

Fearless and Free - Grounded

November 21, 2025

Grounded in Reality

Ephesians 2: 1-3

And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Questions for Small Groups:

Ephesians 2:2-3 identifies three forces at work encouraging us to stay in that place of slavery and death. What are they?

Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, ²¹ envy, ^[a] drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Questions for Small Groups:

Can you recognize self-centeredness in yourself? Which areas of your life or which relationships? Can you identify any relationships in which you are using people instead of serving them? Has this ever been the case in your relationship with God?

CCC 1426: Conversion to Christ, the new birth of Baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Body and Blood of Christ received as food have made us “holy and without blemish,” just as the Church herself, the Bride of Christ, is “holy and without blemish.” Nevertheless, the new life received in Christian initiation has not abolished the frailty and weakness of human nature, nor the inclination to sin that tradition calls *concupiscence*, which remains in the baptized such that with the help of the grace of Christ they may prove themselves in the struggle of Christian life. This is the struggle of *conversion* directed toward holiness and eternal life to which the Lord never ceases to call us.

Grounded in Grace

Ephesians 2:4-10

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not because of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Questions for Small Groups:

We were dead in our transgressions, but when God intervened, what happened? (Ephesians 2:5-6)

How are we made spiritually alive? See John 5:24, Romans 6:4

John 5:24 ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

Romans 6:4 ⁴ We were buried^[a] therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

After hearing this what are your thoughts on why we might have experienced baptism, yet still not feel like God's beloved daughters?

How are we saved?

Grace is defined as follows in the following two passages in the CCC:

CCC1996 Our justification comes from the grace of God. Grace is a *favor*, the *free and undeserved help* that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life.

CCC 1999 The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it. It is the *sanctifying* or *deifying* grace received in Baptism. It is in us the source of the work of sanctification:

2 Corinthians 5:17-18: ¹⁷ Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation;^[a] the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;

Grounded in Belonging

Ephesians 2:11-22

¹¹ Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall^[a] of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸ for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²² in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Questions for Small Groups:

“Have you ever felt like an outsider? Do you often feel alone or unprotected? Do you ever think no one understands you? Do you feel like you are living on the fringe? (describe the *feeling* more that logistical details)

Grounded in Hope (10 min.)

Read Ephesians 3:1-13

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— ² assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, ³ how the mystery^[a] was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴ When you read this you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; ⁶ that is, how the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷ Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸ To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in^[b] God who created all things; ¹⁰ that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose which he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and

confidence of access through our faith in him. ¹³ So I ask you not to^[c] lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Grounded in Love

Ephesians 3:14-20

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think,

CCC 2563 The heart is the dwelling-place where I am, where I live; according to the Semitic or Biblical expression, the heart is the place “to which I withdraw.” The heart is our hidden center, beyond the grasp of our reason and of others; only the Spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully. The heart is the place of decision, deeper than our psychic drives. It is the place of truth, where we choose life or death. It is the place of encounter, because as image of God we live in relation; it is the place of covenant.

Questions for Small Groups:

How is the heart described in CCC 2563? Turn to your partner and share your answer.

Resolutions:

1. I want to be grounded in reality. I know that sin is real, and that it needs to be cleared out of my heart if I'm going to be able to hear God's voice. I'll go to confession this week so that any barrier that is keeping me from hearing His voice calling me beloved can be broken down by His mercy and forgiveness.

2. I want to be grounded in grace. I don't have to hustle, perform, or try to earn God's love; I already have it. When I feel myself relying on my own strength and getting worn out, I will stop and pray. I'll ask God to help me remember that is isn't all up to me. It's up to Him. I can rest. I will leave some things undone this week and trust that God can make up for where I am lacking.

3. I want to be grounded in love. I need to take step of trust by inviting God into the places inside me that are vulnerable and hurt. I don't know how to do this alone, so I will find someone to walk alongside me in the process---a wise friend or a professional. I will hold fast to the truth that it is not a sign of weakness to ask for help, but a sign of strength.