

# THE FIRST 15

Monday, October 14, 2024

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Today is Monday, October 14th, and this week we are reflecting on how God sets us free from guilt by the power of his grace.

## OPENING PRAYER

In this season, we are praying this prayer together.

*May the cornerstone of my life, and of our life together, be Christ and Christ alone. AMEN.*

## SCRIPTURE

***As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 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. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 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. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:1-10***

## REFLECTION

Today, you are laying a cornerstone. By beginning your day with the word of God, you are proclaiming,

*“God, I want you to be first in my life. Today, I want to build my life on Christ and Christ alone. I trust him to be the solid rock. I will not build my life on sinking sand.”*

And all throughout this fall we’re emphasizing how important it is to renew this commitment **every single day** because, **on any given day**, a storm might come.

This week we’re looking at the “*storm*” of guilt and God’s desire to set us free from the power we assume guilt has over us and in today’s passage we find Paul proclaiming how God - in Christ - has brought us from death into life.

Paul begins with the reminder to the Christians living in Ephesus that **you were dead and you didn’t even know it**. In the life you once lived, you were completely unaware of how enslaved you once were to the ways of the world around you.

In the English Standard Version (ESV) of the scriptures, verse 4 begins with,

*“But God...”*

In those two words, we find a beautiful summary of the entire Gospel.

You were dead and you didn't even know it.

You were living an anemic life, not an abundant life.

You had a life that was about pursuing what felt good today without any real hope for the future.

*But God...*

*Out of his rich mercy...*

**God intervened on your behalf.**

You were barely breathing but through Christ, God performed CPR breathing life into you again. Grace and grace alone has done this work. There was nothing you did to earn it. No merit on your part was involved.

It was, it is, and always will be a gift born only out of God's loving and grace-filled heart.

If God has shown you this great “kindness” in Christ, what level of kindness would God challenge you to extend to yourself this day? How should we live in response to this great gift? Should we surrender ourselves over and over again to shame's lie or is it possible that the Spirit is inviting you to live today in the strength of the new life that you have received? God has given you a great gift. What are you going to do with it?

## **Pause and Pray**

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to you, in every way.*

*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet.*

*Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say. AMEN.*

-Prayer from Lectio 365 App