbelievers, we didn’t care about God. We didn’t seek him; just like a criminal doesn’t seek out a police officer. We are all criminals before God. We have a huge debt that would take eternity to pay back to God. But God, in spite of our rejection of

Him and the inability to pay the debt we owe, was merciful sending His son to die in our place.

So although actions don’t save us, they do tell us if the person truly believes what they say they believe. If I said I believe that this chair can hold my weight but I refuse to sit on it, do I really have faith in that chair to hold me up?

James 2:14-17 says: *“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”* Verse 19 of James 2 says this about knowing God: *“You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe and shudder!”* Just having the head knowledge about God doesn’t save us. Demons testify that Jesus is Holy, God the Son, but demons don’t act upon this fact by surrendering to the Lord. They continue to rebel against God.

Christ needs to not only affect our head; He needs to affect our heart and our actions.

So how will you respond to God’s Word in Ephesians 2? Will you accept His merciful gift of salvation provided through Jesus Christ? Verse 8 indicates it is a gift to be received. A gift that is received by a faith decision. Believing faith is A. Understanding the facts. B. Believing they are true. C. Putting your complete trust in the Word of God, believing God will do what He says He will do. Your decision will determine the outcome of your relationship to your Creator.

Capitol Commission Bible Studies

Tuesday @ 7:30am – 8:00am, LOB 414
Monday @ 12:00Pm – 1:00pm, LB 2nd Flr.
Monday @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, Chapel