

The Old Man vs. The New Man

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

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Tonight, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the book of Ephesians and whether you realize it or not and John referenced this earlier, there's a lot of places you could be tonight and allow me to say you have chosen wisely. As we look at the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, there are those chapters in the Bible that even though all Scripture is inspired by God and even though we would never elevate one passage above another, there are certain chapters in the Bible that for whatever reason just seem to grab a hold of our lives, they grab a hold of our hearts and our minds, and Ephesians 2 is one of those.

As you're making your way to Ephesians 2, just allow me to go through a brief sampling of those what I might call critical chapters, not because they're more important than but because necessarily the message tends to grab a hold of our hearts. How about Luke 15 when Jesus sits down and he communicates three parables in a row, the only time he does so, and that final parable is the story of a son whom we've labeled the prodigal, the one who much like many and all of us who've run away, who has taken the spoils of his heavenly Father and turned them into the slop of the pigs, in that moment in which he comes to he senses, he rises and goes home and rather than receiving the earthly response that many of us expect, he receives a ring on his finger, a robe on his back and the declaration that his child that was lost has been found.

John 3, we find ourselves in the middle of the evening on the top of a house. It is there in the cool of the night that a man by the name of Nicodemus comes to Jesus and says, "What must I do to be born again?" Here is a man who had grown up with a religious upbringing, a man who had all of the trappings of life but he realized something was missing. He and Jesus get in a discourse about what it means to be born again and Jesus responds, "Are you not a master of Israel and not aware of these things?" It is in that great chapter that we hear that famous verse, "For God so loved the world he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

I promise I won't go through all the great chapters of the Bible but one more for a sampling. Romans 8. After the Apostle Paul has spent many verses talking about being a wretched man trapped in sin, he says in verse 1, "There is therefore now no

condemnation to those of us who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." He begins to describe what it means to be in a right relationship with the Lord and then he concludes that great chapter by saying, "Neither is there any height nor depth nor principality nor power that can separate us from the love of Christ Jesus."

The story of the prodigal son, the discourse with Nicodemus, the reality that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, those verses, those chapters are not more important than other passages in the Bible but can we all agree they just grab us differently than others. Ephesians 2, in my opinion, is one of those chapters. For the sake of time, we're not gonna go over every concept and every construct that's in Ephesians 2 for I'm of the opinion to rightly do this chapter justification, it would probably be an easy 8-12 week sermon series and so I promise to keep it within the allotted time.

Ephesians 2, and if you'll allow me to, I'm just gonna read the entirety of the chapter because of the beauty therein. It says,

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. 11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of two one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but

fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Now it may not impact you the same way but this chapter almost makes me want to become Bapcticostal, if you know what I mean. You read those words and you hear the dialog there and there's such clarity about who we used to be before we were saved, and now what we are made through the blood of Christ Jesus. So today, I want to just discuss the difference between the old man and the new man, and I promise you we're not gonna go through each and every one of these one by one because here's the amazing thing about Ephesians 2 and I'm sure you can walk through it and you can divide it somewhat differently, but the way that I see chapter 2 being laid out, there are 15 declarations of who we used to be and there are 15 affirmations of who we are now. In fact, I would say that Ephesians 2 is the tennis chapter of the Bible. The reason I say the tennis chapter, you know, if you go to a ballgame, basketball game, football game, even a soccer match, whatever it may be, you know, there are times where a team will catch momentum, you may have a team that scores three touchdowns in a row without any response, you might have a team that scores 18 points in basketball without the other team ever responding, but tennis is very different, in fact, if you hit a shot in tennis or you want to do the smaller version, table tennis, ping pong, and your opponent does not properly respond, that point is over. You cannot just slam it five straight times without your opponent returning because then you have to do the serve and such again. And when you play tennis or you play ping pong, one of the things that you'll notice is this, that whoever wins the point only wins by the margin of one every single time. Why? Because all it takes is one perfect shot or one missed shot for the point to end.

