

**Conversations on**  
**Eph. 2:1–10**

*Discuss this passage in light of the commentary below.*

*Idea!* Listen together to the song “I Know Where I’ve Been” from the movie *Hairspray* (2007; PG). Discuss: How does knowing where we’ve been help move us toward the future instead of moving backward? How is hope conveyed in this song?

### WHAT is important to know?

Verses 8–10 force the reader to look both back and ahead. Looking back, the reader is reminded that salvation—being made alive again after being dead in sins—is a gift that comes only by grace. As Paul argues in both Galatians and Romans, any notion that such a result comes from “works” is forestalled, and any cause for boasting removed. Looking ahead, however, God has prepared in advance other “works” for all those who are created in Christ as God’s handiworks, culminating in a new way of living that contrasts with the old. (*John M. Vonder Bruegge*)

- ✪ Who or what is “the ruler of the power of the air” (v. 2)?
- ✪ According to this Scripture passage, what is the definition of grace?
- ✪ What does it mean to you to be called one of “God’s handiworks”?
- ✪ In what ways does the “new way of living” contrast with the old way of living?

### WHERE is God in these words?

The great privilege of being human was never meant to be reduced to a state of manipulated control by forces outside our control. We were made for greater things. And God sees all this even when we are dishonoring the gift of creation by self-absorbed egotism. God’s vehicle to bring about the transformation is the work of Christ. We are already saved. The work is accomplished. We participate in the resurrection now, and are invited to witness to the gift of grace that we have received. The agent of this dramatic change is God. (*Ian S. Markham*)

- ✪ Based on Ephesians 2:1–10, for what “greater things” were we made?
- ✪ In what ways does humanity’s “self-absorbed egotism” dishonor the gift of creation?
- ✪ How does God intend to work through us?

### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

While we can oppose the forces of sin, make personal headway against them, and forge our identity as church in relation to them, we cannot defeat them. “No one may boast” that they have overpowered the powers. We are too weak. Not even Christ defeated the powers in life. It is Christ’s resurrecting victory over sin and death that manifests and verifies our hope of redemption. The already, but not yet quality of the resurrection is why we return perennially to Lent, unable to avoid Christ’s death to the powers but able to foretaste Christ’s decisive victory. (*Adam E. Eckhart*)

- ✪ How do your thoughts and actions exemplify that of someone who is saved?
- ✪ How do you embrace the “already, but not yet quality of the resurrection” in your own life?
- ✪ How does the Lenten journey help you understand the salvation journey from death and sin to new life? How do you call attention to this journey in your own life?

### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

Yes, we are saved by grace through faith. No, we do not rely on good works to be saved. But we *are* what God has made us—people “created in Christ Jesus for good works.” So good works are now transformed. Instead of being frantic means for trying to save ourselves, good works are the blessed opportunity for us to live out the lives we were destined to live. Good works are expressions of Christ alive in us ministering to the world. Good works are demonstrations of our present reality and future; we are God’s royal children exercising God’s dominion of love in the world. (*Jeff Paschal*)

- ✪ What should your “way of life” be as you respond to the gift of God’s grace (v. 10)?
- ✪ What does it mean to be a child of God who exercises “God’s dominion of love in the world”?
- ✪ In what specific ways does your congregation’s life and ministry show you to be a community “created in Christ Jesus for good works”?

*Thank God for the gift of God’s grace in our lives.*