

WEEK 3:

JESUS MAKES US ALIVE

A grid of horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 20 rows and 15 columns of lines.

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Looking Back: What did God teach you this past week as you read the daily devotions? What opportunities did you have to apply what you learned?

Looking Up: Play the video and discuss the questions from the teaching.

Does the account of the great flood (see Genesis 6–8) typically hit you as personally applicable or largely unrelatable? Explain.

Do you tend to think of people who are not believers in Christ as “pretty bad off” or “completely destitute”? Explain.

Read Ephesians 2:1-5. In your own words, what is the reality of every person apart from Christ?

Read Mark 7:21-23. What did Jesus say about our hearts? Why is it important to understand this about yourself?

Read Ephesians 2:4-5 and Romans 3:23-24. How did Paul describe every person who trusts in Christ? What does it mean to be “alive . . . with Christ” (Ephesians 2:5)?

In the video teaching, we were asked “How do we live as people who acknowledge sin rightly?” What evidence in our lives shows we acknowledge sin rightly? What evidence shows we don’t?

What makes living as someone who acknowledges sin rightly difficult for you?

Read Matthew 24:36-44. How does Jesus want the great flood to hit us as personally applicable? What, then, is the relationship between being “alive” in Christ and daily life in the world today?

Looking Forward: How will you apply what you learned today to your life this week? Take a few minutes to plan your next meeting and spend some time in prayer together.

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DAY 1—READ EPHESIANS 2:1-5

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved

Verses 1-3 of Ephesians 2 tell us who we were before God stepped in, and they don't paint a very flattering image. Verses 4-5 tell us about the amazing grace and love of God as He stepped into human history and gave us a new identity in Christ.

When we consider the magnitude of what has been done for us in Christ, we might wonder, *"Why would God go through all the trouble?"* We might wonder what about us made God act. The truth is nothing in us made God act.

Everything we bring to the table only adds to the problem and creates distance between God and us. But God loved us when we were entirely unlovable. Jesus's saving act demonstrates God's character in a way that nothing else does and made a way for God to show us who He is—the immeasurable riches of His grace and kindness. He has revealed Himself to us. Otherwise, we would not be able to know Him. The lengths God went to in order to save us should inform our thoughts and actions every moment. It should cause us to enter His purpose of seeing that same grace come to others.

How does Ephesians 2:1-5 speak into the topic of our problem and God's promise?

Based on Ephesians 2, in what way were you just like the people in Noah's day?

What is one way you can live this week as someone who is not dead in sin but alive in Christ?

Thank God for His great love in making you alive together with Christ. Ask Him to show you ways you can walk in that grace more fully.

DAY 2—READ ROMANS 3:23-24

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus

The profoundness of our problem is laid out across the whole counsel of God's Word. In Romans, Paul lays out the depth and universal nature of sin. No one can escape. In Romans 3:21, however, the conjunction "but" begins the most complete explanation of the gospel in the Bible. Over the next chapters, Paul explains the depths of the riches of the gospel and what Jesus has done in our lives. Here we see a brief opening summary of the gospel truth.

Apart from the law—apart from our good works (which would never be enough)—righteousness from God has been presented and is available to us in Jesus Christ. God no longer makes distinctions between who you are, where you're from, and what you have done. If you come to Him in faith, you are His child by faith.

All have sinned. All fail to meet God's standard. This is how we ended up under His wrath. However, the person under God's wrath can come under the protection of His righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. We stand before God justified—in right standing with God—redeemed, freed from judgment, and made alive purely by grace. That means we are able to enjoy the freedom and benefits of salvation right now. This is the message we have to proclaim to invite others to know Jesus.

How does Romans 3:23-24 speak into the topic of our problem and God's promise?

Which word in verse 24 stands out to you today: *justified*, *grace*, *gift*, or *redemption*? What does that word mean to you personally?

Memorize these two verses as a way to explain the gospel clearly to another person.

Thank Jesus for saving you from death and giving you life apart from anything that you've done.

DAY 3—READ 1 PETER 2:4-6

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

Some people think Christianity is a dull life. They think it's more reflective of dying a slow, boring death than any sort of real living. But read 1 Peter 2:4-6 again. Life in Christ is chosen, precious, like “living stones”. It involves being “built up,” being a “holy priesthood . . . acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” And get this—those who are saved by Jesus will never be put to shame.