By the way, just as an aside for those of you that may not know, hopefully you've gotten to know one whom you've heard speak publicly, Pastor Lloyd, who is assisting with our Korean congregation, the very first time that he gathered with our staff here and we were just kind of getting to know him and find out, you know, for example, his name Lloyd, that's his American name that he chose and we asked him why and he said it's because of the great theologian and the pastor Martyn Lloyd-Jones. He said that's who he wanted to emulate his ministry after. Then I asked him a question that I thought was innocent, had no idea the impact it would have, I said, "Sir," I said, "what do you like to do for fun?" To which he said quote, "Competitive ping pong." In other words, if you don't have game, don't bother asking is basically what he said, and we, the staff, have learned unless you want a whipping, don't call Lloyd because you gonna get one when you play, but it's also very entertaining along the way.

But in that game much like tennis in full scale, there is this back and forth and when you get to Ephesians 2, these 15 points of declaration and affirmation, they are not one-for-one, it's not like this is who you were, this is who you are, who you were, who you are, it's not a strict illustration, in fact, it begins in chapter 2 by giving us five or six of who we were before it gets into the affirmation side. So as you see before you tonight a list of

these declarations and affirmations of the old man versus the new man, I want to spend just a few moments discussing a few on the declaration side and a few on the affirmation side.

So let's begin with the old man. This is who we were before Christ. By the way, if you're not in a relationship with Jesus Christ tonight, you're not what the Bible calls saved, born again or regenerated, this is not who you were, this is who you are. This is the description of someone who is not saved. This is the description of someone who like in the garden of Eden says, "I got this. I know what I'm doing. God, just let me take control of my life." If you go to verse 2 of chapter 2 it says, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Notice it says that someone before they know Christ, before they're saved, before they're regenerated, they follow the prince of the power of the air. Now there's a whole lot there that we could unpack about the identity of who we know as Lucifer who became Satan, the prince of the power of the air, the enemy, the devil, Satan, etc. but we find it interesting that it says that whoever is lost, unregenerate, unsaved, that they are literally taking their marching orders, they are following that individual, the prince of the power of the air.

You know, I know you're probably familiar with this but Jesus was not politically correct. He did not make statements to win friends and influence people. He made statements to save souls. There's a difference and in John 8, he was in a great discussion about not only his identity but how that impacted those who were struggling with him, in John 8, the passage where he claims to be the Messiah as he often and regularly did, those who were the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the scribes, they said, "You know, you're claiming to be even greater than our father Abraham." There at the very end of John 8 he makes this great statement, he says, "Before Abraham was, I am." He declared that Abraham rejoiced to see his day. You can imagine that got kind of the hair on their necks all ruffled up but before that, he made this statement to them, he said, "Your father is the devil. He's a liar and has been from the beginning." I don't think Jesus would have packed some stadiums with those kind of words, "your father is the devil."

You know, that's exactly what Ephesians 2:2 is saying, that if we don't know Jesus Christ as our Savior, we're following the prince of the power of the air, it means that our father, our spiritual father, the one in whom we are walking in the footsteps of is the devil himself. I know it's not positive and I know it's not political but to quote an old friend of mine, sometimes the power is in the negative preaching, my friends, because I don't want to end up where the devil ends up because in Matthew 25:41 Jesus says those of you who are of iniquity, go into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

One of the many things it says about who we used to be is that we used to follow the prince of the power of the air. Also in verse 2 it says we have "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Interesting because it correlates disobedience with the spirit of the devil and I think that is something that is so absent from our culture today both inside and outside of the church. And I know some of you may think, "Well, did he just go there?" Yeah, I just went there. Here we go. There are so many reports that are

coming out on such a regular basis of extreme nonsensical violence in our world and everybody wants to control everything and put regulations on everything and declare that if we had just done this and if we had just done that, if we had just implemented this or if we've just checked that. I am waiting for the day when somebody gets up and says the reason this tragedy happened is because that individual was filled and ravaged with demons.

Well, that's what it says. It says we walked according to the prince of the power of the air, according to the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. Just recently I had the privilege of hearing someone's individual testimony and, by the way, you know, at the end of the services in the morning I talk about we want to hear your story, I love hearing people's story. You know, who were you before Christ? Who are you now in Christ? What has he done in your life? And this individual was beginning to explain some of the things that had happened in their life and talked about the different things that they had struggled with and the different things that they had fought with and been strongholds in their life, and I love what this individual said, they said, "Well, let's just call it what it was, I was demonized." And I appreciated that because they admitted that what was happening in their lives was not natural, it was supernatural, and just like when we're saved and we receive the Holy Spirit of God that empowers us to the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, temperance, just as only those traits can come from the Lord himself, can we at least acknowledge that those horrible things that are expressed in humanity are that which is coming from the spirit of disobedience.

