

***Ephesians 2:1-10***

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Last week we talked a bit about the power that God has bestowed upon us: the power that raised Christ from the dead and literally animated His dead tissue and transformed Jesus' fleshly body into a supernatural body; the power that seated Jesus in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms; the power that placed Jesus far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come; the power that has put all things under the authority of Christ; and the power that has made Him head over all things for the benefit of the church. We talked about how that power is

---

expressed in our lives and is to be practically experienced by each and every one of us. In this passage, Paul continues with that train of thought. He focuses our attention on the fact that this same power has not only raised us from the dead and given us new life, but it has seated us in the heavenly places and given us power which is far above the spiritual forces of darkness which rule this world.

Paul starts by making the point that prior to Christ bringing us new life we were dead in our sins and trespasses. Does that phrase mean anything to you—“dead in our sins and trespasses?” Does it just sound like Bible talk and do you kind of gloss over it when you hear it or read it? I am afraid that most of us still have not entirely accepted this truth or understood the serious implications of this truth. Yet, it is tantamount for us to believe this truth in order to abide in Christ.

I say that most of us have not accepted this truth because we still do not live as if we are thoroughly in every way, shape or form, 100% dependent upon Jesus for all things; rather, we live as if we need Him for some things, the really important things, but for the most part we believe we have it covered (even if the way we live our life brings us no peace, no joy, no rest, and no love). Believing, however, that we have any ability whatsoever to manage our own lives is a lie from the devil. In fact, it is one of the devil’s most powerful deceptions. Sadly, he has too many of us convinced that we can actually control the outcomes of our life or at least protect ourselves in order to survive our lives. The devil has tricked us into living as if we are, in essence, our own god. But that is simply not the case!

Outside of the new life we have received in Christ we are dead men. This means 1) we have nothing to offer to God, and 2) are in no position to even try and manage our own lives. Thus, all our attempts to be good people—good

---

Christians even—and all our efforts at controlling our lives are futile. The reality is that everything in our life that does not come directly from Jesus is tainted with the stench and corrupting influence of death.

You see, prior to receiving Christ we were walking dead men. Literally, we were zombies—animated tissue with a lifeless soul. When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race; it was like a permanent mutation of our spiritual dna that has subsequently been passed on to every human, without exception. This sin brought death (present and eternal separation from God), and death spread to everyone, for everyone who has ever lived has sinned by nature and by choice (this idea is captured by Paul when he says we were dead in our trespasses and sins as this covers both the willful sins and all the unintentional errors which may not be so “bad” but still fall short of God’s standard of perfection).

This “death” resulted in eternal condemnation, which is why Paul says that we were children of wrath. We were all sentenced to spend eternity not just separated from God, but our eternal destiny included abject suffering. The metaphors which the Bible uses to describe this “**wrath**” are nothing short of terrifyingly horrific: fire, weeping, gnashing of teeth, where the worm, which eats you alive from inside out, never dies. And this lasts for eternity; it never ends, it never wanes, and there is never any comfort to be found from anyone. The “**wrath**” of God is the scariest thing I could ever imagine and despite what some people might think, there will be no “partying with your friends” or “kicking it with the devil.” See also **Romans 3:23; 5:12-21; John 12:31, 16:11**.

And not only were we dead, condemned, and sentenced, we were also mere puppets of the one who is the prince of the power of the air whose very nature is

---

sin and disobedience. How degrading. We were enslaved to Satan and his demonic hordes to do their bidding. We saw that in the *Song of Songs* when the woman says: “The sun has burned my skin. My brothers were angry with me and sent me out to tend the vineyards in the hot sun. Now see what it has done to me” (1:6). She was compelled to serve at their commands and it severely damaged her, but she had no choice she was simply unable to tend for her own vineyard or garden; therefore, it fell into neglect.