It's not boring. Neither is it strictly past tense. Jesus gives us life—that's an eternal reality, and it's also an earthly one. We are being built up as a spiritual house. As we face the difficulties of life, we continue to receive the moment-by-moment life of Christ. The reality of sin in our lives, and the shame that comes with that reality, does not define us because Jesus is the cornerstone on which all living stones are laid.

The life we live in Christ is abundant and full (see John 10:10). That doesn't mean we won't face any trouble or that we'll experience earthly prosperity. It means, even in our suffering, Jesus makes us alive—and that life is extraordinary!

How does 1 Peter 2:4-6 speak into the topic of our problem and God's promise?

What does Jesus being the "cornerstone" of your life teach you about that life?

What is one practical way you can show you recognize Jesus as the cornerstone of your life and our church?

Thank God for making you His through the death and resurrection of His Son. Ask Him to help you experience the reality of that fact here on earth as you wait for its ultimate reality in heaven.

DAY 4—READ HEBREWS 13:15-16

¹⁵ Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. ¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Have you ever had one moment that made your entire day? Maybe it was an encouraging word or a sweet gift you received on an otherwise ordinary day. Conversely, have you ever had a moment that ruined the rest of your day, no matter how well it started?

In everyday life, it is difficult to be intentional about all we do. We view many moments as simply ordinary. In these moments, we tend to let go of intentionality and let our guard down. This is not always bad. But it can lead to those closest to us catching the worst in us. We don't hold our tongues or do something thoughtful when we are focused on "me time" after a long day.

While we each need to reset and step away, the Lord ultimately fills us up and gives us true rest. In the saving work of Jesus on the cross, He alone makes us truly alive. When we look to Him for "life," we have a greater capacity to serve those around us. When we continually offer up a sacrifice of praise for the work He has done in us—which we did not in any way deserve—our perspective and purpose shift. The ordinary moments of the day become less about how we can get a break and more about how we can continue to see God at work in those around us.

Jesus makes us alive so that we can engage with our heavenly Father in all areas of life—even the most ordinary moments. Let's not miss them today.

How does Hebrews 13:15-16 speak into the topic of our problem and God's promise?

Where in your life is it easiest for you to grow weary and lack "life"? Why? How does Hebrews 13:15-16 speak to you about that?

What is one daily practice you need to prioritize to live as someone Jesus has given life?

Offer up a sacrifice of praise to God for His saving work in your life. Ask Him to show you how that praise needs to manifest in your daily life.

DAY 5—READ EPHESIANS 5:1-2

¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

What is the worst thing you have ever smelled? What is the best thing you have ever smelled? The way God designed our sense of smell is remarkable. It is considered the strongest of the five senses. It is also considered the sense most closely related to memory. Have you ever experienced that? You get a whiff of something specific, and suddenly you are whisked back to a childhood memory. The sensation of smell keeps us uniquely linked to our past and helps us reminisce. Not only can a particular smell bring about a flood of memories, but it also can influence people's demeanor and even affect work performance. Smells can completely alter your mood, and they directly affect your taste buds.

When Noah stepped off the ark, he offered a burnt offering that Genesis 8:21 tells us was a pleasing aroma to God. Can you imagine it? Noah's sacrifice was, to God, a scent so delightful that He determined to never again flood the earth to the point of total destruction.

Ephesians 5:1-2 reminds us that, instead of total destruction, God sent His Son, Jesus, to give us abundant life. Jesus offered Himself up for us in love. That sacrifice acted as a pleasing aroma to God, only it had a much farther-reaching effect than Noah's sacrifice, or anyone else's. By Christ's offering, God has accepted us as His beloved children.

By Christ's offering, God accepts you as His beloved child. And now it is your turn to respond. As Jesus makes you alive in Him, you can draw others in with the pleasing aroma of the gospel.

How does Ephesians 5:1-2 speak into the topic of our problem and God's promise?

In your own words, what does Jesus making you alive equip you to do?

How does your life show the gospel message as "alive" to those around you? What needs to change?

Pray that God would help you walk in the love of Christ, so your life might be a pleasing sacrifice and fragrant aroma to Him.