

## AAS #1 Talk – Ephesians 2v1-10

### Introduction - Junk

*Bring in a garbage bag full of junk...*

I've heard it said that you can tell a lot about someone by their garbage, so I thought I'd bring in my garbage for you. Maybe you'll discover some interesting things about me. Let's have a look. *Pull each item out one at a time*

I don't know about you, but sometimes I can really relate to rubbish. Just look at it...

### *Rotten piece of fruit*

Take this rotten piece of fruit, for example... Ever felt like a piece of rotten fruit? Maybe there are times you think you're just so full of sin and so bad that you repel God with your rotting smell. Maybe you feel like you're just dying inside.

### *Broken Bottle/Bowl/Record*

Perhaps you can relate to this broken bottle/bowl. Now you're broken because of events in your life and pain, you're not useful anymore.

### *Reject – wasn't made properly*

What about a defected glue stick – it never worked in the first place... Maybe you feel like there's been something wrong about you from the beginning, you're so different that you just don't fit and no-one wants you.

### *Something Old*

Or maybe you just feel too old or completely drained, that you've past your used-by-date and all you're good for is sitting in the bin, waiting til you're disposed of.

I reckon we all can relate to feeling like junk of some kind. Some of us may have felt like junk our whole lives. Others of it may feel it at different times – go through phases. Some may go from feeling like one piece of junk to another kind and then another, and so on.

The trouble with junk is that it's usually written off as dead. And I reckon when we feeling like junk, it does suck the life out of us.

But here in Ephesians we are presented with great truths that can bring new life to us.

### Ephesians 2v1-10

**1**As 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 sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects 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 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 workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

This tells us that God does not think we are junk! WHY because he did everything to save us, he made us and he has a purpose for us.

**Point 1 – It is by Grace we are saved NOT works**

Have you ever done something naughty and deserved to be punished? (*get a response*). Imagine if you did something naughty and the punishment was cleaning the toilet. That wouldn't be very fun would it. But a strange thing happens. Your mum or dad talks to you about what you did. But instead of making you clean the toilet, they said they would do it for you. When they had cleaned the stinky toilet they took you to the park and played with a ball. That is called GRACE (*draw word on board*).

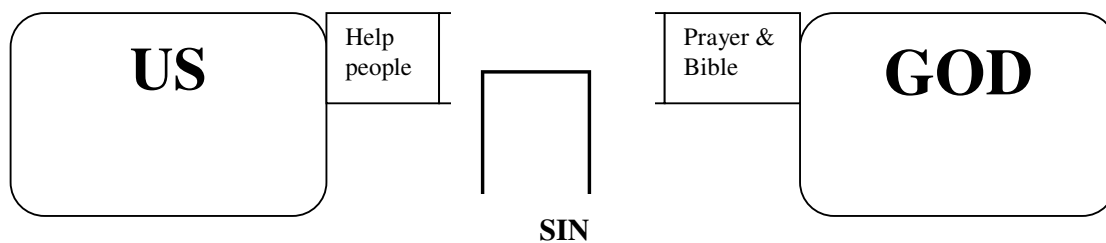
*Show how God's Grace works.*

We were separated from God because of our rebellion against him. The result could only mean death for us because to be separated from him is to be separated from life. Now what kind of things do we do because we think we have to or because we think it will get us closer to God? (*get responses – write each as a block of the bridge*).

The irony is that Works doesn't work. This attitude sets us up for failure and disappointment. Thus endorses the idea that we are junk. It even imprisons us, enslaves us...

It's hard in this world to understand Grace. The world is founded on the idea of Works. The first thing we are asked when we meet a new person is "What do you do?" Ever find yourself trying to please people. It's because we think we are junk and we need to prove ourselves to not be junk.

**WORKS**

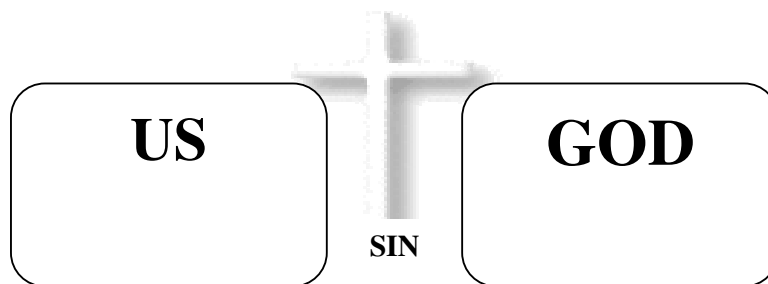


It's NOT about what we DO rather, it's about WHO WE ARE because of GOD's WORK.