When you look around the world it is so tragic and humiliating. People really think they are rulers of their own domain, masters of their destiny despite the fact that their own garden (their own soul) is in complete disarray and neglect and they are unable to find protection from the sun. They don’t even realize that they are just these zombies walking around unwittingly doing the bidding of their master the devil. Satan must just relish in our foolish pride as he yanks upon another string or two and people jump to do his bidding.

I know this sounds bizarre and is the kind of thing by which we get labeled “fundamentalist freaks;” but labels aside, we cannot ignore the fact that the Bible makes it clear that this tangible world is basically likened to the matrix (it is not real) and the intangible world is what is real. If you closely read the gospels you will see that the things Jesus says pretty much always focus on the fact that the spiritual is the hard reality and the physical is just a temporary almost ethereal existence. In fact, so much of what is here on earth is just a copy of that which has already existed in heaven—that which is eternal.

In this unseen world there are powers, principalities, mighty rulers of darkness and wicked spirits in the heavenly realms (*Ephesians 6:12*). In other words there is

---

a whole army of demonic spirits which are organized and ranked by responsibility and authority (just like in any military) and they are posed against us. You see, we are in a war, even though we rarely seem to know of its existence. And the reason so few people are aware of this war is that the last thing the devil wants anyone to know or believe is that he is real or that there is a God. So this prince of the power of the air operates in stealth and stays in the shadows. With deception and lies he keeps people entirely blind to their true condition.

Make no mistake, Satan does not have to try and win over anyone; they all already belong to him. Satan just works really hard to try and prevent light from reaching into the darkness and stealing away from him those that are in his control. This explains why when God's light does pierce the darkness in the heart of a person, Satan moves with a two prong attack. First, he immediately clothes himself as an angel of light, and his servants clothe themselves as servant of righteousness (**2 Corinthians 11:14**), in order to try and deceive a person to remain in his artificial light and thereby stop short of entering into God's light. However, if they do enter into God's light, he quickly deceives them into believing that they need to be "doing" something to please God and serve Him knowing that this lie will prevent the person from actually living in God's light—hence the "religion" of Christianity. So he either keeps them out or tries to keep them neutered.

Now, I want to make this next point very clear since it has been a product of great demonic deception. In the same way that physical death separates us from all those who are living, spiritual death separates us from all those who are spiritually alive, and there is no middle ground. There is not a category for those

---

who are good people or mostly good people. A person is either dead or alive. I say this so emphatically because as believers we cannot be deceived and have to understand that these truths also apply to how we live in our new life in Christ.

For instance, in terms of living as a Christian, there is no category which captures our ability to be good or “do” good, for only God is good (**Mark 10:18**). Therefore, what comes from our lives is either from God and is by definition “good” or from our old nature of death and is by definition rotten, putrid, and evil. The idea that there is some middle ground of goodness is simply another demonic lie. I know it does not often feel as if it is satanic since the ramifications of the things we do from our old sinful nature are not always immediate or even always “bad” in the practical sense (especially the religious things we do). But we must remember the truth and live the truth: it does not matter what we feel or even experience in this “matrix;” it matters only what God says is true.

Paul says each of us once walked like dead men and abided in the lusts of our flesh (our old sinful nature), indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind. This is a very important point. Paul adds this little tag “and of the mind” because there is a distinction between our old sinful nature (which he calls “flesh” or in the Greek, “sarx”) and our mind. In fact, this distinction is critical to Paul’s whole theology of new life in Christ where there is a division between our new creation in Christ, the old sinful nature, and our mind which is able to choose the master it wants to serve—God or “unwittingly” the devil. I say unwittingly since most of us do not consciously make a choice to become beholden to the devil; we just fall prey to his clever deceptions. Remember, there is no middle ground. It’s scary but true!

---

The flesh always desires us to abide in its nature, as sons of disobedience; and, in the past, since we were slaves to the prince of the power of the air, we had no choice but to bathe ourselves in all that was not of God—which he calls “the lusts of the flesh.” Please, don’t be thrown off by Paul’s use of the word “lust.” In our vernacular we tend to apply that word to very lurid (shocking) aspects of our life but that is not the case. Every aspect of our lives yearned for all that was not God. It’s how we lived and our minds were soiled by this existence and freely gave our bodies over to the desires of the flesh.

