

EPHESIANS chapter 2

EPHESIANS CHAPTER 2 Part 1 / 2:1-7

And you were dead in 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 who we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich

in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:1-7, ESV).

Can you imagine what it would be like to see someone who is dead and lying in a coffin get up and start walking around and talking? That's the kind of thing that happens in the spiritual realm when we come to Christ. We were dead spiritually and He brought us each back to life. We doubt it sometimes when we fall back into sin or despair such as we had before we were saved, but in the spiritual realm we were literally dead, and He brought us to life.

#21 The Mug Shot Was My Lowest Point; Living On The Streets Using Heroin And Meth Daily



Paul begins the chapter presenting a before and after picture of what our lives were like before we knew the Lord. We all have seen those before and after pictures of people like that Jared guy who weighed about 500 pounds and then lost the weight by eating every day at Subway. I've included another one here of a woman who was living on the streets addicted to heroin and meth. She was a daily user. That is such a vivid picture of how horrible our lives are spiritually when we don't

know the Lord. Every time you see this kind of thing, the goal is to produce an after photograph that is so mind-blowing that we want to know what could possibly motivate such a change in a life. The girl on the left is a picture of a young woman who had become so enslaved to drugs that she appears to be a zombie of sorts. On the right side, she is clean, off of drugs and in her right mind. She literally looks at though she has passed from death into life.

In these first few verses of Chapter two, Paul shows us EXACTLY what you and I looked like spiritually before we came to Christ. He then shows us what we looked like after we

came to Christ. In verse one he says, “You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked.”

Paul tells each of us what our spiritual condition was in our “before” picture:

- You were Spiritually dead.
- You walked according to the world.
- You were under the control of the devil.
- You Indulged the flesh.
- You were subject to the wrath of God.

This is what our condition was before we came to Christ. Dead means not alive. We were hopelessly dead.

When you and I were born we were spiritually dead. Man died when he and the woman disobeyed God’s one commandment to them. We hear God’s warning of spiritual death back in the Garden of Eden. *“¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, **for on the day that you eat from it you will certainly die.**”* (Genesis 2:17, NASB).

Adam and Eve didn’t *physically* die the day they ate the fruit, but rather, they died *spiritually*. Before that event, they were walking with God in the garden. They were made to live forever in close fellowship with Him. Teacher Les Feldick says it in an interesting way, “his [Adam’s] body immediately began to die even though he lived 930 years, he still died. We’re talking about physical death with his soul being separated from his physical body.” Before that event, God spoke with Adam and Even and had sweet fellowship with them, but when they disobeyed a great rift formed between them and God. Paradise was lost. Ever since then, man has been trying to get back to the Garden of Eden. He desires to be back in that state of innocence and bliss. The hippies of the 1960’s yearned for “the garden”. They tried to find their way back to the garden with sex, drugs, and rock and roll. Iron Butterfly sang their iconic “In-a-Gadda-Da-Vida” and I’ve heard it said that meant “In the Garden of Eden”. Joni Mitchell’s ethereal sonnet about the music festival at Woodstock was sung by Crosby Stills Nash, and Young who ended with something about “getting back to the garden”. Man has been trying to get back to that garden ever since the fall. We know that something is missing. Something’s not right and we know that things are not as they should be. In the Garden, man entered into rebellion against God, sin entered the world, and from that sin of Adam we inherited what might be called a spiritual sin DNA that causes each of us to be born in sin. This caused every human being to be born with a dead spirit. Paul describes it by saying we were born with a “sin nature.”

When we were born spiritually dead, we had no spiritual understanding. We were blind to spiritual things. Jesus repeated the sentiments of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Shepherd King David in the Psalms, saying, "You have eyes but you cannot see, and you have ears, but you do not hear" (Mark 8:18, paraphrased).

Before coming to faith in Christ, our lives and our priorities were the same as those of every other person in the world. Before I came to the Lord, I had the world's viewpoint concerning my career. I had the world's viewpoint on how I related to people. What I thought was important came from the world's perspective. I was just a guy who was "cool" in his own eyes and in the eyes of other worldly people. I was intently working on my own plan to live my life in my own way (or so I thought). But, when I came to faith in Jesus, I was transformed in a spectacular way. My friends whom I had loved for my entire life, didn't want to have much to do with me anymore. I was just too strange for them. And the reason that I was strange is because my spiritual eyes had been opened and I began to devote myself to God and whatever He had for me to do with my life. But before that event, I was dead in sin. I blended in with the world around me because I was of the world.