BUT God's grace frees us!

**BUT:**

**GRACE**



**Point 2 – God’s grace towards us shows us we are not junk to him**

Even though we do rebel against God and have bad in us – God never saw us as junk. If he did he would not have sent Jesus. If he did he might have just shown us mercy and not let us be with him and serve him...

MERCY = exemption from punishment

GRACE = undeserved favour – favour instead of punishment

**Point 3 – We were saved by grace for a purpose**

The tricky thing about this passage is that it tells us we cannot save ourselves by works but we were made by God to do Good works. So what is the difference?

It’s in the motivation and the point in our salvation that we do good works in. If we are doing good works to build the bridge or things we think we have to do because we are Christians, we are trying to save ourselves and it is futile. That is the kind of works Paul says we are not saved by.

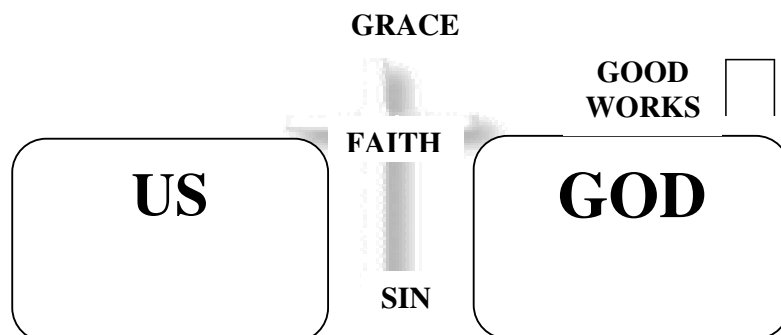
It is once we have received God’s salvation through grace and by faith, the good works comes in to play. We are saved by grace so we can serve God by joining him in his good works. Good works that bring him glory – that show his character, his love, his grace – so people may see him, praise him and be saved by him too. Types of good works: James 1v27 – look after poor, orphans, widows etc.

It is when we realise that we are saved by grace and not ourselves we are freed to serve God joyfully and faithfully without being ‘weighed down’ by it. There’s desperation in trying to save ourselves by works, and when we fail it is the worst. But when we do good works because we are saved by grace, it doesn’t hurt so much when we fail, and it even brings life to us when we serve. That is a grace from God too.

*We can only receive it through FAITH (draw word in the cross)*

Faith = trusting/believing that God has saved you

*The best reason to do good stuff is because God does great stuff! He saved us so we can be a part of the great things he does. That’s incredible! That is Grace!*



## **Conclusion**

The fact that God he has been so gracious to us and he has given us purpose, shouts out that we are NOT junk, BUT are very important, special and valuable to him. And it Screams out how AWESOME God is! Which makes me so glad he saved me by grace cause I actually get to know him personally and be a part of the great things he does!

## **Application**

The thing is that we change through life. Our circumstances change, our abilities change, etc. And when those changes mean that we can't serve God in the same way, we tend to think that we're junk. If we start to think that, we fall into the mindset that we our works save us. But when we realise that we are saved by grace we will see that even though we can't do what we used to do, God still has purpose for us now and in the future – so there is no need to feel like junk and stop living. Instead we will be able to see new ways of doing good works God has given us to do, or new good works he has for us.

So, let us take tonight/today and this week to really let these truths sink in. Whenever you feel like junk, read Ephesians 2v1-10. It is a lie and the only way to combat a lie is with truth. No matter what kind of junk you feel like God doesn't see you that way. No your not too broken, too old, too drained, too rotten in God's eyes. You are whole, full of life, and a sweet aroma to him.

1. Praise Him
2. Check motives for works & even for not doing works (you may have given up cause you think you're junk now)
3. Fulfil your purpose with Joy – serve with God and out of a heart of love for him and people

Maybe you're faith has been based on works rather than grace and you have not realised it. If you are coming to that realisation please speak to one of the ministers. How do we receive this grace – by faith (trusting that God saved you).

Let us also continue to remind each other of God's grace.