

Dead Men Walking pt 3

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Bible Text: Ephesians 2:1-3
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We kind of had Gospel tabernacle old-time camp meeting music tonight, didn't we? I like those songs.

Go to Ephesians and let's conclude this section we've been looking at on the depravity of man, but I'm going to begin tonight, I want to be careful using humor from the pulpit but sometimes real things happen and it just seems to be a good sermon illustration. But I want to begin with the parable of the flying okra as I begin tonight.

I was leaving my encouragibility group and I was on the second story walkover from the education building over there and as I got out of the double doors into the walkover, I thought a bird had flown by. I thought, "Man, a bird's gotten..." It's happened before, a bird's gotten in here, and then I saw it, that it didn't fly off, it just hit the wall and fell. I thought, "Well, if it's a bird, it died right there when it hit the wall." But it wasn't it was a piece of okra and that piece of okra had flown from the bottom story up to the second story and landed on that second story up there. But then out of the corner of my eye, I saw two boys standing down there and I saw a white sack and just quickly without them knowing I was up there and had seen that, I grabbed the okra and threw it back down, and when it hit the ground, I said, "Put it back in the sack." And then I walked on.

Now, you cannot go home tonight and ask your son, "Did you throw the okra at the pastor as he walked down the aisle?" You can't do that because using it as a sermon illustration is killing him right now and that's enough, and I'm not mad and I'm not upset because that's probably something I would do at that age. But the irony of the whole thing is a man asked me this morning, "Can I bring you a bag of okra?" It's probably my okra. That's just the truth. People sometimes come up and say, "Can I bring you some okra?" You don't ever ask me if you can bring, just bring the okra. I love okra.

But then I got to thinking about it, I've been praying about this text this afternoon and I thought, "Why would a little boy stand by likely my bag of okra and grab a piece and have to chunk it up on the second floor of the walk through in the church?" The same reason I would have done it, we're all sinners. You don't have to teach a boy to throw okra on the second floor of the walk through at the church, he's just going to do stuff like that. I mean, he's just got to pick it up, it wasn't his okra, it's my okra, but he's just got to pick it up and chunk it up there. Do you know why you have to teach a boy, "No, you

don't throw the okra, son, that belongs to somebody. They're going to eat that stuff." Do you know why you have to teach that? Because we all are born with a depraved heart. We're all born to mischief and disobedience.

Now look, on a scale of 1-10, this is a 1 ½ and, again, and I don't even remember who it is. Honestly I don't. I think if we had a line-up I could probably pick him out, but I honestly, I purposely did not try to remember who it is and immediately he said, "I'm sorry." And he put it back. Everything is cool. Don't you make a deal out of this, moms and dads, okay? Are you with me? Okay? Amen. But that's a good illustration. That's just the way children are. As we've often said, you don't have to teach a child to lie, they'll do that all by themselves. You have to teach a child to tell the truth.

Well, that's where we are and Paul describes why we are prone like that and that was a risky thing for me to do because I want you and God wants you to sense the weightiness of this truth we're looking at. Now, there is glory in it at the end, of course, but this isn't a light thing. It's not a humorous thing at all, it's a radically serious and sober reality of what we are before a holy God in our natural state and how in vivid contrast it is to the spirit of our age and the philosophies of our age.

Ephesians 2:1,

1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 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. 3 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.

Just what a Mount Everest of weighty truth that Paul brings out here writing to the Ephesians and brings to bear on us as we think about who we are and what we are naturally speaking before this one true and holy God.

Now, I talked about how Paul uses this word "death," the putrefying, corrupting, decaying corpse to give us a visual image of your value and your worth, your condition before a holy God, and far too often in Baptist and evangelical churches, they've tried to rub the edges off of the truth of the depravity of man as if God saw so much in you that was good he decided to die for you. Friends, that could not be more wrong. It could not be more unbiblical. That's not true. He did see what putting his righteousness in you would do for you, but he saw nothing in you to cause him to be drawn to you, favor you or love you. He just is capable of loving the most radically unlovely. That's what the Scripture require us to deal with. Don't you love the word of God? It just tells us the truth. It just flat tells us the truth. So Paul uses this graphic image and especially in an ancient Jewish context, of course he's writing to Greeks, but he is a Jew, and from his ancient Jewish context about the most corrupt and impure and spiritually unclean thing was a dead corpse. So he wants you to grasp that.