The mind and the flesh worked together and indulged themselves—bathed themselves—in all that is not God. Again, we are not just talking about the more base aspects of our human depravity (greed, sexual perversion, prejudice, abuse, murder, and so on), but about every thought, every motivation, every deed (no matter how kind and altruistic) that does not measure up to God’s standard of perfection; i.e., everything that does not derive from God Himself.

But unlike the “flesh” which is hopelessly depraved, the mind is something that can be cleansed; it can be washed or renewed. It is not something that is innately evil and corrupted with sin like the “flesh;” therefore, it plays a very important part in our learning to live in the power that has been bestowed upon us in Christ (***Romans 12:1-2***).

So our condition was critical—we were walking dead men—but God, being rich, lavish, or plush in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us from eternity past, even though we were dead, sentenced, condemned to wrath for all eternity, chose to make us alive together with Christ. He bestowed upon us the same power that raised Christ from the dead and in so doing He raised us from

---

the dead and literally put His life into these bodies of ours. And now it is from Him, by Him, and through Him that we live.

Notice that this same power also *seated* us with Christ in the heavenly places. Now this might seem as if Paul is speaking in hyperbole since clearly we are here on earth and not physically in the heavenly places. But he is not. Again, we must remember that this physical reality is just like the matrix, an illusion, and does not represent the true reality which is captured in the spiritual world.

First of all, this power has seated us—it is in the past tense so it is not something that we are waiting for but it is, and has been, our reality. The fact that we are seated means that we are at rest. This is an allusion to Paul’s Jewish heritage and the way in which priests who were doing their service in the temple never sat down but were always up and always working, day after day, offering sacrifices that really could never take away sin or make them right with God. But they were always busy “doing” for God. In contrast, Jesus, our Great High Priest, offered Himself to God as one perfect sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then He sat down at the place of highest honor at God’s right hand for the work was completed (**Hebrews 8; 10:11-12**). As He emphatically stated right before He died: “*tetelestai*”—it is finished (**John 19:30**)!

And we who have believed, we who have been “born-again,” have entered into His rest and like Him are seated. We have found rest and do not need to try to make ourselves right with God, try to make amends for our sin, or work to obtain any sort of approval from God (**Hebrews 4:3-11**). He is seated and we are seated. This has powerful implications for how we are to live in Christ. This is why practically our lives in Christ are not about “doing” anything for God (a.k.a. the



---

“religion” of Christianity), but about believing what Christ has done and learning to simply live in this rest.

We have been presented as sons of God; therefore, there is nothing that God requires from us in terms of our salvation. Besides, we did not deserve it in the first place; we were dead men and condemned to wrath. Our salvation was a free gift which He chose to lavish upon us—for by grace we have been saved. And in the same manner in which we were saved we are to live— It is through faith that a righteous person has life (***Galatians 3:11***); it is not through our ability to do anything right or do anything for God.

Therefore, in terms of practical living, our “work” so to speak is the same as it was in the beginning—to believe! It is through belief that we can daily experience His full outpouring of grace on our lives. We need to continue to believe that our old sinful nature is dead and is therefore completely worthless and something that our mind is no longer to indulge. Rather, our mind is to indulge itself in the things of the Spirit and thereby be transformed to believe that we are sons of God seated in the heavenly places. We simply need to continue to believe that we can do nothing because Christ has already done everything; and His work was perfect and is all that we need.

***Galatians 3:3, 5***

“Have you lost your senses? After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?...I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because

you obey the law of Moses? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about in Christ.

We need to live as men and women who can just enjoy the love and acceptance of our precious Father. I know this may sound too good to be true; but it is the truth. If we can grasp this truth in our souls we will begin to know why it is safe to trust ourselves 100% to His lordship over our lives. We will know why it is safe to relinquish the “control” that we constantly try and exert over our lives.

