

Intro:

There are many disciplines in the Christian life: assembling together with the brethren, fasting, prayer, righteousness & sanctification, tithing, worship, thanksgiving, rejoicing... There are thoughts and words and deeds we are expected to perform once we come to the saving grace of Jesus...

Ephesians 2:1-3 {AMPC}

Well, thank you, brother Paul, for those encouraging words! Why is he pointing this out to the Ephesian church? Should we focus on who we were before we came to Christ?

Ephesians 2:4-5

↳ He is pointing out our state before salvation, before being born again, in order to understand the exceeding riches of God's grace toward us.

We weren't brought back to a state of servanthood (though we are servants). We weren't redeemed as humble slaves of a good Master (though we are called to follow Jesus who took on the form of a servant.)

To be redeemed to a place of forgiveness as a servant of God for all eternity would be the greatest display of gracious mercy EVER! But God...

v. 6

But why? Why God? Why us?

Psalm 8:3-6

↳ Everything we receive from the Father is not for *our* glory. Salvation, forgiveness, healing, financial prosperity, restoration, deliverance from addiction... it is all to *His* glory.

Ephesians 2:8-10

Why? (Like a little kid when we tell them what to do...) WHY should I?

1 Peter 1:6-7

When we put pressure on our faith, instead of following the whims of the flesh, *our faith is purified*, and purified faith will be found unto the praise and honor and glory when Jesus is revealed. But whose praise and honor and glory?

Ephesians 2:4-7

There is never a time in our Christian experience that we begin to earn what was given to us. We never arrive at a place of salvation where our Christian walk balances out with God's gracious gift to us. Now, at the beginning of our faith (if you were saved last week) you walk in the same unearned, undeserved grace as another who has been saved for 80 years.

We serve God because we love Him, because He is worthy of service and obedience and allegiance. But everything we do, everything we are, everything we give - comes back to the One who graciously saved us!

Our motivation for serving more, for giving more, for loving more, for praying more, for worshipping more... is that at the revealing of Jesus, everything we've done in faith, will bring Him glory.

- Ex. 500,000,000,000 years after you receive your glorified body, your very walking on those streets of gold, of worshipping before the Throne, of fellowshiping with Abraham & Peter & Daniel, every moment of that will be God showing off the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward you in Christ Jesus.
- Ex. The crown that you carry which displays the righteous, faith-filled acts which you accomplished on your very short vapor life here on the earth - that crown will be God showing off the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward you in Christ Jesus. (And you will throw that crown at the feet of Jesus - who is the author and finisher of your faith.)

Our motivation for pursuing a lifestyle of service before the Lord, our motivation for believing God for increase, a holier lifestyle, a deeper love for God, deeper love for the brethren, and for the lost - is all so that in the ages to come God will receive the glory.

Conclusion:

My encouragement to us today is to allow God's grace to grow and develop in all of us- to push us past our comfort levels, to demand more of our time, our energy, our priorities, and yes, our "stuff" - so that God can be glorified in the earth now, and throughout the ages.