Then he goes on and this is review, he says we were dead in trespasses and sins. We blundered, we went past these standards God had set up and as sinners we fell short of the standard God meant for us to live up to. Then we've moved on from that point and we talked about how we are deviant. We are dead, secondly, we are deviant, which means in our natural state before God intervenes in our lives, we willingly participate in a deviant world, a world that has deviated from what God has called it to be and wants it to be. That's what Isaiah 53:6 is saying when it says, "All we like sheep have gone astray. Each one has turned to his own way." We've deviated off the path. Let me move on.

Thirdly, we talked about not only that we are dead in that putrefying, corrupt, offensive state before a true and holy God, we are deviant, we deviate off course, but thirdly he says we are demonized. Again, in verse 1, just reviewing these three points, "you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world," that's the deviancy, and now the third thing, demonized, "according to the prince of the power of the air," the middle of verse 2. The prince of the power of the air is, of course, Satan and demons. So there is a demonic aspect to every lost man's life. The Bible says that when you're a child of God, you're a child of light, but before you're a child of light, you're a child of Satan as Jesus told the Pharisees, and what a powerful contrasting thing that was for the Pharisees to hear Jesus look at them and say, "You're not of Abraham, you're of your father the devil." Good night. You talk about a man's man, Jesus stood right in the public square and took on those hypocrites with the most cutting and clear, even embarrassing rebukes.

Well, that's the way we all are. Now, they, the Pharisees, because they had manipulated true religion for their own self-advancement and glory, that was the height of wickedness but we all are demonized. We all come into this world dead to God, spiritually a putrefying corpse before him and we are deviant, we're off-course with what God intended us to be, and we're influenced by demons and demonic powers are at work in our lives. Now Paul goes on to say in addition to that, I use the word "disobedient." Certainly this ties into deviance but since Paul keeps building his case, I want to keep building the case following him. The last part of verse 2, "of the spirit that is now working," here's the phrase, "in the sons of disobedience." Again, we are sons of light and sons of God after conversion, but before conversion, this is new material, by the way, before conversion the unsaved ones are the sons of disobedience. That's our nature. That's what we are. The illustration I began with, the reason that's humorous is because all of us see ourselves in that. It's just so natural to us.

You say, "Well, we're not that bad." No, it's right the opposite, you're worse than you could ever fathom that you are. If you had the capacity to discern with the infinite knowledge of God, you would understand the weightiness of your fallenness before a true and holy God. You are a son of disobedience which means disobedience marks what we are and it marks what we do. We did not learn to disobey, that was natural within us, but we do learn to disobey more frequently, more maliciously, more deviantly and more craftily. In other words, because we're what we call totally depraved and there is no good thing in us and corruption has hopelessly corrupted the totality of our being, it doesn't mean you're as bad as you could be, but if you live long enough on the earth without the

restraining power of God...you see, God has restraining power even on lost people to keep them in check. You do understand that? The Spirit of God works on all men, he just doesn't work savingly on all men. So there is a restraining influence that holds peoples together and holds nations together, and without that, do you know what you get? Read the book of Revelation. Read the great tribulation sections in Revelation. That's what you get when God says, "Okay, I'm pulling my restraints off and letting you just go into your own sin and indulgence." Why? Because we are by nature just disobedient and left to ourselves, we will just be more frequently, maliciously, deviantly and craftily disobedient. We come forth from the womb with a spirit of disobedience and this spirit of disobedience is thriving in our fallen dead heart and you spend your life crassly and brazenly asking the question before God, "What is wrong with that? Well, what's wrong with that? Well, what's wrong with that?" Do you know why you ask what's wrong with that? You want to disobey. It's natural to you, it's natural to me. That's what we are. We consistently work and connivingly seek to find ways to excuse and justify our disobedience.

