

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 5-4-14 PM NOTES  
"FROM WALKING DEATH TO SEATED LIFE"  
EPHESIANS 2:1-7  
#7 in Series, "The Christian's Wealth, Walk, and Warfare"

**2 Peter 3:18a (NKJV)** "but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)** "Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

I. The Christian's Past (vv. 1-3)

A. We Were Dead (v. 1)

**1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)** "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."

**1 Corinthians 15:22a (NKJV)** "For as in Adam all die..."

**Romans 5:12 (NKJV)** "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned".

"The unbeliever is not sick; he is dead! He does not need resuscitation; he needs resurrection. All lost sinners are dead and the only difference between one sinner and another is the state of decay. The lost derelict on skid row may be more decayed outwardly than the unsaved society leader, but both are dead in sin – and one corpse cannot be more dead than another! This means that our world is one vast graveyard, filled with people who are dead while they live."  
- Warren Weirsbe

B. We Were Disobedient (v. 2)

**1 John 5:19 (HCSB)** "We know that we are of God, and the whole world is under the sway of the evil one."

**John 8:44a (NKJV)** "You are of *your* father the devil..."

C. We Were Doomed (v. 3)

The "flesh" as it is used here is not a thing, but it is a condition of yielding to the power of sin and being controlled by our unbiblical programming.

**Romans 1:21 (HCSB)** "For though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became nonsense, and their senseless minds were darkened."

**John 3:18 (NKJV)** "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

II. The Christian's Present (vv. 4-6)

"Such then was our past condition. We were without God, without Christ, without hope. We were sinners by birth, by choice, and by practice. Our lot was cast in a world controlled by the evil one, and our eternal destiny was to live forever under God's wrath and curse."  
- John Phillips

A. We Are Loved by God (vv. 4-5)

**1 John 4:16 (NKJV)** "God is love..."  
*He saw me ruined by the fall,  
Yet loved me notwithstanding all,  
He freed me from my lost estate,  
His lovingkindness, oh how great!*  
- Samuel Medley

"Jesus didn't die to make bad people good; He died to make dead people alive."  
- Adrian Rogers

**1 Corinthians 12:13a (NKJV)** "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body..."

**Romans 6:6a (NKJV)** "knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*..."

**Romans 6:4 (ESV)** "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

B. We Are Lifted by God (v. 6)

**John 17:14b (NKJV)** "...they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

**Colossians 1:13 (NASB)** "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son".

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 5-4-14 PM  
"FROM WALKING DEATH TO SEATED LIFE"  
EPHESIANS 2:1-4  
#7 in Series, "The Christian's Wealth, Walk, and Warfare"

Sometimes I fear that we have de-emphasized the "supernaturalness" of salvation. Sometimes we miss the fact that there are some immediate supernatural changes that take place when a person is saved. It may not be some blast of emotion but there are some changes that take place immediately. We may struggle to

articulate them and even struggle to understand these differences. I'm all for discipleship. Conversion is just the beginning of a walk that we continue throughout eternity. I believe that if a person has truly been converted, saved, born again, you don't have to convince, badger, plead, or pressure them to be discipled. They will have a hunger in their heart. Jonathan Edwards said that one of the main evidences that a genuine conversion had taken place is that there is a "holy affection". In other words there is a longing to know God more deeply and to as **2 Peter 3:18 (NKJV)** says, to "...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." When a person claims to have received Jesus Christ the Lord has no desire to know Him more deeply and to love Him more biblically, they have cause to carefully examine themselves as to whether they are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). Listen carefully to **2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)** "Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Our discipleship ministry is called TELL (Teaching Exchanged Life Living). TELL is designed to lead people to Christ and then disciple them with the basics of who they are in Christ and how to grow in Christ. If we meet someone who has already professed Christ, but is not involved in a church and is thereby not being discipled, we offer to share with them these basic discipleship truths. It's interesting how people respond. Some jump at the opportunity to learn more and grow in this new relationship with Christ. Others aren't interested in the slightest. I remember a woman who had visited one of our satellite locations. My TELL team went to visit her. Without pressure or manipulation we shared the glorious Gospel and this woman said that she wanted to become a Christian. She prayed and said that she repented of sin and put her faith in Jesus Christ alone. We rejoiced and shared some material with her immediately including the Gospel of John. We asked if we could come back the next week and share some biblical truths about what had happened to her and how to grow and said yes. We went back and were told that she wasn't there. We called and left a message about when we would be back and after multiple attempts, it seemed obvious that she wasn't at all interested. What do we make of that? I can't authoritatively say that she was not converted, but I think it is cause for great concern. When a person is born again, everything changes! Even though you may not be able to pinpoint the exact time, there is a discernable desire to please Him and a deep love for Him and His Word. Oh, there is still the battle with sin and the pull of the flesh, but at the core of our being we become new creations! There are holy affections. There is a desire to grow. I've never lost that desire. Oh, there are times when it wanes because of sin or wrong priorities in our lives, but the discipline of a loving Father is applied and we are brought to repentance and then the hunger returns.