Now, because this message is beautifully simple, the demonic forces work relentlessly to combat and confuse this truth. They continually bombard us with lies and tempt us to take life into our own hands and: strive to do things “right;” strive to appease God; strive to experience peace and love (if you can imagine); strive to be accepted; strive to not sin; strive to be obedient to God; strive to serve God; strive in ministry; and even strive to connect to God and experience His presence. They are all demonic lies. This leads us to our second point.

Our having been seated in the heavenly places also speaks to the fact that this power has given us position above the dark rulers, authorities and powers in the unseen world. Last week I said that Christ’s victory is our victory. I know that sounded like some Christian cliché but it is the truth. Jesus sits in the seat of ultimate authority and Satan and all his demonic forces are in total submission to His rule. Likewise, since we are sons of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ, and seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (“in Christ Jesus” is the key to this passage), we also have power and authority over the powers of darkness. Now

---

most of us are so experientially unaware of this power but it is ours none the less and we need to learn how to live in this power.

This power over the dark forces is not only the power to cast out demons and the like, but the power to live free from demonic manipulation and control over our lives. It is an absolute tragedy; but too many Christians have chosen the lies of the enemy as the foundation of their lives. It forms their identity, it is their abode in this world, and is the very basis for all their interactions with others and with God. You name it, you pick the lie: I am never going to be loved; no one accepts me for who I am; I am worthless; it must be my fault—I must deserve what I have received; I am too weak to do it right; I cannot trust anyone; I cannot trust God; I am a loser—always has been and always will be; I will always fail; I am not attractive or worthy to be adored; I am going to be abandoned, I just know it; I am afraid; God does not hear me; in fact, no one cares to hear me or really listen to me; God does not help me; He does not care about me; I will always be alone; no one understands me; I need to protect myself and guard myself from harm; I need to shelter myself from those who hurt me; I need to shut down and not feel for the feelings hurt too much; and so on. The list of lies is as long as we can imagine. But they are all lies and are not to be what we build our lives upon.

We are to build our lives upon the cornerstone which is Christ and the truth that He has done it all just so we can be lavished with His grace, mercy, and love because for some reason we are precious to Him. We are that pearl of great price that He searched the world over to find and He chose us to know His love and to live like sons of the Almighty. In fact, He gave up everything to purchase our lives from the enemy and seat us right next to Him.

---

This means we have the power to blow to shreds the control that these ridiculous lies have had in our lives. ***Ephesians 6:16*** says that our faith can extinguish every lie that the enemy sends our way. In fact, because we are seated with Christ we even have the power to cause not just his demonic hordes, but Satan himself to flee from us (***James 4:7***). If you resist the devil in truth He will flee; He has to since Jesus already defeated Him for you.

Because these dark and wicked spirits are submitted to Christ they are also submitted to you in the sense that they cannot get their hands on you, they cannot control you, and they cannot continually bombard you with these lies unless you allow them. When we choose to abide in the power that the Father has bestowed upon us in the Beloved by holding on to the truth of who we are in Christ, the enemy cannot touch us and we are safe (***1 John 5:18***). Then, and only then, will we experience the peace of mind that all of us so desperately desire.

However, when we choose to clothe ourselves in the devil's lies, he throws everything at us in order to make us feel as if we are the ones who are defeated and the ones who will never win. In fact, being the prince of the power of the air who is in control of all those who do not live in the Spirit, he manipulates things and people (even Christians who have not learned to live from their new creation) so that the circumstances of our lives and every encounter just seems to reinforce the lies in which we live. And we are left feeling trapped, feeling like we are crazy, feeling like God does not work, and feeling like it is hopeless. So we read our Bible more and pray more and strive and strive to get control and still it does not help. I am here to tell you it won't help until you choose to take off those lies believing they are filthy rotten clothes of a dead man and leave them on the ground and

---

instead clothe yourself in the grace and mercy of Christ and the truth that you are accepted in the Beloved and you are a son of God seated in the heavenly realms with Christ.

