

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 22ND - 23RD, 2022 // BOOK OF EPHESIANS

SPIRITUAL DEATH (EPHESIANS 2:1-3) THE DEPTH OF FORGIVENESS AND REDEMPTION

Chapter 1 talks about the blessing of being forgiven and redeemed by Jesus. In chapter 2 Paul explains this in more detail by telling us we "were dead in [our] trespasses and sins."

- **Trespasses** is a lifestyle of violating God's commands. **Sins** are the actions by which we violate God's commands.

"IN WHICH YOU PREVIOUSLY WALKED"

When we become Christians, we're choosing not to follow the ways of the world, but the principles and teachings of Jesus.

- **Accepting Jesus is a spiritual and mental change that should be evident in virtually everything we do. To claim Christ without evidence is not biblical.**

THE "RULER OF THE POWER OF THE AIR" IS SATAN

This tells us that a **society that works in "disobedien[ce]" to Jesus is under the influence of Satan.**

- Genesis 3 tells us that Satan tries to distract us from God by focusing us on ourselves. **The god of self is the prevailing god of American culture.**

ALIGNING WITH THE WORLD HAS CONSEQUENCES

When we live in disobedience to Jesus, we're "**children under wrath.**" This means:

1. **Natural cause-effect consequences of sin** (jail, STDs, hatred, etc.).
2. **Sometimes God directly causes "bad" things because of our sin.**
3. **Facing His wrath and eternal consequences** (damnation).

LIVING (EPHESIANS 2:4-10)

"BUT GOD..."

VS 1-3 are bleak, but then Paul reminds us that we have the ability to be spiritually alive because Christ conquered spiritual death.

- **God not only loves us but shows us great mercy! Our sins made us spiritually dead and hopeless, but through the cross, we have life and hope.**

"RAISED US UP... AND SEATED US WITH HIM"

The power of the Holy Spirit given to us by the work of Jesus on **the cross not only gives us hope and fulfillment in this life, but also ensures that we have an eternal inheritance.**

- This language foreshadows the great banquet in Revelation 19 when we become privileged co-heirs with Christ.

LIVING LIKE WE'RE NOT DEAD

Because of our salvation, we're not only alive in Christ, but we're empowered to live holy and represent Him in the battle against evil.

- **Too many of us are living like we're still dead! We can demonstrate the fruit (Galatians 5), be set free by the power of the Spirit, and set the example of true love in the world!**

PIVOTAL PASSAGES (VS 8-9)

The Word is clear, "[we] are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast."

- **We must humble ourselves and know we cannot save ourselves or earn the love of God; He graciously offers.**

THIS DOESN'T CONDONE IRRESPONSIBILITY

Though salvation is a gift, that gift is received by us putting our faith in Jesus. Faith in Jesus should be evident by how we live.

- Though how much we pray, study, and live out the teachings of God cannot save us, **demonstrations of faith should be natural responses to salvation.**

So, it is clear that we're not saved by our works, but V 10 and James 2 also make it clear that we are not saved from works either.

- **We are "His workmanship, created...for good works." Jesus didn't save us to live in sin or be selfish consumers, but to live holy and be salt and light!**

BEING BUILT (EPHESIANS 2:11-22)

TENSION BETWEEN JEWS AND GENTILES

Because of their history and the prophecy of the Messiah coming through the Jews, many of them were critical of Gentile (non-Jewish) converts to Christianity.

- Circumcision was a specific source of pride for the Jews because it was a physical reminder of their history with God.

THEIR HEART WAS A PROBLEM (ROMANS 2:29)

Though the Jews in Ephesus had historical pedigree and knowledge of Jesus before anyone else, they were not living out the principles of love toward others.

- **How often in America do we brag on our church history and knowledge while failing to live out the love of Christ?**

NOW THE OUTSIDERS ARE FAMILY

Paul told the non-Jews that through the mercy and grace of God, they had been adopted into the family of God with the Jews and there should be no "wall of hostility."

- **God wants us to demonstrate peace both vertically and horizontally. If anyone submits to Christ, they are our family.**

WE ALL HAVE ACCESS THROUGH THE TRINITY

Because Jews and non-Jews have become "one man from the two," anyone, regardless of color, status, nationality, or past, has access to Jesus.

- This access is possible by the Father's plan for salvation, the Son carrying out that plan, and the Spirit empowering us until Jesus returns for His Church.

NOT STRANGERS, BUT ONE HOUSEHOLD

Paul moves into a metaphor about a building and declares that both Jews and Gentiles are bricks in a house God is building.

- **Theology is immovable, but methodology can vary from culture to culture. Regardless of the method, we're all one under the gospel.**

CORNER AND CAPSTONE

The Church is built on the foundation of the "apostles" (disciples) and "prophets" (OT and NT), but Jesus is the **cornerstone**. Paul is alluding to two different things from Is. 28 and Ps. 118.

- A cornerstone (the foundation stone) can also be a capstone (the last stone placed). This echoes Revelation 22:13.

YOU'RE NOT A VICTIM

Paul's conclusion is that the Gentile Christians had no excuse not to grow in their relationship with Jesus and to flourish in the world.

- **Christianity and a victim mindset are incompatible. In Christ, we have freedom, equality, grace, love, and empowerment through His work, not ours.**

SPIRITUALLY DEAD

- **"The wages of sin is death"** (Romans 6:23). Do we understand that our disobedience to God's commands and principles has natural and spiritual consequences?
- **Have we addressed our sin?** Do we feel remorse for it? And have we asked for Jesus' forgiveness and help?

TO TRULY LIVE

- Because God loves us, He shows us mercy and gives us the opportunity to have life and hope through Jesus.
- **We are saved by grace through faith.** We cannot earn salvation and a relationship with God, but **we can receive it through truly believing in Him.**
- When we have a relationship with Jesus, He gets into every part of our lives, and everything changes.
- We can live in peace and fulfillment because we are saved, we are being restored, and we are empowered through the Word and the Spirit to live honorably.

RESPONSIBLE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

- **We must also live responsibly.** Our initial responsibility is to simply accept God's gracious gift of forgiveness and salvation by welcoming Christ into our life.
- When we fall in love with God, we are responsible for obeying Him because we learn to trust His wisdom.

MAKING HIM THE BEGINNING AND END

- The only pathway to restoration, peace, and contentment is by **making Jesus the cornerstone (the foundation) and capstone (the authority) in our lives.**
- Logically speaking, **has any other way worked?** If not, maybe we should trust in our gracious and loving Creator.