Perhaps Ephesians 2:1-7 is the clearest passage in the Bible that describes what happens when a person is truly saved. I am being ambitious in trying to cover these 7 verses in one sermon, but I want you to see them all together.

## I. The Christian's Past (V1-3)

Before we get into this passage, let me say that if you have never savingly believed in Christ, this is your present. For the saved, until we see how bad and how bad off we were apart from Christ, we will never genuinely appreciate the heights to which we have been raised in Christ.

### A. We Were Dead (V1)

Obviously he is not speaking of physical death since He speaks in verse two of these dead people **walking** according to the course of this world in verse 2. It is not that the Ephesians were in danger of dying; they were dead. Paul is speaking of spiritual death. While physical death and spiritual death are different, they also have a lot in common. Just as a physically dead person cannot respond to physical stimuli, a person who is spiritually dead does not respond to spiritual things. A corpse does not hear the conversation going on in the Funeral Home. A dead person does not eat, drink, or even get hungry. A physically dead person does not have the capacity to respond to commands. He is dead! In the same way those who are spiritually dead hear commands to change, but they are powerless to really do a heart change with the right motive and give God the glory. They have no spiritual hunger or thirst. There may be some curiosity, but no genuine hunger. They can't really even understand spiritual truths. **1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)** "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they

are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” This condition of being dead in trespasses and sins is the condition in which we were born! We are all descendents of Adam and we are told in **1 Corinthians 15:22a (NKJV)** “For as in Adam all die...” Romans five speaks of Adam and his descendents and summarizes things in **Romans 5:12 (NKJV)** “Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned [in Adam]”. Apart from Christ, all mankind is spiritually dead and dead people cannot do anything about their condition.

Notice that we were dead “in trespasses and sins”. There is obviously a difference between these two words or he would have just said “sins”. Whereas trespasses refer to wrong that we do unintentionally, sin is falling short because of the violation of truth that we know to be the truth. In other words we were dead in unintentional sins that we fell into because of the nature that we inherited from Adam and we were also dead in sins that we knew were sins and did them anyway. We are not spiritually dead sinners because we committed trespasses and sins; we commit trespasses and sins because we were born spiritually dead sinners because we were descendents of Adam and we inherited the consequences of his sin. Let me allow Warren Weirsbe to sum it up: “The unbeliever is not sick; he is dead! He does not need resuscitation; he needs resurrection. All lost sinners are dead and the only difference between one sinner and another is the state of decay. The lost derelict on skid row may be more decayed outwardly than the unsaved society leader, but both are dead in sin – and one corpse cannot be more dead than another! This means that our world is one vast graveyard, filled with people who are dead while they live.” [Warren Weirsbe, “Be Rich”, pages 40-41].

#### B. We Were Disobedient (V2)

Walking “according to the course of this world” means that we walked according to the values of the world system; according to the world’s ways. The world is society or culture’s views and values apart from and most often opposed to God and His Word. The lost person marches to the world’s drumbeat. He believes what the world tells him. His values are determined by the culture that leaves God out instead of by the word of God. Here are some examples: “A woman’s body is her own and she should not be forced to house a fetus for 9 months when that is not what she wants for her life. She should have freedom of choice to abort the baby”. Here is another: “A person cannot help it if they have an attraction for the same sex. Why shouldn’t they be allowed to marry and have the blessing of society and the church like someone who is attracted to and marries the opposite sex?” The spiritually dead person walks according to the course of this world. He adopts the world’s values even though these values change from time to time. That is why Christians are admonished to refuse to be conformed to the world (Romans 12:2) and love not the world (1 John 2:15). We are what 1 Peter 2:9 (KJV) calls a peculiar (different) people who derive our values from God’s never changing word that teaches that same sex relationships are sinful and that we are not to take another persons life whether that person is living inside or outside the womb. Those without Christ are deluded by the course of this world.

We are also told that we walked according to the prince of the power of the air. This prince of course is Satan. He is called the prince of demons in Matthew 12:24 (ESV) and the god of this world in 2 Corinthians 4:4. In John 12:31 he is called the ruler of this world. The “power of the air” speaks of the realm where this rebel prince and the vast number of demons that he commands operate. It is the spiritual world that we can’t see with our physical eyes but is more real than the physical stuff we see with our eyes. Remember that Satan, the rebel prince and all his armies were created as angels and they operate in the spiritual realm. Those without Christ are spiritually dead and are walking under the influence of the world’s values and programming and the manipulation of the prince of this world. This influence is described in **1 John 5:19 (HCSB)** “We know that we are of God, and the whole world is under the sway of the evil one.”