Now, let's go back to this notion that we were saved by grace through faith. The faith part was our "work" so to speak (**John 6:29**). We had to choose to bet our lives on the truth that Jesus is God, that He was the perfect sacrifice for our sins, and that He died in order that we might live. We had to choose to accept Him as our Lord and Savior. No one forced us to believe. We had to choose with our mind and our will to believe. We had to choose to repent from our sins and in effect "exercise" our faith. And when we did, we experienced our "coming out," so to speak, as a child of God. But I want you to note how **everything** about our new life was a gift from God's hand—for by grace you have been saved.

**Romans 12:3** tells us that even our ability to have faith and express faith came from God—as He has given each man a measure of faith—therefore, we are not to think more highly of ourselves than we deserve. It was all Him. Again, every part of our life, even our ability to believe, was from Him. That is why when asked who can be saved, Jesus said: "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God" (**Mark 10:27**). He gave us faith and then merely asked us to choose to make Him the only object of our faith.

With the truth that it was all God—it was His grace from beginning to end—I want to talk about 2 major blasphemies or lies which the enemy has worked relentlessly for us (Christians) to believe.

First, it is an abomination to think that a person has to do something religious in nature, like clean up their lives and stop their sin, before they come to Jesus

---

(they don't!)—the invitation to come is for all. Besides, as Jesus said in **Mark 2:17**: "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." So all a person needs to do is choose to come to Jesus; and, as we know, if they have been chosen from before the foundations of the earth, they will come.

Second, it is entirely and wholly blasphemous to try and add anything to the completed work of Christ. And when we strive to be something for God or do something for God we are saying that His work was not sufficient. This is what the entire book of Galatians addresses. God chose us from before time to be His own. He then predestined the affairs of our life to ensure that we would choose Him. He purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. He adopted us into His family and calls us His sons. He perfected us—made us holy and blameless. He made us new and He gave us His life. He even seated us in heavenly places above the rule and power of the enemy. He has done all this work and it is perfect and glorious. This is why we are to stop striving and instead trust ourselves to Him—He has earned it.

This is why I often speak so vehemently against the “religion” of Christianity—that part of our spiritual heritage that tries to move the responsibility for our **living** as sons of God from His hands into our own hands. Remember, our only “work” is to live by faith—to believe what God says about Himself and about us—for that is the only thing that pleases God anyways (**Hebrews 11:6**).

Besides, you have to trust the fact that if we live according to our new life in the Spirit the entire dynamic of our lives is different. In fact, we will not indulge ourselves in the desires of the flesh (**Galatians 5:16**)—even the desire to clothe

---

ourselves in the lies which the enemy has been telling us since we were just children. It simply won't happen; the Spirit of God will be in control of our lives and He does not indulge Himself in sin.

Now we have to ask ourselves, why did God do all of this for us? He says that He did it so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. This is represented in that beautiful picture we see between the man and his woman in ***Song of Songs 2:4***. *She says, "He brings me to the banquet hall, so everyone can see how much he loves me."* And in ***6:9-10***: *"The young women [of Jerusalem] are delighted when they see her; even queens and concubines sing her praises! Who is this, they ask, arising like the dawn, as fair as the moon, as bright as the sun, as majestic as an army with banners?"*

The bride of Christ is glorious and He will proudly bring us into His hall so that all who are invited to attend the marriage supper of the Lamb can bask in our beauty. All the citizens of heaven will sing our praises and will be delighted and amazed at how much He loves us. In the same way that we marvel at a beautiful sun rise or a bright and shining full moon, they will just stare and stare and stare at us and in pure delight they will sing our praises!