The prophets spoke of this in the Old Testament. Jeremiah 7:23-24, "But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.' Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward." That's all of our testimonies. James tells us if we disobey in one point of the law, that we are as guilty as if we broke all of the law. Someone has illustrated the law of God is like links in a chain, you break one link, you still fall if you're hanging onto the bottom of that chain. So the Bible wants us to grasp the weightiness of that. Listen folks, you will never treasure and love Christ as you ought if you don't grasp the weightiness of your need before you found Christ.

So what a predicament we are in but, hallelujah, Romans 10:4 says, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." There it is above the baptistry. In other words, because of Jesus Christ, the law has ended as far as a means whereby we might obtain an acceptance and a justification before a holy God. The law no longer is the source or the means or the place we go to obtain a right standing before God. Because of Jesus Christ, the law now has ended as far as a means to be accepted, now in Christ freely through grace, we are accepted before a holy God. What a truth that is.

Well, let's go to number 5. We just have two more points. Number 5 is: deranged. Deranged. Dead, deviant, demonized, disobedient and deranged. I use this word "deranged" because we are those who passionately pursue our rebel desires. You have to be a madman...we all may get angry but a madman in his anger walks in a room and kills 20 people. He's deranged. Well, there's a sense in which all of us left to ourselves cultivate, we will actively pursue that which is anti-God, against his law, and against morality, and listen to me, any time you pursue that which is sin, you're actually destroying yourself and only a deranged person would do that but we're so blinded we can't see it.

In verse 3, here's how he words it, "Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of the flesh," now here it is, "indulging in the desires of the flesh and of the mind." The concept is we're passionately, we are indulgent in these things that dishonor God and destroy ourselves. The idea of deranged is to disturb the operation or the proper function of something. God made man in his own image. Man was originally created with a heart and a nature to honor his Creator and, of course, obey his Creator, and to live under God's glory. That's man's purpose for existence but having fallen in sin, man is now deranged and has completely abandoned the original function.

Well, let me just reference it in Genesis 4. We have the story of Cain and Abel and how Cain becomes jealous because God accepted Abel's sacrifice but he rejected Cain's sacrifice and he indulged in this anger and jealousy. He didn't just become a little upset with his brother, he wasn't just a little offended that his brother was accepted, I mean, he passionately indulged in this lust of hatred and what did he do? He killed his brother. We see it right there in the very beginning and, again, that's a parable of all of us.

Now, I don't think there's anyone in this room that's actually killed somebody but all of us in our own ways have passionately indulged in that which is contrary to God and damaging to ourselves. What kind of fools are we? Think about it. What kind of fools are we? But we all do it. That's how fallen we are; that's how, if you will, deranged we actually are. You see, our bodies now in our natural state before regeneration, are ruled by sinful passions and desires that drive us on with no regard to God's original order and original function. Pleasure becomes the idol on the throne of the heart and God is ignored or denied or we create some idol of a god that fits our lust. "God made me this way." What a blasphemy. No, we are responsible for those lusts, God is not.

Ephesians 2:3 shows that though we are dead to God, we are fully alive to wickedness. He says we "lived in the lusts of our flesh," here in verse 3. This indeed is the purpose and pattern of how we conduct ourselves, "indulging the desires of the flesh." We did what our flesh desired to do with no restraint except to honor the flesh and to honor ourselves. Then he says not only did we live in the lust of the flesh, indulging in the desires of the flesh, he adds, "and of the mind," which means intellectual sins. All the passionate pursuit of self-exalting, self-seeking pride and all the selfish ambition. And by the way, this can certainly get into the church when people put on things in the church for self-exalting pride and selfish ambition. Why? Because it's just natural. It's just natural to what we are as fallen sinners before a holy God. The phrase "desires of the flesh" means everything that is in opposition to the will of God. That's what we naturally would passionately pursue.

So Paul outlining these things in Ephesians 2 says we were dead, we were deviant, we were demonized, we were disobedient, and we were deranged, and lastly he says, we were damned. Damned. I use the word "damned" in the classic sense of doomed to hell or doomed to judgment. It's just where we were. God was not waiting to damn us, God was not waiting to classify us as the condemned, that's what we were already. We were waiting for the rendering out of that eventuality but that's what we are, the damned, naturally speaking before a holy God.

