

Ephesians 2:1-10

“Management or Sales”

I came across something funny this week. Well, maybe it's Bible nerd funny. When the ancient Greeks looked up into the heavens they could see the stars and the planets move, but they never saw the earth move. They thought everything in space revolved around the earth. They called it geocentric astronomy. Plato and Aristotle wrote about it and affirmed this idea that everything revolved around the earth. This theory was held as fact for 1500 years. The power of it affected the way people thought about humanity and our place in creation. People thought everything ought to revolve around what people wanted, and that we are the center of the universe. It wasn't until Galileo that humanity began to realize the truth of how the planets move. Now here's what's funny. Galileo wrote his theory in the 1500's AD. But way back in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD the Apostle Paul writes this letter to the church in Ephesus. Basically, Paul explains while there are hundreds and billions of stars in the heavens they do not revolve around you. Life and everything in it does not revolve around me. Galileo argued the planets in the solar system revolve around the sun. The Apostle Paul is arguing in this passage from Ephesians all of creation hangs on the salvation paid for by the Son of God.

In my first job out of college I went to work in the marketing department for Herff Jones yearbook division. The slogan for Herff Jones was, “All About You.” The problem with All About You is it is a dead thought. Life is not all about you. Life is not about me; what's good for me, or what I want. When we make this mistake; when we try to make everything about us we become the sons of disobedience who follow the prince of the power of the air. Understand, the prince of the power of the air is the devil. The devil's only goal is to lead people away from God. I have heard the devil's favorite snare is pride. The sin of pride is a powerful and sincere focus on ourselves. Pride can lead us to focus on how well we are doing; our success and what feels good to us. Through pride the only thing that matters is what feels good to me. That is the message of the world. “Look after #1.” And thus we walk the earth, as good as animated corpses – cut off from all that would bring us love, hope, faith and joy, but the greatest of these is love.

How is it those who are dead in their trespasses find love? How is it those who have wronged so many others find mercy? How is it any of us find grace? The simple answer is we can't. Grace is not something we can find. Mercy is not something we deserve. Even if love is offered to us we cannot accept it because deep down in our selfishness we own the lie – love is not something we are allowed to have. Too many of us own the lie, “If the good things we want don't come to us we must not be worthy of them. We must not be worthy of love. Some people are, but we are not.” This is one of the lies the devil uses to put the focus on us and our worthlessness, or unworthiness. If we think too highly of ourselves that is a sin because it puts the focus on us. If we think too little of ourselves that is a sin because it puts the focus on us. Church, on whom should our focus rest?

The Apostle Paul makes this point.

“God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” (Ephesians 2:4 RSV).

Although, there are hundreds and billions of stars in the galaxy; although, we may feel as though our lives are surrounded on all sides with problems, fears, doubts and failures the good news is life does not revolve around us. Life, and all things pertaining to the “good life,” revolve around the Son; Jesus Christ. We cannot earn salvation. We will never be good enough or smart enough, or obedient enough. Do you know why? Because salvation is not about us. Salvation is about what God is doing in us, and through us. “We are God's workmanship, created in

Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before hand, that we should walk in them” (v10).

God has done this wonderful thing for us we do not deserve. God has saved us because of God’s great love and mercy. God is always reaching out to us. God is always offering God’s grace. That is the reason why when people ask, “What must I do to be saved?” we can say all they have to do is say, “Yes.” Say, “Yes to Jesus Christ.” Say, “Yes to Jesus as their savior.” Say, “Yes, to Jesus Christ as their Lord.” That means our lives can no longer be about us. Our lives belong to the Lord.

If we are going to make that change, to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord what would need to change? What would need to happen for our lives to revolve around Christ instead of just revolving around ourselves and what we want? What might we do? To whom might we reach? And with whom might we connect for Christ? Who are the people within our congregation who feel separated from the Love of God? Who are the people in our community who do not know Christ as their personal Lord and savior? If we would do battle with the prince of the power of the air we must begin by realizing the battle is not about us. We are not in charge. The conflict is not about us. The devil is trying to sell us on the idea that all of this is about us? Please pay attention to this. The problems we are facing; the blessings we receive, the sorrows and the joys we feel are not about us. They certainly impact you, but they are not about you. They are not about us. Our jobs are not on the line. We are not in charge. It is not our responsibility. We are not in management. (pause) We are in sales. The devil is selling the lie that our lives are all about us. We are commanded by Christ – the King, to make disciples. We are in sales, and we are using the words of our mouths, the meditations of our hearts and the example of our lives to share with people inside these walls and all of the people outside these walls just how good it is to be loved by God. We are commanded by the Lord God Almighty to share God’s love with others. However, to be successful for God’s kingdom we have to get it straight; once and for all. Are we in management or are we in sales? Whose glory and whose success are most important?

In the name of Jesus Christ – Amen.