The young women of Jerusalem cannot even take their eyes off of Solomon's bride and they yearn to be in her presence. They say: "Return, return to us, O maid of Shulam. Come back, come back, that we may see you once again." And her lover tells them: "Why do you gaze so intently at this young woman of Shulam, as she moves so gracefully between two companies (or two armies) (***Song of Songs 6:13***).

---

In other words, the bride of Christ (which is you and me) is on display before the hosts of heaven and the demonic hoards (the two armies), and everyone is captivated and enthralled by our beauty. He parades us in front of His angels who just yearn to be in our presence and He parades us in front of His enemies so they can be thoroughly humiliated in their defeat. Yes, even the demonic hordes will be fixated on our beauty and the depth of His love for us. Keep in mind, they were part of God's original creation and yet He did not die to redeem them from their sin. They will be forever wondering, "Why them? Why them and not us?" You may not know this, but God's love for us is something which the angelic beings do not have the capacity to understand but they yearn to know (**1 Peter 1:12**).

Yes, there will come a day when every created being will know and declare the praises of God's magnificent love toward His bride. And the story gets even better. You see we are not just this lovely woman (although that is an amazing and thoroughly captivating metaphor), but our entire lives are His work of art—a story that He has personally written with His own hand; a story which continues throughout the ages. When Paul says we are His workmanship (that our *new creation* is a product of His particular design—**2 Corinthians 5:17**), Paul uses the Greek word "*poieema*" from which we get our word "poem."

Think about it this way, the product of God's marvelous workmanship is our *new creation*. He made it holy so that Jesus, through the Spirit, could dwell within our bodies. And with Christ in us He has written a marvelous poem about our lives with His Son; and we get to live out this beautiful tale of redemption and love which boasts of His glory. This is a story that He will read before all of creation. They will come and marvel at the way God intertwined us into this beautiful



---

temple in which He lives and accomplishes His good works. It's will be just like in the ***Song of Songs*** where the lover just goes on and on about the beauty of his woman and he lets everyone know how, to him, she is perfect in form; there is not one part of her body that he left out in describing her exquisite and phenomenal beauty. She was magnificent from head to toe; a sight for all to see (***Song of Songs 4, 7***).

We are His beautiful piece of art. Honestly, in so many ways, this is still so unfathomable to my mind; but I know that we have to start believing how marvelous we are in His eyes. We simply must let these truths form our identity and self-image and we must replace the lies of the enemy with these truths.

Now were created in Christ Jesus for “good works,” which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Once again we come across both this idea that since only God is good these have to be His works, and the notion that God pre-ordained these “good works” for us. In this regard, I think it is intriguing the way that God’s plan was not just to take us up to heaven and be holy and blameless before Him up there with the angels; but instead to live holy and blameless as heavenly men and women here on earth. His design is that we let Jesus live through our *new creation* such that all that is accomplished through us is really just Jesus completing these supernatural pre-ordained works through our bodies. We just get to walk in them. Sounds pretty effortless; which is why He says His yoke is easy and His burden is light (***Matthew 11:30***).

That is why I have said over and over again that walking in the Spirit of God, by faith, means that we will only do what the Father tells us to do, only go where the Father tells us to go, and only say what He tells us to say—for if the Spirit is in

control of our lives, Jesus is the one who will accomplish the Father's good works through us. Yes, this power that gives us life from the dead and victory over the darkness is to be daily experienced in these marvelous works.

Imagine this. The tale of our lives gets displayed before all of creation and they get to hear about how we, who were once dead, walked by faith, overcame the enemy, overcame our flesh, and actually became vessels of His love. All of creation will listen to this story and marvel at the miraculous lives we have lived.

Then they will watch us step up, receive our rewards, and then suddenly take those rewards and place them at the feet of Jesus as we bow before Him and acknowledge that it was really all His doing (***Revelation 4:9-11***). From beginning to end it is Him; all the praise and glory belongs to Jesus Christ. It will be a beautiful tale that the Father tells about you and me and everyone in the heavenly places will shout: "Amen!"

Let's Pray