Notice how he words it there, Ephesians 2:3, "Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh," that's deranged, "indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature," here it is, "by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." Our very nature. Now, the Lord taught this during his earthly ministry very clearly. He said in John 3:18 to Nicodemus, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already." You're already in that standing as a judged, condemned or damned one before this holy God. Now, two key characteristics that jump out to me here are, first of all he says, "you're sons of disobedience and you're children of wrath," using the familial analogy here. You're children of wrath and you're sons of disobedience; because you're sons of disobedience, you are the children of wrath. And what a horrifying state. I hope there's a part of you that's uncomfortable. I hope there's a part of you that's troubled by this. It's meant to be that way and I cannot as your pastor take this text and flower it up with something and make it different. It's meant to be that way.

J. M. Boice who wrote some great commentaries, he's with the Lord now, Boice says this about this phrase "we are by nature the children of wrath," he says, "Paul adds something so horrible, so overwhelming, that the other descriptions actually fade into the background when placed next to it." He says that our sin, rather "That in our sin, we are by nature objects of wrath." What a picture that is. The moment you were a one-celled human being in the womb of your mother, your nature screamed for God's judgment. By nature, a child of wrath.

Now, I'm convinced based on biblical teaching that every child conceived before that age of responsibility and understanding is God's elect and if something happens to them, they go straight to heaven. I'm convinced that's one of the ways God will have people from every people, tongue, tribe and nation worshiping him in heaven one day. So I believe all babies are safe in the electing grace of God and that's why sovereign election, I think, is such an important doctrine because if you deal with a man-centered Gospel whereby man must perform certain things then God performs certain things, if we all get our act together, we get into heaven, then how can a baby perform anything? But electing grace gives you a sound theological foundation for believing that children are God's elect. But now, just because they're God's elect does not mean they're not born or rather back up, conceived with a nature of rebellion, disobedience, deranged, demonized and damned before a holy God.

The New Testament word for "wrath," well, let me back up, the Old Testament uses actually 20 different words to describe God's wrath and the Old Testament lists more than 600 passages referring to God's wrath. Now, one New Testament word, thumos, that is used for wrath means "to rush along fiercely or to be in the heat of violence." It's like a raging fire. But the word here, orge, orge is the word that means something is growing ripe. It means God's gradually building and intensifying something and the thing that he is gradually building and intensifying is his wrath, and it's the most common word used for wrath in the entire New Testament.

Now, you and I presently live in the age of grace. We live in the age where through God's Gospel and the preaching of God's Gospel, he's offering grace to men and calling men to repentance and faith and if they will turn and believe on Christ, then grace covers them and their guilt is removed and their condemnation is gone. It was all placed on Christ. This is the age of grace and hallelujah for that! Praise his name for that! And that's why we plant churches and do missions is because that's God's means of getting his grace out there. But I want you to understand though grace is active in today's world, God's wrath is also active. According to this verse and according to the meaning of this word for wrath, God's wrath is steadily building and intensifying all the time. We get a vivid illustration of this in Revelation 14:18 when the Bible talks about the grapes of wrath and they're depicted in this text, this image is that they are ripened and they are swollen and the skin is stretched out thin and they are just about to burst. As a matter of fact, the Bible calls it God gathers them, he says, and tramples them in the winepress of the fierce wrath of God Almighty, but the point is this is something that he had been doing all along; he had been bringing to this point. So God's wrath is actively accumulating and building against all of those who by nature are the children of wrath which is all of those who are not yet converted. What a picture that is.

And then according to Revelation 19:15, of course, God tramples those grapes that are about swollen to bursting, they've been waiting, building, waiting, intensifying, waiting, building, and then the divine wrath of God pours forth. Now, in the New Testament, God's wrath is consistent, it is controlled and it is just and I might add, it's frightening, that this infinitely powerful God in perfect justice is building and intensifying. He's not ever out of control, in complete control so that one day he might unleash with a fury unimaginable his divine wrath against all sinners. So I have a little trouble and I know what we mean, I've used the phrase myself, we say, "Well, God hates sin but he loves the sinner." I'm sorry, his wrath is coming not against your sin, it's coming against you. So in one sense, God loves the sinner, hates the sin, yes, I guess it's true, but it's not a good catch-all for the totality of God's truth about man's condition before a holy God.