That is who we were before we were saved. That's who we were before we were born again. We were children of the devil and we were filled with the spirit of disobedience, controlled by that which we often would call the demonic. No wonder over and over in Jesus' ministry when he dealt with, he spoke to and he touched those who were ravaged by the demonic, you find them sometimes in the same chapter, sometimes a little bit later seated, clothed and in their right mind. You find it interesting that everybody wants people to be in their right mind yet Jesus said the only way that's gonna happen is if you allow me to do so.

The third what used to be or the old man that I want to address is in verse 12. I want to focus on the positive. It said, "at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise," listen to this, "having no hope." You know, I think one of the most miserable emotions in the world is hopelessness, not seeing any way out, not seeing that there is anything that can be positive that comes out of this, not seeing anything that can be affirmative. When you are without hope, it allows you to and even at times forces you to question everything about your existence and your life. You know, all it takes, and you've heard this adage, all it takes is a glimmer of hope. Give the little possibility that something possibly might could happen and it changes everything.

It says you were without hope, then it says, "and without God in the world." Now I know there may be those not only here in our presence but also those listening or watching online that for whatever reason, maybe they're curious, maybe they're interested, maybe

they're very angry and mad at God and wanted to tune into a service tonight, but if you're here, if you're there, if you're anywhere and you're listening to the message tonight, allow me to share a glimpse of my story that I bet is your story if you'd be willing to be honest. All I know is this, when I was struggling even as a child, when I was struggling with that decision to be saved, when I was struggling with that decision to believe in Jesus Christ, can I share with you what happened during that time period of my life? I didn't sleep at all. I was so consumed with hopelessness. In other words, even as a child when I realized the gravity of my sin, when I realized the reality of hell, and when I tried to quantify the length of eternity, I was without hope. There's no way to solve it. There's no way to fix it and that, my friends, is the problem of our society and our world today. Everybody is finding their way to display their opinion and to give their perspective on things but what do you hear time and time again: there's anger, there's frustration, there's this verbal nonsensicalness that all it is is hopelessness. It doesn't matter what side of the aisle it comes from, it doesn't matter what perspective or what network, notice the verbiage coming from the world today, there's a foundation of hopelessness. There's no hope unless we get this law passed. There's no hope unless we regulate this. There's no hope unless we implement this. According to Ephesians 2, the only way hope comes is through Jesus Christ and just like I'd love somebody to call out what we see happening in some of these acts of violence, I would love for someone to call out that our only hope comes in Christ Jesus. That's probably why they haven't invited me to do an interview on one of those networks.

Let's go to the positive. How about the new man. Now you understand why I said we could go 12-15 weeks, however long on this because you could take each one of these phrases and just work them phrase by phrase. There's a statement made in verse 1 which, by the way, is in italics and again in verse 5 that says that though we were dead in sins, he has quickened us together in Christ Jesus. He has made us alive. What that is communicating is that before you were saved, you were a walking dead man or a walking dead woman. That showed the walking dead is not new revelation, folks, that's just Bible. That's all it is. That show about those that are zombies walking around already in their corpse-like state, that might be the rage of modern-day television but all that is is the theological discourse on who we are before we meet Jesus. The walking dead isn't a new show, it's an old story and that's who we are until we are quickened or we are made alive.

If you have the ability, I want to encourage you to flip a few pages to the right, 2 Timothy 4. The very last chapter chronologically in the life and the ministry of the Apostle Paul. He has been the culprit of the majority of the New Testament being written and inspired through his hands. He's been on three missionary journeys. He's seen an incredible amount of people come to know the Lord. He has built up the local churches from coast to coast. This is his last will and testament and I want you to notice how chapter 4, verse 1 begins, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." When it says here back in Ephesians 2, you who he hath quickened, you who he has made alive, you know, we talk about and we use this word in a lot of different ways but I think rarely do we apply it to Scripture. How many of you have ever seen or heard about or maybe you've even experienced a documentary on quicksand? Why do we call it quicksand? Because before

you know it, it takes you. Anytime we talk about something being quickened whether from a chemistry perspective, a science perspective, or even a philosophical perspective, it means that which takes place in an immediacy, in a very short amount of quantitatively measurable time. And you who he quickened, in other words, our salvation, our regeneration, our being born again is not something that takes a lifetime to achieve, it takes a moment to be realized. Those who he has quickened, those who he has made alive.

