



2 As for **you**, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in **those** who are disobedient. 3 **All of us** also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^[e] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 **But because of his great love** for us, **God**, who is rich in mercy, 5 **made us alive** with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God **raised** us up with Christ and **seated** us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ

Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, **expressed** in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by **works**, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are **God's handiwork**, created in Christ Jesus to do **good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do.....

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,

Icebreaker

What is one of your favorite gifts you've ever given to someone else? Why was it so memorable?

Conversation Starters

1. What do you think of the definition of faith Alice cites in her teaching - "Faith is empty hands left open for God to fill." Do you believe that? Why or why not?
2. Talk about what you were taught about faith when you were growing up.
3. What are some other ways faith could be defined? What are the differences from the definition above. Does this definition of faith require the person to bring something to God?
4. If you had to pick between these two equations, which do you choose? Why does it matter?
 - a. Faith = trying harder
 - b. Faith = empty hands before God.
5. Read the Verses from Ephesians 2 above.
 - a. How do you respond to the truth that God does all the heavy lifting through Grace when it comes to our restoration?
 - b. In what ways do you resist this truth?
 - c. Why do you think humans want to claim some part or role in grace other than receiving the free gift?
6. Faith is not something we give to God. In that case, faith would **be a work**. But exactly the opposite is true. To have faith in God is to be without works before God. Faith looks like empty hands held open for God to fill.
Miraslov Volf
7. How do you make sense of the idea that faith is coming to God with open hands AND THEN God fills your empty hands with good work to do? Where is the motivation and inspiration to do the work if it isn't to get, keep or earn God's love?
8. How can you practice approaching God with empty hands?

