PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Int.

1. **Aim:** To discuss the verses and how we can change and become a faithful Christian.

2. Ephesians 2:1-10
   - Paul discusses the things of our life before conversion
   - Then he describes the life of a Christian and what we will be.
   - In order to fully appreciate the blessings in Christ, readers need to understand where they were before they became a Christian. The contrast will deepen the appreciation.
   - To comprehend their present wealth, they must understand their former poverty.

3. Let us look at our past, the present and the future as described in a spiritual way.

Discussion

I. THE PAST  Eph. 2:1-3

   A. Eph 2:1  “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,”

   B. He made alive
      1. Paul had been praising God and thanking Him for the faith of the Ephesians
      2. Now he begins to remind them of what they once were and what they now are in Christ.
      3. Been quickened = made alive
         a. They were dead - separated from God
         b. Now they are alive - been reunited with God through Jesus Christ
         c. They have been born again - John 3:3-5
C. We were “dead in trespasses & sins”

1. In their former way of living they were involved in paganism and were dead spiritually. - in trespasses and sins  Gal. 5:19-21
   a. Trespasses = to willfully cross the boundary
   b. Sin = to miss the mark, fall short

2. Our hearts were “darkened”/without “understanding”
   a. Eph. 4: 18 “having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;”
   c. Because of Separation from God
   d. Which causes? “hardening of their hearts”

3. Thus, we are alienated from the life of God.

D. We walked according to the world’s standards & NOT God’s! [2] Eph. 2:2  “in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,”

1. To walk according to the world is to walk according to one’s own wilful desires, rather than walking in God’s spiritual instructions

2. Prince of the power of the air
   a. A prince is the author or leader
   b. Satan is the author of worldliness
   c. He is called “the prince of this world”  John 12:31
3. "Air"
   a. The word "air" is used here as a figure of speech for the realm where Satan has control
   b. This refers to Satan who is the prince of worldliness
4. Sons of disobedience
   a. The non-believer walks according to the spirit of Satan
   b. One who does not know God and has not obeyed the gospel is walking in disobedience
   c. They walked in the spirit of disobedience
5. But, we choose to follow the "desires of the mind" [3] Eph. 2:3 "among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others."
   a. We followed the "lusts of our flesh"
      (1) At the time it feels good.
      (2) The problem is that instant gratification is short-lived.
      (3) David is an example - 2 Sam. 11:2-4
         (a) He saw Bathsheba as she bathed
         (b) He inquired as to who she was
         (c) Then he sent for her to come
         (d) Then the physical act of adultery took place
         (e) It started with a desire of the flesh, the fulfilling of the desire brought forth sin and its consequences.
b. This evil molded our nature into “children of wrath.”

(1) This word “nature” does not mean they were naturally born sinners

(2) The nature of the ungodly was formed by the continual practice of ungodly habits.

(3) This verse does not teach that one is born in sin, or that he inherits sin

(4) Isa. 53:6 “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

(5) Calvinism teaches that one is born in sin, unholy, and obnoxious before the eyes of God.

(a) Calvinists believe man needs redemption from the moment of his birth and is born in a state of condemnation.

(b) Because of these false doctrine they have falsely concluded that babies need to be baptized because of the guilt of sin

(6) This verse does not say their nature started at birth

(a) Sin is the transgression of God’s commandments - 1 Jn. 3:4

(b) Until men sin, they are not guilty - Rom. 3:23

(c) Men are lost as a result of their own sinful actions - James 1:14,15

Ezek. 18:20

(d) Men are not lost as a result of birth

(e) The nature of the ungodly was formed by ungodly practices

c. “just as the others” denotes that the majority were living so. - This matter of disobedience and sin is a universal problem.
E. We were controlled by Satan himself.  

1. Satan is as a "lion" seeking to devour his prey!  
   [1 Peter 5:8] "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom (Christians!) he may devour."