You know, I heard the other day and you know, some of you realize I'm somewhat of an automotive, I don't want to use the word junkie but it really is true. You know, one of the jokes I say, some guys struggle with two legs, I struggle with four tires. I mean, I really do. I like cars. It's just who I am. You know, we have some transmissions out there now and I won't get into all the details, that can shift from one gear to the next in 80 milliseconds. Let me put that in perspective, I don't care how good a driver you think you are, you can't shift that fast. There's nobody here who has the capacity to engage a clutch, shift a gear and reengage that quickly. It is so fast that now the "automatic transmissions" are actually sometimes rated faster than the standard transmissions. Why? Because of the quickness of which it engages.

When it says he quickened us together, I got news for you, in the Lord's timing 80 milliseconds is an eternity. It didn't take 80 milliseconds to quicken your soul. It didn't take 80 milliseconds to save your soul. In fact, I would dare say at least from our perspective it was an instantaneous response to what we talked about this morning when we heard the Gospel and we believed it. We have been quickened, we have been made alive.

Go to verse 10 of Ephesians 2, a verse that honestly and this is a pun in advance, is so colorful about our relationship with the Lord, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." We are his workmanship. We are his masterpiece. The illustration that is being given is that once we are quickened, once we are made alive, once we are believers, that as we walk in that relationship, as we are walking through the process of sanctification and holiness, that he is very steadily, slowly and efficiently painting the masterpiece of our life. We are his workmanship. We are his masterpiece.

Now that's a beautiful concept but so difficult to realize. Why? Because it says "ordained that we should walk in them." Anytime we engage in a walk of any kind whether it be for recreation or just to get from point A to point B, it involves a process that is rarely if ever fast. Now I understand that there is speed walking, I get it. I've seen those that speed walk, so to speak, and to be quite honest, those who do, I think their legs are gonna come unhinged at one moment the way that they move. But generally speaking, can we agree that walking from point A to point B is a very lengthy process?

In fact, this morning when I was with the college students, I challenged them. By the way, I do know that next week we're gonna have very few college students here because I asked how many of them were going to Dallas for the Auburn game and almost the whole

room raised their hand, okay? So that's just a fact of the matter. And I challenged them when we were talking about what it means to walk in our faith, I said, "Go ahead and put your GPS, go ahead and put your maps app, whatever you use when you go to Dallas next week, and put in there what does it look like to drive it," and it'll probably say around 12 hours. I mean, that's just roughly guessing it. I said, "Then push the transit button." Y'all know what the transit button is, right? Where you take by rail or by bus and I guarantee it's gonna be a little longer. I said, "But have fun. Push the walk button." Did you know on your map app on your phone and in your car, you can actually choose to walk the distance? Can you imagine what it would take to walk from here to the Auburn game next weekend? If you are going to do that, can I suggest you leave in about 30 minutes because it will take you that long.

You know, I've had what I'm about to share with you in private conversation numerous times recently because it's just been a part of my life and I'm just gonna be very transparent with you. When I was much younger, I got really frustrated because God never worked fast enough. You know, he never moved quick enough for me. I was like, "Come on, God, can you not get with it? I see the answer, why can't you see the answer? Let's do it." And so I was always like, "God, come on, keep up with me, please." Now I've gotten to the stage of life where God works too quick. I'm like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, God, can we just slow it down a little bit?" And here's where the honesty comes in, where was the happy medium? I missed it because in my younger days God didn't move fast enough, now as I'm getting older he moves too fast but here it says that he is creating a workmanship, a masterpiece of our life that is according to his pace whether we perceive it as being too quick or too slow.

