

**Ephesians 2: 1-5; “God’s Merciful Intervention”, Message # 11 in a series entitled –
“The Exceeding Greatness of His Power”, a Bible Study prepared
by Pastor Paul Rendall on July 10th, 2019,
for those gathered at his home.**

The words in verse 1, “hath He quickened” in the King James, or “He made alive” in the other good translations, are not in the original Greek text. It literally reads – “And you, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked...” The words “He made alive” were added there in verse 1, by the translators; very properly I believe, in order to bring forth the great contrast and theme of our deadness in sins with what He, God, does for His elect when He comes and raises them from the dead spiritually speaking. It is of God’s great mercy that it is so. And so these words – “He made alive” were supplied in order to conduct and lead our minds to the truth which Paul is going to state plainly in verse 5 – “Even when we were dead in trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ.” There has been no violence done in the adding of these words in verse 1.

The theme of these verses is; that our deadness in sins and trespasses is no barrier to the exercise of God’s great power in raising us from the dead, spiritually speaking. It is an act of sheer mercy and grace. And so, I would like to open up these awful and wonderful truths for you tonight and have you think about them with me. 1st – The deadness of all men’s hearts requires God’s merciful intervention if they are to be saved. 2nd – The way that all men walk, requires God’s merciful intervention if they are to be saved. And 3rd – For all of God’s elect; those who will believe in Christ, God has mercifully intervened. Let us love and praise and wonder, that God pities sinful fallen men, and saves some of them, even though they are so sinful and so adverse to His doing so.

1st – The deadness of all men’s hearts requires God’s merciful intervention if they are to be saved.

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Now, we must ask ourselves, what is this death that is being talked about here? It is the particular death that exists in every man and woman who is born into the world, but some are saved from it by being given New Life from God. The answer is, that the death that is being spoken about here is a spiritual death in trespasses and sins. How is it, then, that all men and women are born into the world, dead in their trespasses and sins? People have the physical life of the body, and they have a real life related to their spirit and soul which is with them from the moment that they are born until the moment that they die physically. And this life continues on into eternity because men and women were created in the image and likeness of God. So in what sense is Paul speaking, here, when he says that all mankind is dead in trespasses and sins?

Well, we must understand that it is this particular death that Paul is speaking of, is what the first man Adam brought into the world by his sinning in eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Turn with me over to Genesis chapter 2, verses 15-17. It says here – “Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.” “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” In the original Hebrew it says – “Dying you shall die”. In other words, Adam when he ate of the fruit would not die physically right away; although that would eventually happen after 900 plus years. But he would die spiritually in some sense, immediately.

In what sense would he die spiritually? What happened when Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? The answer is that he, for the most part, lost the life of God in his soul. The image of God in his heart was marred. The entrance of sin into his mind and heart separated him from God spiritually. His eating of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil robbed him of much of the glory with which he was created. Sin affected every aspect of his being and it took away his desire for fellowship with God, and the things of God, and his being righteous

and holy in the way that God wanted him to be righteous and holy were no longer important to him. He became alienated from the life of God, and dead spiritually to living to God's glory. He would rather live to himself and to his own idea of life, apart from God's word. Sin had made a separation between him and God. Well, we need to understand that Adam did not simply sin for himself when he partook of the forbidden fruit. His sin has affected every one of his descendants because each of us is born into the world, because of his sin, in his fallen image of Adam. Because of his sin we too have sin in our very nature, and because of his sin, we all die physically, and are dead spiritually. We commit sins ourselves because we are sinners. And we confirm our sinnership by many sins of our own against God and against His holy law.

This is proved for us if we look over at Romans chapter 5, verses 12-19. "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned – For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law." "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come." "But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous."