2. Satan is an evil force who works against us  
   [6:12]  
   a. Satan’s evil power is what we “wrestle” against.  
   b. Hollywood is one of the greatest evils.  
   c. Flesh & blood are temporal, but our souls are eternal.  
   (1) We choose; either Satan or Christ?  
   (2) We choose; either hell or heaven?  
   (3) We choose; either eternal pain or eternal joy/bliss?

II. THE PRESENT  Eph. 2:4-6

A. Eph. 2:4-5  "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),"

B. We are alive thanks to Jesus Christ.  

1. By grace we have been saved!  
2. By His wonderful “mercy” we are confident He loves us.  
3. Col. 2:13  "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses:"
4. The motive for this mercy is His great love for us.
5. God's mercy toward us obligates us to show mercy toward others - Lk. 6:36  "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."
   a. Matt. 18:23-35  - Story of unmerciful servant
   b. Man owed big debt - forgiven by his creditor
   c. This man had a small debt owed him - demanded pay - put the other man in prison
   d. We must be merciful, kind, forgiving to our fellow man

C. Even while we were “dead in trespasses” He gave us life.  Eph. 2: 5
   1. We were spiritually dead in sin and trespasses  - - made alive
   2. Jesus Christ’s physical sacrifice took the place of the animal sacrifices under the OT’s Levitical priesthood.
      a. NOW, we have all spiritual blessings.
      b. NOW, we have the ultimate example for ourselves!
   3. He demonstrated His love for us in action.
      a. Romans 5: 6-8 “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
      b. He gives us true spiritual strength.
      c. Saved By Grace
4. We can now “sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus!” - Eph. 2:6 “And hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus:”

a. Heavenly places

(1) He calls the church, its principles, services, promises, all of which are enjoyed in Christ, heavenly places. - Gal. 3:27

(2) The church of God is the reign of heaven on earth.

b. We have spiritual blessings in heavenly places = the church - Eph 1: 3

III. THE FUTURE  [2: 7-10]

A. Eph. 2:7  “That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in [his] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

B. V. 7  We shall see “the exceeding riches of His grace.”

1. “His kindness” = unmerited gift at work
2. The benefits/blessings of being in His kingdom. [Gal 5: 22]

C. We shall be “saved!” [8]   Eph. 2:8  “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,”

1. God's Part = Grace, - - unearned, unmerited
2. Man's Part = Through Faith - an obedient faith
3. Jesus Christ was obedient unto death for the benefit of our souls. [Tit 3:4]
4. NOW, we can enjoy eternity with Him!
5. It is the gift of God

a. God has told us what we must do to accept this gift
c. Ill. Gift of money - give you a sum of money, but to accept it you must come to my house and take the money from the table. - You had to come to my house and put the money in your pocket - It is still a gift!

d. God has extended the gift of salvation by His grace to all men - Tit. 2:11. Some will accept it and meet the conditions set forth by God. Others will not accept the conditions and lose their free gift of salvation.

D. Man cannot boast [9] Eph. 2:9 “not of works, lest anyone should boast.”.

1. It was not of the works of the Jewish law, or by any works of man’s invention or device

2. God instructs man to do certain things to receive his grace

3. When man does these things he is obeying the commands of God. He is saved in obedience to God’s laws. He is not saved because he has earned it by the things he has done in obedience to God.

4. No man can boast that he has earned salvation - it is a gift

E. Takes a working attitude throughout our short lives. [10] 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."

1. When we have obeyed the gospel and been born again that shows that we are the product of his workmanship, that great plan whereby we could be redeemed.

2. We are created to do good works - Acts 10:38

3. We are not saved by works but saved to Work

4. God planned for us to do good works
CONCLUSION

1. Past = What we were is not important.
   a. We had nothing to battle Satan with, but now we do. [Rom 6: 3-14]
   b. We could not have enjoyed eternal joy in heaven.

2. Present = What we are!
   a. We are God's workmanship
   b. We are workman for God, who have a humble faith.
   c. Be careful though! [Rev 3: 1-7]

3. Future = What we will be!
   a. "Saved" in Christ is all that counts.
   b. Continual good works is part of our obedient faith.

4. Yesterday's the past, tomorrow's the future, today is a gift. That is why they call it the present.