You think about a masterpiece of art. How many strokes of the brush are composed in that one painting? For wouldn't it be so simple if there was just one big broad stroke but that's not how it works. In fact, many times there are thousands if not tens of thousands of both large and small, both bold and slight that make up the beauty of that work. You know, I know most of us are familiar with an artist by the name of Pablo Picasso. Pablo Picasso's paintings oftentimes at auction bring the greatest amount of monetary gain, hundred plus million dollars. If you look up some of Pablo Picasso's greatest works and you were to be honest with yourself, you would think that your grandkids could do it because most of his paintings are what we call abstract. It appears on the outset that he grabbed a couple boxes or a couple of cans of paint and just threw them against a canvas, swirled it all around and said, "Well, there you go." It looks as if it took 34 seconds and now it's worth 120 million, but what most people fail to understand about Pablo Picasso was this: before he was an abstract painter, he was a portrait artist. He never forgot the dimensions of the human face. He never forgot the dimensions of the human body, and even though it is in abstract form, here is the genius of Pablo Picasso is he kept the ratios proper even in their abstractness. The reason his paintings are so valuable is they are this abstract version of that which is absolutely academically correct, and yet even Pablo Picasso, it may appear just threw some paint on a canvas and said now it's worth 100 million, it was a tedious, lengthy stroke by stroke process.

When we talk about who we are in Christ, not only have we been made alive, we've been quickened. It says here in verse 10 that we are his workmanship, we are his masterpiece. That means in your life right now stroke by stroke, color by color, he is putting together the portrait, the painting of your life. What is the temptation? "God, give me that brush. I can do it better than you can." Oftentimes you say, "But I wanted a bigger brush at that moment. I wanted a longer stroke. I wanted a brighter color." And the problem is he sees it from the long perspective and what we don't realize is he's taking these colors and he's mixing them and he's layering them on top of each other and when he gets to the end, that which we thought had its mistakes along the path are actually a part of his greater plan.

Who are we in Christ? We're made alive, we're his workmanship, finally in verse 14, "he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." You know, it's interesting in our society today everybody wants to gripe, whine, complain and moan that nobody can get along. This group can't get along with that group. They can't get along with us, whoever they and us may be, and everybody wants everybody to get together in the same room and sing Kumbayah but the reality is that our coming together in spite of whatever apparent differences may be there, according to verse 14 only can happen through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

It says he is our peace. He has made both one, has broken down the middle wall of partition between us. Let me give you the historical relevance there and then make it to a contemporary example. The historical relevance are the Jews and the Gentiles. You do realize and I'm sure many of you are like myself, that we're, you know, our heritage is eating pork and bacon, right? I mean, we're Gentiles by nature most of us. Some of you may have somewhat of a Jewish background. I don't, most of you do not which means that if it had been several thousand years ago and we found ourselves in Jerusalem going to the temple, that you and I would be left on the outside. We would be in the outer courts. We might get a glimpse of what was happening, we might be able to smell what was happening, but we'd be on the outside. You know, the only thing that brought us to the inside was when the veil was torn and the blood was spilled.

How many people in our world feel like they're marginalized, they're ostracized, they're relegated to the outskirts? And there's a lot of different reasons why they experience that, feel that, and a lot of it is justified and they say, "Well, if we just had this and we just had that, if we just implemented this." Allow me to share with you the only person that can tear down walls of division is Jesus Christ. That's it and yet we want to find our solution in anybody and anything other than him.

When it says that he is our peace and he's broken down the wall of partition, you know, through a relationship with Jesus Christ it's amazing that you can engage in a personal relationship with people who otherwise you would have never entertained that relationship. You can find commonality with somebody who you had no commonality with. You can walk side-by-side, hold hands and pray together with those who you would never otherwise would have even possibly even been seen together. When we look at the old man walking in the steps of the prince of the power of the air, possessing the spirit of disobedience, exhibiting the traits we spoke about, and then we see the new man made

alive, becoming this masterpiece and workmanship of Christ Jesus who now lives in peace and no longer has this wall of partition, you know, it's made very clear that everything the world is trying to gain and sell is only found in Jesus Christ and yet everything that has been analyzed as being wrong in our world is found in the prince of the power of the air.

So tonight as we look at Ephesians 2, we realize that we can implement and instrument all types of human solutions to all kinds of issues and subjects but again, as the Bible does over and over again, we discover that the only person and the only solution is Jesus Christ. He's the only one that can make you alive. He's the only one who can give you a guarantee of everlasting life. He's the only one that can paint the portrait of your life that actually honors and glorifies him. And he's the only one that can give you peace and break down that wall of hostility. So my friends, why would we spend anymore time and anymore energy seeking anything or anybody else when everything we truly want is found in Jesus?