

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 23RD, 2022 // BOOK OF EPHESIANS

OUR PROBLEM (EPHESIANS 2:1-3) OUR THREE ENEMIES

The Bible teaches us that there are three enemies every Christian faces: our flesh, the world, and the devil. We see all three of these in 2:1-3 at work in us.

- We often try to manage our exposure to the influences of the world, the temptations of the devil, and the desires of our flesh, **but that only leads to bondage.**

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER TO THE CHURCH

Paul says that the Ephesians (and us) were once dead in our trespasses and sins. **Trespasses** are our failures to obey the commands of God. **Sins** are offenses against God in our thoughts, words, or deeds.

- Trespasses and sins don't cause our hearts to be dead; our deadness produces the fruit of rebellion: trespasses and sins.

WHERE OUR DEAD HEARTS LEAD US

Our hearts lead us to enjoy the ways of the world, which is ruled by the devil, so we live disobedient lives. While it would be easy to say we can't help ourselves since we're dead, Romans 1:18 reminds us that we are people who **"by their unrighteousness suppress the truth."** We are created in God's image but love to rebel against our Creator.

WHY DO WE SIN?

Paul tells us why we sin: we like it! We chase after our "fleshly desires," and we "carry out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts." We would sin without the world and the devil's temptations, but what we see, hear, read, watch, touch, and think about comes from the world controlled by "the ruler of the power of the air" that inflames and pushes us toward sin.

"UNDER WRATH"

We aren't just born sinners; we are sinners by choice. Once we begin to choose to sin willfully, we come under God's wrath because He is the standard of everything that is right, good, and beautiful we should uphold.

- It's not just that we don't live as we should, **we reject the One in Whom we should delight**, which separates us from Him.

THE SOLUTION (EPHESIANS 2:4-10) SOME WONDERFUL "BUTS" IN THE BIBLE

There are no greater two words we can find in the Bible than "but God"! God would have been just to leave us in our rebellion and allow us to die separated from Him because of our sins. But Paul says God is "rich in mercy" and has a "great love" for us.

- **Mercy is when we don't get what we deserve, which is God's judgment.**

WE NEED DIFFERENT HEARTS

We are made alive in Jesus through all that He has accomplished for us in His life, death, and resurrection. Our deadness seems impossible to overcome, and it is if left to ourselves. We need "outside" help to change our hearts. We need to be born again.

- **No one is too far gone who cannot be changed by the power of God in Jesus!**

NEVER-ENDING SUPPLIES

God's mercy and grace in Jesus never run out. By Jesus' grace, we get more than we could ever imagine, ask, or think. Where we once lived according to the ways of the world, we are now raised up and seated in the heavens with God in Jesus!

- **We are living displays of His kindness and grace now and for all eternity.**

WE DIDN'T EARN IT!

Paul makes clear that our salvation is a gift, not to be earned by works, which leads to pride, but to be received, which leads to gratitude. We receive all of this through saving faith, a faith that God gives us to believe and trust in all Jesus has accomplished for us.

- **We live as humble examples who boast in Jesus, the name above all names!**

SO WHAT ABOUT WORKS?

Our works for Jesus are the *display* of our salvation, not the *cause* of our salvation. This is incredibly controversial because some believe in a "works salvation," that our works earn our salvation. Others believe in a salvation that can be free from works.

- **Neither view is biblical! We aren't saved by works nor from works but to works.**

RESULTS (EPHESIANS 2:11-22) MANY APPLICATIONS OF THE GOSPEL

The work of Jesus to save sinners has many practical applications. Paul speaks about several of them in the rest of the chapter. The first application is the scope of the gospel. It's good news for anyone who will repent and believe, even those who seem "far from God."

- The Jews treated the Gentiles as outcasts who were unworthy of knowing God.

NOT TOO FAR AWAY

The Gentiles were without God and without hope in this world. They chased after false gods in the hope they could find peace and contentment. But Jesus didn't die to keep them at arm's length. He brought them near so He could shower His amazing love on them.

- **No one is too far from God's grace.**

UNITY IN CHRIST

Another application of the work of Jesus is how He makes one people out of many people. The Jews and Gentiles were as far away from each other as two people groups could be, yet Jesus tore down the dividing wall to make one body out of them.

- **This one-body work of Jesus invites all to join who will repent and believe.**

THE LAW SEPARATES, GRACE UNITES

The law's primary purpose was to show the sinfulness of sin. It separated people based on how well they could uphold the commands and regulations: into the good and the bad categories. Grace levels all people because all people can only be saved by grace.

- **We must be a church that welcomes all people and points them to Jesus.**

SAINTS AND SINNERS ALL NEED JESUS

Since there's no difference between the spiritual needs of both Jews and Gentiles (we all need Jesus), we rejoice that God has made salvation possible for all, no matter our backgrounds, our ethnicities, our genders, or our pasts.

- In Christ, we all have access to the Father by the Spirit, making us one family.

WHAT GOD IS BUILDING

God calls all people to Himself through Jesus by the Spirit so that He can tear down dividing walls and make us one. The final application is why He is doing this. He's doing this because He's building something that's never been seen. **God is building a people with whom He will dwell for all eternity. We are His temple forever.**

NO LONGER LIMITED TO A NATION

In the OT, God chose to dwell among His people, Israel, in a building called the temple. Now, God's temple is an every-nation temple of vagabonds and ragamuffins who humbly receive Jesus by grace through faith. Jesus is the firstborn among many brothers and sisters from every language, tribe, people group, and nation to the glory of God.

DO YOU WANT TO GET IN ON THIS?

The beauty of the gospel is that it is good news for **anyone** who will receive it by faith. The only limitations to the gospel are what we put on it by keeping it in the church and not taking it outside the church.

- **God's building still has floors and rooms to add. We gladly proclaim, "whoever calls on Jesus will be saved!"**

OUR BATTLE

- There are real enemies we face, which can only be defeated by the power of God demonstrated in Jesus by the Spirit.
- When we become Christ-followers, we are no longer slaves to sin but delivered from bondage.
- **Do we fight sin daily so we can delight in God more and more?**

GOD WORKS FOR US!

- Do we really believe that God has the power to change lives as we share the gospel?
- Do we live our lives as if God's supply of grace, mercy, and love is limited?
- Have we come to the place where we rest in all that Jesus has done for us so that works come from our love for Him?

WHAT IS HE BUILDING HERE?

- We have the privilege of being the representatives of Jesus to our city and county.
- **We can't expect people to find Jesus and His gospel attractive when we are not loving the world outside our doors.**
- **Ask God to give us eyes to see so that all can be invited to join this beautiful body.**