



Truth Applications

Grace! Motivation for the Faithful

Ephesians 2.1-10



Berlin, Reichstag, 1945



Berlin, Reichstag, Now

Walking Dead Men (1-3)

1. The hard truth (in contrast to the blessings in ch. 1).
 - a. "And you being dead" (literal).
 - b. No surprise → Rom 6.23; 3.9b-18.
2. The reason.
 - a. "...by nature ..."
 1. Something part of us from birth (cf. Rom 2.14)
 2. Also: *what we become by virtue of our habits* (cf. Rom 1.18-32; esp. 24, 26, 28; also 6.12-14; 1 Tim 4.2).
 - b. "... trespasses and sins..." — comprehensive
 1. Trespasses: slipping or falling away.
 2. Sins: missing the mark or target.
 - c. The wrong guide: actively and unfairly seduces our desires ["passions"] and will ["desires"] (vv. 2-3; cf. Gen 3.17; 1 Pet 5.8; 2 Cor 11.3-4, 14).
3. Separation.
 - a. God's "wrath" (Eph 2.3; 5.6; cf. Rom 1.18; 2.5, 8; 3.5; 4.15; 5.9; 9.22; 12.19; 13.4-5).
 - b. "You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong..." (Hab 1.13a).

History's Most Important Conjunction (4-10)

1. **"But God"!** (vv. 4-7)
 - a. "... rich in *mercy*, because of the great *love* with which he *loved* us,..." (v. 4): seeking our best in spite of us.
 - b. But of course, he loves us. We deserve it. Not!!!
 1. "... *even* when we were dead in our trespasses!" (v. 5; Rom 5.6-8).
 - c. Metamorphosis (cf. Rom 12.2): kindness, made alive, with Christ, beyond rich (vv. 5-7).
2. A worthwhile repetition (vv. 8-10)
 - a. With a provision: faith (knowledge → trust → an active response; cf. James 2.14-26).
 - b. A gift! Therefore, no boasting, i.e., no confidence in our spiritual expertise or competence.
 - c. Result: God's work of creation (cf. Rom 1.20).

Their Story, Our Story

1. Noteworthy changes:
 - a. The subject of the sentence: In vv. 1-3, it's us. In vv. 4-10, it's mainly God. Exceptions are in 5, 8, 10 where we are passive recipients.
 - b. Status — death to life.
 - c. Rulers — then: the prince of the power of the air; now: faith in God.
2. Important: the change from the 2nd person pronoun in vv. 1-2 to the 1st person plural pronoun in vv. 3-10. Paul wrote as a Christian to Christians.
 - a. He had internalized and appreciated being a beneficiary of grace (cf. Acts 23.1; 24.16; Phil 3.3-11; 1 Tim 1.15).
3. Appreciating the downside of being good (Luke 18.9-14; cf. 18.1-8; 18.15-19.10).
4. God's kingdom: open to all "who know their need of God" (Matt 5.3; NEB).

"Is it better to be bad and then be good than to always be pretty good? You know, I've been raised a Christian, and I've never been bad....Since I was never really bad, I'm not sure I appreciate the grace of God like this other fellow does...."
 ~ Michael Moss, "When God Reigns: A Study in the Parables of Jesus," 42.