So we see here that through the one man Adam sin entered the world, and death through sin. Adam's sin affected all men because it was by his sin that death spread to all men. This is not only the death of the body that is being talked about. It is also a spiritual or moral one. Death passed upon all men because they are "in him". He was the common parent and representative head of all mankind in regard to his original righteousness and his original sin. It is because of that fact that all men are constituted sinners in God's sight, and all men are fallen creatures in him. They all confirmed their sinnership by their own sins and we thus guilty sinners in God's sight; not because they sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, but because sins came forth from their own sinful nature and thoughts and actions because this is really what they are, and what they want to do. They are sinners and want to do their own will rather than God's.

The truth of this is further proved because until the law was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, sin was in the world, but it was not imputed, or formally charged upon men, nevertheless, men and women still died. Their deaths proved that they themselves had sinned even though not in the likeness of Adam's offense. God still saw them as guilty sinners and punished them accordingly with the death of the body because of Adam's sin and their own sins confirming that they themselves were sinners. They were dead in trespasses and sins by nature and practice. This is the very nature of sin, to separate and to bring death to all of us. We still are alive, but we are dead spiritually both in the sight of God and in relation to our experience of spiritual things.

The deadness of men's hearts requires the merciful intervention of God; that He might, according to His eternal purpose, save those who will believe in His Son. In this limited and specific sense, Adam is a type of Him who was to come. They are both seen by God as federal heads; Adam of all mankind except for Christ, every person except for Christ, coming into the world, fallen and condemned because of Adam's sin. And he being a type of Christ who has been appointed by God to be the federal head of a new holy race of people, a new world, and a new creation of men, being saved out of the old and first creation; people whom God would forgive for Christ's sake. According to God's purpose, they are saved and transform into righteous people

through His purchased grace being applied to them. All those who believe in Christ and receive the free gift of righteousness will be saved. For their believing results in justification; of their being declared righteous in the sight of God. And their faith in Christ also results in justification of grace also being imparted to them in spiritual life being given to them. For verse 18 says that it was by the “one Man’s righteous act (that is Christ’s fulfilling the law and dying for our sins) that the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life”.

This is not only a sinner’s being justified in the sight of God as a declarative act, but it also results in the justification (that is the basis) for God’s being able to give to all of His saints, New Spiritual life in the New Birth, and it is this life which is given which becomes the on-going daily basis in the sanctification process, in which a sinner becomes a saint, and is holy, and is becoming holy in the sight of God. This is the work of the Holy Spirit who is given to every believer.” Verse 19 – “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.” So being “made alive” in Ephesians 2: 1 refers to this great gift of Christ and His gracious working by His Spirit according to the will of God to bring about the restoration of real life in the Christian; the righteous image of Christ beginning to be formed in all who believe in Christ, and by this means, over time, they are transformed.

2nd – The way that all men walk , requires God’s merciful intervention if they are to be saved.

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.” We are told here that men walk according the prince of the power of air. They walk, they live their lives according to Satan’s unholy and false suggestions as to what they ought to think and how they ought to live. And if we can recall Eve’s experience in the garden of Eden, what did Satan do? He attempted to mix lies with the truth and make the lie seem very reasonable. Look at Genesis 3: 1 – “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.” “And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’” “And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘you shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” “Then the serpent said the woman, ‘You will not surely die.’” “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

And you know the rest of the story, Eve saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant tho the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate it. And she gave to her husband with her, and he ate. This leads me to think that when Satan is referred to as the prince of the power of the air, that he is an spirit being, who seems as it were, to hover in the air over those whom he wants to deceive; in this case, all of mankind. He is a prince over all the demonic angelic beings, and he has a kingdom and rules by craft and deceit. It is a kingdom of darkness and not light. It says in our text that he now works in the sons of disobedience. That is, all those who do not know God, all those who are dead in their trespasses and sins, he works in their lives; even making suggestion to their minds and hearts, how they ought to live in rebellion to God and to His word, so that He will be neglected, ignored, despised, and dishonored by them.