You see, God doesn't just get mad from time to time and then lash out in anger like some half-senile old man and then forget about it later. No, the New Testament requires us to view God's wrath as something that is steady and building and growing and is against all unrighteousness. Now, there is also a present and partial dimension to God's wrath and we can see that so very clearly in Roman's 1 where there is one part of God's wrath that's building and intensifying and in perfect control and it is escalating exactly according to divine edict to be unleashed on sinners, but there's another part of God's wrath that's temporal and it's unleashed as we live. Romans 1 where he talks about men giving over to the unnatural lust of men being with men and women giving over to the unnatural lust of women with women, but prefaced to that, he says it's because God turns them over. God turns them over. The Bible says that God darkens their understanding, Romans 1:21, and then they begin to debase themselves in deepening sinful passions and perversions. And in this context, what men will do, they increasingly indulge in their lust, primarily sexual lust, it includes other things but in this text primarily their sexual lusts, and as they are increasingly indulging in their sexual lust, they celebrate that they are liberated when actually they're under the wrath of God. The very act is God's wrath. It's God's judgment.

Leaving them to their own lust to consume and destroy themselves. No wonder he says in that context, "Professing to be wise, they become as fools." They celebrate, "Look, we're free! We're the most progressive and advanced culture that's ever lived!" Professing to be wise, they become as fools.

Man in his fallen condition believes that death is his problem but it really isn't. Man in his fallen condition believes that sin is his problem, but it really is not. Hebrews 9:27 reminds us, "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." It's appointed. That means it's laid up and laid away. It is set aside. It's set for all men to die once, once and for all, and then face judgment. Two appointments you will not miss, death and judgment. But in the true reality, man's problem is not death, man's problem is God.

I have done it and I was wrong and we sometimes use the fictitious illustration that all men who are in hell would love to believe on Jesus and be saved. No, they don't. They hate God in hell. They despise him. They grind their teeth in anger and hatred that he would be the authority over them and God is only present there with them in his wrath and in his judgment. You see, the hell of hell is God is there in wrath and judgment. God is their hell. Are you hearing me? The Psalmist said, "If I ascend to the heavens, thou art there. If I go down into Sheol, into hell, thou art there." God is omnipresent. There is no place where God is not. He's in hell in his wrath. You, sinner, will not go to hell and get away from God, you'll go straight into hell and walk right into the face of an angry God of retribution and wrath. You're not going to outwit God on this thing. You're not more crafty than God, you're going to run right into him. But hallelujah and praise the Lamb because of the unmerited favor and unimaginable grace and mercy of God through his Son Jesus Christ when we die, we run right into the arms of a forgiving loving Savior. Hallelujah to his name. So God is man's problem, sinful man's problem.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:56 that "The sting of death is sin." Why? Death shouldn't be that big of a deal unless you're a sinner. The stinging reality is that after death, we face God as children who are sinful, children who are destined for and deserving of this God's wrath and he is a righteous Judge. That's what makes it so terrifying. That's why Matthew 10:28, Jesus said, "fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

So circling the field, we summarize Paul's exposition, if you will, my exposition to you of the condition of these Ephesians and our condition before our conversion before this just and holy God: we are dead, we are deviant, we are demonized, we are disobedient, we are deranged, and we are damned. In our encouragibility group, two of the young men in my group said that both of them have had to take sensitivity courses centered on the LGBTQ community. I don't know if I got the letters right but you know what I'm talking about. Why would we live in a culture that wants to help us embrace and celebrate what God says is his judgment and his wickedness? There's only one conclusion: men are depraved. Our hearts are depraved. Our minds are depraved. Things like abortion, Islamic terrorism, what evil, what hatred, what violence. Where does that come from? It comes from the

heart. Jesus said it's not what goes into you that's the problem, it's what comes out of you because it comes out of a wicked, rotten, depraved heart.

So because of this condition of man, God is perfectly calculating, steadily building, and judiciously designing fierce wrath to unleash upon us. Is there any hope? Well, no, not in man and God willing we'll look at it more in a couple of weeks on Sunday night, but the next verse says, "But God." That conjunctive word jumps out, "But God." You are dead and deviant and demonized and disobedient and deranged and damned, that's the state you're in. You're not working to get there, you're there, and in that state, God does something.

