

Let's get back into the book of Ephesians today.

In Chapter 1, Paul began to lay a foundation of who God is and who we are in Him. He continues to unpack the truth of the transformational power of God's work in our lives as we continue reading in Chapter 2:

Ephesians 2:1-7 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.<sup>3</sup> Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

It's important to remember the miracle of transformation that took place in our lives when we became born-again.

For those who lived an outwardly rebellious life before Christ it's easy for them to point back to a palatable change in their lives when they relinquished control of their lives to Christ.

For those who may have been raised in the church and perhaps had an outwardly more compliant life, they need to realize that they were equally as lost and dead in their sins.

All of us, if we're not careful, can tend to forget the radical power of transformation through the Gospel in our lives and it is good for us to remember the incredibly rich mercy and great love that God has for us.

I've noticed, over the 40 years of being a Kahu, that if a person becomes complacent and mediocre in their attitude to the deep and radical forgiveness that the Father has poured out in their lives through Jesus, they tend to start becoming complacent and mediocre in the passion for and obedience to Jesus.

We see a perfect example of this in Luke 7:

Luke 7:36-47 Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined *at the table*. <sup>37</sup> And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining *at the table* in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, <sup>38</sup> and standing behind *Him* at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears,

and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. <sup>39</sup> Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.” <sup>40</sup> And Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And he replied, “Say it, Teacher.” <sup>41</sup> “A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup> When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?” <sup>43</sup> Simon answered and said, “I suppose the one whom he forgave more.” And He said to him, “You have judged correctly.” <sup>44</sup> Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. <sup>45</sup> You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. <sup>46</sup> You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. <sup>47</sup> For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”

Jesus said in John 14:15, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

When we remember and celebrate His amazing Grace in our lives and transforming forgiveness in our lives, we grow in our love for Him and subsequently our obedience to Him.

### **Hale Pule Question:**

**In what ways do you recognize the power and depth of His forgiveness in your life?**

As I said a little earlier, sometimes we can become complacent in our attitude concerning His forgiveness and some people we encounter may even think, “I’m not all that bad.” We tend to look at the presence and nature of sin on a sliding scale. Of course, there are always those WAY worse than us.

Let’s look at some Scriptures to remind us of the amazing and powerful act of love the Father showed through His forgiveness that comes through Christ.

First of all, we need to understand the devastating nature of sin from God’s perspective. We can’t understand the power of His forgiveness without understanding the deceptive and destructive depth of sin. We can’t make light of it or just settle for judging the sin in our lives on a curve, comparing ourselves to others and thinking that is how the Father sees it.

Paul wrote to the Jesus Followers in Rome and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit painted a comprehensive picture of the Father’s perspective of sin. Here are a couple of verses that talk about the true universality of sin.

Romans 3:10 as it is written, “There is none righteous, not even one;

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

To make light of the true nature of sin, our culture trivializes it, mocks it, and even celebrates it. Sin, though incredibly deceptive, is not benign nor “innocent. (Hebrews 11:25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin)

Paul goes on to give one of the clearest statements about the true nature of sin tied with the overarching radical truth of God’s forgiveness through Christ.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He shares the same principle with Titus, in a little more detail.

Titus 3:1-7 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, <sup>2</sup> to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. <sup>3</sup> For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. <sup>4</sup> But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, <sup>5</sup> He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

The true power of God’s forgiveness in our lives is that we were utterly powerless and hopeless, not necessarily on the surface of life – many think they are cruising and in control without Christ – but spiritually and eternally speaking.

For those of us who are Jesus Followers, we don’t look back to our old life and wallow in regret, pity, guilt or condemnation. We are COMPLETELY forgiven by Him and are a new creation and don’t walk in condemnation. (2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 8:1)

For those who aren’t Jesus Followers, you don’t have to be paralyzed by the weight of your sin and walk in a shame that keeps you from humbling yourselves, confessing your sin, and relinquishing your life to Jesus. He is there, ready to transform you from the inside out. We already saw this in Titus 3:5-7 and here are a couple of more verses:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Isaiah 43:18:19 “Do not call to mind the former things,  
Or ponder things of the past.

19 “Behold, I will do something new,  
Now it will spring forth;  
Will you not be aware of it?  
I will even make a roadway in the wilderness,  
Rivers in the desert.”

### **Hale Pule Question:**

**Given what the Bible says about how Complete and Comprehensive the forgiveness of God is in our lives, how can you walk out the power of this truth in your life?**

We will talk more about His Grace and Calling on our lives next week as we continue in verse 8.

More verses to meditate on and consider:

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Philippians 3:7-14 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that [i]for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Luke 9:62 But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”