He works in conjunction with the fallen flesh of mankind; trying to promote their ultimate satisfaction in relation to this world and its pleasures, this world and trying to obtain power and glory to ourselves. But in the process of that, people’s lives are ruined by his lying suggestions, because he promotes rebellion and sin and false doctrine and religious practices which act as a substitute for the true religion of the Bible and following Christ. His being the prince of the power of the air means that he would like to control and direct what men believe about God and the Bible. If you look at a concordance under the word, “air”, you find some interesting verses in this regard.

Ecclesiastes 10: 20 – “Do not curse the king, even in your thought; do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom; for a bird of the air may carry your voice, and a bird in flight may tell the matter.” This is how Satan operates in the spread of slander and lies concerning Christians, and even God Himself. He may in this unholy way try to deceive Christians and unbelievers alike and even pit Christians against each other. For instance, when it says a bird may carry your voice, it is the same thing when you speak things about other people that are either not true about them, or you know that it would not be profitable for that person to hear about them. Well, you are doing Satan’s work and you may not even realize it. Satan would have people to sniff the air, to see which way the theological wind is blowing, and thus truth is twisted to include lies, to the damnation or misdirection of many souls.

Revelation 9: 1 and 2 – “Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth.” “To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.” “And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace.” “So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.” This is a good example of what Satan does as the prince of the power of the air. The context here is the 5th trumpet. And you will recall in the book of Revelation that you have the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls of wrath. They are a picture of the 3 different time periods of this present Church age, leading up to the Millennium when Christ’s Church will spiritually conquer upon the earth.

Here in the context of these verses, a star falling from heaven to earth means that Satan is using a false minister, in this case one who professes to be wise and holy, to influence many people through false doctrine, so much so that “the air is darkened”. That is, what people see and breathe in, is darkened and polluted. People who want to know the way of truth are deceived by doctrines of demons, as it says in 1st Timothy 4: 1, and they are thereby controlled by the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air. The Papal system of Roman Catholicism and also Mohammedanism are great and mighty examples of this; the spiritual air being perverted.

We can further say, on the level of individuals that Satan is working to bring about disobedience to God and to His word, both in regards to the things that are believed and the things that are done as religious works, so that God is not glorified, nor His commandments kept. Look at 1st Peter 4: 1-5 – “Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.” “For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles – when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.” “In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.” “They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”

Brothers and sisters, this is how we once were. This was how we conducted ourselves. But since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, we should arm ourselves with the same mind. In what sense have we ceased from sin? We have not lost our indwelling remaining corruption, so in what sense is Peter speaking here? It is that we do not want to sin purposely, and we have the power not to sin. And all of that process of sanctification is going to involve some degree of suffering in our flesh; that is, denying ourselves, being crucified to our flesh. And we remind ourselves that we have spent too much time in the past pursuing these sinful things that we once pursued. We were fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as others who do not know Christ. This was what we once loved before we came to know Christ. But no longer.

For 3rd – In relation to all of God’s elect, those who will believe in Christ, God has mercifully intervened.

Verses 4 and 5 say – “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” Although the child of God was once under God’s wrath, they are no longer under

God's wrath because God has shown them rich mercy and great love. God is described here as being rich in mercy to all those whom He calls to Himself. Rich in mercy, because "He saw us ruined by the Fall, and loved us, notwithstanding all." "He justly claims a song from me, His lovingkindness is so free." His mercy, His lovingkindness, is so free to me, but it cost Him so much; even the giving of His dear Son to be crucified on our behalf so that we might be shown grace. It is amazing how God loves His elect with an everlasting love, but when they are born into this world, they are a child of wrath, even as the rest of the unbelievers, until their conversion. And yet He loves them with an everlasting love. His love was so great that even though we were dead in trespasses and sins, He made us alive together with Christ. That was real mercy! What amazing love and grace, to show mercy to us who only deserved eternal wrath. Let us thank Him and praise Him that He is the God of all grace and the Father of mercies. He brings everlasting consolation and good hope by grace to those who trust in Him. 2nd Thessalonians 2: 16 and 17 – "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work."