Just quickly, Romans 8:1 reminds us, "Therefore there is now," that's right now, "there is now, right now, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Wow. You're not waiting to hope that there might be forgiveness. No, right now. Sir, you may be the most selfish, indulgent and vile man in the Shoals area but if you've turned to Christ and said, "I'm a wicked sinner. I need your forgiveness." Right now there is no longer any condemnation for you. That gave me chill bumps. Is that not wonderful good news? Now there is not. I mean, now. You don't have to go to the Catholic system and exercise the priestcraft and be under their sacraments. I mean right now Christ has made you to be without condemnation before a true and holy God.

But you say, "Pastor, you don't understand. I still struggle with lust and I still struggle with being deranged and disobedient and sometimes I don't even know if I'm not demonized. I'm still wrestling." Yes, but all the weight of your iniquity has been laid on Christ because you are now. You see, the doctrine of justification does not mean that you did something and God is pleased and so God is going to declare you justified. The doctrine of justification is that Christ justifies the ungodly. In that state right now, he declares you not guilty. Listen to me: if you're truly a child of God, you cannot not be forgiven. You cannot not be considered without condemnation. It's impossible. You didn't fix it, you can't mess it up. Christ did that.

Now, as we have journeyed through these three verses and hopefully expanded the grasp of the weightiness of our vile offensiveness before this one true and holy God, we've been really teaching or describing what we call the doctrine of total depravity. The doctrine of total depravity does not, again it does not mean that you're as bad and as wicked as you could be, here's what it means, it means the totality of your being is hopelessly corrupted by sin. Your mind is hopelessly corrupted by sin. Your emotions, they are hopelessly corrupted by sin. Your will is hopelessly corrupted by sin. There is no part of your being whereby you can say, "Well, phew, I found one part of me that's pretty good and I can take that part and build a new me." No, there is no part of you whereby you can grasp and, if you will, gird up your loins and go to work for God and somehow please him. No, total depravity. Every aspect of your being is hopelessly corrupted by sin.

Now, when we think about that, I think that leads to two things. 1. It sure leads to prayer. It sure leads to prayer. As Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 3:1, "Pray that the word would spread rapidly and be glorified just as it also did with you." Here's the point: Paul is

saying, "If only God through his word can convert men in that state, we've got to pray God keeps doing it." Now, he does use our means, he does use our witnessing, our testifying, and our preaching, but it's God who does it. So we pray, "O God, let your word spread rapidly and be glorified." Pray that for Grace Life Church. "God, we pray more and more people will be changed by the power of your Gospel, that your word will have spread and you'll get more glory because that's what it's all about anyway." In Colossians 4:3, Paul says, "praying that God will open a door for the word so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ."

Then, of course, always working to proclaim the truth of the Gospel because men in this condition are only converted by the Gospel, they're not converted by crafty things, by creative things. You know, all this nonsense we hear today about all the clever things we have to do to get men saved. Men in this condition cannot be saved by crafty cleverness, they're only saved by the Gospel.

Then lastly, verse 7, I'll mention this and we're closing. "So that," other things and we'll look at the other things but in perfect flow and context, this verse is a fitting way to conclude, "So that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." I think it's appropriate to say this: God is right now saving these awfully totally depraved people to become his very own children through the merits and the work of his Son and through the preaching of his Gospel, and as we go through the church age in contrast to the Old Testament dispensation, I use the word kind of broadly here, but in contrast to that dispensation, now the age of grace has come and person after person after person all around the world is hearing the Gospel, repenting of their sins, placing their faith in Jesus Christ and God is continually, if you will, showing forth the surpassing, how does he word it there? "He might show forth the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." In other words, God is showing off that he can do what no man can do. He is working in this world of these dead, demonized, deviant, disobedient, damned sinners and making them people who from their very hearts are beginning to love and treasure God again where before they could only love and treasure themselves. Oh, they can dream up a lot of religious stuff but they really just love themselves and God for all eternity will be praised and held and honored and treasured for this great great work only he could do. That's why three times in chapter 1 of Ephesians he says, "All to the praise of the glory of his grace." Aren't you glad you get to be one of those trophies of grace?

Let's stand together in prayer.