

God's Love Story

Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10 (The Passion Translation)

Date: February 22, 2021

Message: Even when we were dead and doomed in our many sins, he united us into the very life of Christ and saved us by his wonderful grace! ... We have become his poetry, a re-created people that will fulfill the destiny he has given each of us, for we are joined to Jesus, the Anointed One. Even before we were born, God planned in advance *our destiny* and the good works we would do *to fulfill it!*

Ephesians 2:5, 10

During this Lenten season, many of us are reflecting and mourning anew that our sinless Savior was to be crucified. Some of us will practice various Lenten disciplines such as prayer, fasting, the giving up of certain things or behaviors, or the taking up of more or different acts of service. As we introspectively examine ways to increase and enrich our spiritual life and relationship with God during this season, we can be confronted once again with our failures and short-comings – uncomfortably so at times! Before we beat ourselves up too much or get dragged into despair, I encourage us to look to these words of hope in today's passage from Ephesians. Yes, there can still be hope, even in the dark days preceding the crucifixion. Since this is an annual remembrance, we already know how this story ends on Easter morning. And we already know our personal stories of salvation and forgiveness, where God's grace and mercy covered us.

As I read through this passage of scripture, I kept thinking about story. If you ask a child to write or tell you story or draw a picture, how often do their mom or dad, grandparent or other adult guardian, sibling, teacher, friend or beloved pet make an appearance? They will write or tell about the ones they know, the ones they love; that's who has to be included in their story. How beautiful it is that God has included each of us in His story! As verse 5 reminds us, "Even when we were dead and doomed in our many sins, he united us into the very life of Christ and saved us by his wonderful grace!" And I just love how this Passion translation says in verse 10 that "We have become his poetry." The Message translation says "For we are God's masterpiece." The Voice translation tells us "...we are the product of His hand, heaven's poetry etched on lives." Friends, remember that God knows us and loves us so much that He has written us into His story. And just as we can look ahead to the joy coming after the somber reflections of Lent, be encouraged that God has already planned and arranged – by joining us with Jesus, the Anointed One – for us to accomplish the good works to fulfill our destiny. It is already written.

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, we are humbled and honored to be a part of your story. Help us to live our lives in such a way that those we encounter know that your story is not only a redemption story, but primarily a LOVE story, and is available to all. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.*

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