And sadly, and as odd as it might sound, I was under the control of the devil. That's a weird thing to say, but if I wasn't following the Lord, I was a son of disobedience. It's odd to say that the devil was controlling me, but remember, if you're not under the control of the Holy Spirit, you are open to the purposes of spiritual darkness. Whether I knew it or not the work of the enemy was being played out in my life. "He who is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30, paraphrased). Think of it more as your default position of thinking, seeing, and hearing things as a human being.

In such a state, we lived out the passions of our flesh. You don't have to have been an immoral person to have been under the influence of the evil realm. Right now you might be wondering, "Faber, what part of me was dead?" You might remember that I've said that I believe one way we were made in God's image is that, like Him, we are a three part being. As God is three persons in one (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) we too are like the Trinity, in that we are a three part being.

Les Feldick explains that we are a tri-unity: body, soul (mind and emotions), and spirit. Before we came to Christ that spirit side of each of us was dead. It was born dead. We shouldn't be shocked by the world ever. Many Christians look on at the world in horror by what people are doing. We shouldn't be shocked. The Bible clearly tells us, "The heart of man is evil and deceitfully wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9, paraphrased). And yet we are shocked over and over by what we see going on in the news. We shouldn't be shocked at all. This is men and women living out their lives according to their hearts. Their conduct exhibits the spiritual death that lies within them in their spirits.

The last thing in the “before picture” is that we were by nature children of wrath. We were so lost we were only deserving of God’s wrath. You might ask, “Why was I deserving of wrath?” Well, we were each deserving of wrath because we were in the enemy’s camp. It’s like we were each soldiers in an army that was contrary to God and His will for mankind.

Paul now contrasts the “before look” with the “after look” as we saw in the picture of the young lady addicted to drugs. Here’s a look at the “after shot.” Verse 4 begins with the word “but.” In the case of hearing such bad stuff, it is nice to hear BUT. Paul will tell us how we who are in faith have moved beyond the “addiction” state so to speak. Paul tells us, ⁴ *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,* ⁵ *even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.* (Ephesians 2:4-5, ESV). The first great contrast is that we are now spiritually alive. This will follow with two other observations about our new state. This is how he describes our new condition:

- We are now spiritually alive.
- We are seated with Christ in heavenly places.
- We are a living example of Christ’s grace and kindness towards us.

We have been made alive. This is way more significant than those before and after pictures that show weight loss, being clean from drugs, or some kind of cream that grows hair on a bald head. We’re talking about how we were dead and He made us alive. And why did this happen? Because God is rich in mercy and because He loves us He made us alive. He was merciful and He loved us. Mercy is when you don’t get what you deserve. As sinners we all deserved hell. Some may quibble with that, but it is the truth. With no redemption in our lives we’re focused only on “me and mine.” But it was because of His mercy that He saved us. It is important to understand that God didn’t do these things because of something we’ve done. There really is nothing that we can do and that is what is so wonderful about grace. To not get this right is to get yourself into a works-based theology. That’s sort of like being in a treadmill religion (I don’t even like to use the word “religion” as it connotes doing this and doing that to somehow please God). Good things happen because of God’s mercy.

Paul wrote the young pastor named Titus and he said, ***“he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,”*** (Titus 3:5, NIV).

The beauty of this is that we lived in a state of death. We didn’t see the world the way God sees it. We were blind to the realities around us. We didn’t comprehend what His Word meant when we heard it. Remember in chapter one last week when I was talking

about the spiritual gifts we receive as an inheritance? Some of the things that we inherit involved not only redemption and forgiveness, but the blessings of wisdom and revelation. And beyond that, in becoming spiritually alive, we are enlightened to know the hope that we have in our lives. Paul says we are seated with Christ in the heavenly places. Most of us know what it feels like to be with Christ in the “heavenly places.” It might happen while your working or when you’re out on a zero-turn mower. But it is that wonderful feeling of knowing that God loves you and you love Him and you’re right where He can see you and He smiles at the things that you are doing. That is much of what it is to be “seated in the heavenly places” with Him.

As I said last week, and I will repeat it, “The simplest Christian armed with the Bible and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit has more wisdom and understanding about the world than the most educated non-believer on the planet.” I really believe that and it is no exaggeration. Paul is saying that “positionally” we’re in heavenly places. We now have a “heavenly perspective.”

It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. (Titus 2:12-13, NIV).

So being positioned in the heavenlies, in the Body of Christ we are living examples of His grace and kindness. He will show his kindness over and over to us forever, and as recipients we are now a display to the glory of God for the rest of history. We are now a display of God’s grace and kindness. How could this being Who created the universe be so kind to us? He did it through faith by grace. And that brings us to next week.

This is important. In the same way Galatians taught Jesus + nothing = Everything, we are now going to see that Faith + nothing = Salvation by grace.

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 a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10, ESV).

Let us pray.

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