The phrase “sons of disobedience” may simply mean those characterized by disobedience. Those who are spiritually dead think they are ruling their own life, living like they want to live, but they don’t realize that they are under the influence of the world system’s programming and the manipulation of the rebel prince of this world. They see themselves as simply being free to do what they want, but God sees them

as being disobedient and controlled by the world and the devil. That phrase could also be translated “sons of the disobedient one”. In other words, before we had a Savior, we were children of the devil. Jesus told the Pharisees that in **John 8:44a (NKJV)** “You are of *your* father the devil...” Contrary to what the world system tells us, all men are not the children of God; apart from a Savior, we were children of the disobedient one, Satan.

### C. We Were Doomed (V3)

Here is the reason that people without Christ are disobedient and helpless to stop. They are controlled by the desires of the flesh and their darkened minds and are thus defiled. Let’s define some terms here. The word translated “lusts” means strong desire. It can be either a positive Godly desire or an ungodly negative desire; the context tells us which it is. Obviously, here it is a negative consuming desire. **The “flesh” as it is used here is not a thing, but it is a condition of yielding to the power of sin and being controlled by our unbiblical programming.** A person without Christ conducts himself in the lusts of the flesh because he is a slave to the power of sin and his or her unbiblical programming.

In addition to the flesh, he adds the mind. The mind of an unsaved person is said to be “darkened” in Eph 4:18 and in **Romans 1:21 (HCSB)** “For though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became nonsense, and their senseless **minds were darkened.**” What a description of the depravity of mankind without Christ! The desires of their flesh drive them and their darkened minds justify what they do.

Because we were “sons of disobedience” (V2), we were then “children of wrath”. The phrase “by nature” refers to the adamic nature that we were born with. From birth we shared the fallen nature of Adam and we were children of God’s wrath. We do not become children of God’s wrath after we commit a certain amount of sin; we were “by nature” children of God’s wrath. That is another way of saying what Jesus said in **John 3:18 (NKJV)** “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Wrath and condemnation is the “default mode” of every descendent of Adam. Understanding this helps us understand why Jesus had to be born of a virgin. Had Jesus been a descendent of Adam, He would have been a child of wrath and thus unqualified to be our substitute. Apart from an act of God, we were all doomed and without hope. That is the past of every Christian.

## II. The Christian’s Present (4)

Notice the first two words of verse 1 and the first two words of verse 2: “And you... But God”. Wow! That tells us what’s coming. John Phillips summarizes our predicament that we were all under: “Such then was our past condition. We were without God, without Christ, without hope. We were sinners by birth, by choice, and by practice. Our lot was cast in a world controlled by the evil one, and our eternal destiny was to live forever under God’s wrath and curse.” [John Phillips, “Exploring Ephesians”, Page 63].

In my opinion, one of the greatest two word phrases in the Bible when seen in context is the phrase that opens verse four – “But God”. The word “but” is a word of connection and contrast. This phrase sets up a stark contrast with the sad state described in verses 1-3 and it also connects verse 4 and the verses following with verses 1-3. “But God” gives us our only hope! “But God” sets up the Gospel, the good news! “But God” is a summary of the message of hope we give to an exceedingly messed up world! Our answer to every problem must have at its root, “But God”. That little two word phrase also reminds us of the One who took the initiative to seek those who were dead, disobedient, and doomed to reconcile them to Himself.

Mercy is God withholding what we deserve (grace on the other hand is God giving us what we don’t deserve). Notice that Paul describes God as being “**rich**” in mercy! The Greek word translated “rich” means overabounding, without measure, and unlimited. What motivates God’s mercy? It is His love! Because of His great love, He poured out overabounding, unlimited mercy on us. **1 John 4:16b (NKJV)** “God is love...” What else could have motivated God to send His beloved Son, the Son of His love to

redeem us, to rescue us out our hopeless condition? There was no deservedness or potential in our old man who was dead in sin – none!

*He saw me ruined by the fall,  
Yet loved me notwithstanding all,  
He freed me from my lost estate,  
His lovingkindness, oh how great!*

- Samuel Medley

Adrian Rogers said, “**Jesus didn’t die to make bad people good; He died to make dead people alive**”.

#### CONCLUSION

I want us to revel in the fact that we who were dead, disobedient and doomed are now recipients of God’s mercy given by God and motivated by love. That mercy has made us alive in Christ. We are partakers of His very life – eternal life. We are now in union with Christ in the unseen realm called the heavenlies where we are victorious and abiding or resting in Him for the supply of our every need. Oh what love that has brought us from walking death to seated life in the crucified risen Savior.