

014 - Walking in Death - Ephesians 2:1-5a - 2014-08-24

Call to Worship: Nehemiah 9:31

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 16:19-21

Sermon: "Walking in Death" Ephesians 2:1-5

Benediction: Jude 20-21

Ephesians 2:1-5 And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, (2) 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, (3) among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (4) But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, (5) even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

INTRODUCTION

The bible is teaching us to give all praise to the glory of God, and none to ourselves; to worship the Lord God only rather than giving any worship to ourselves.

To that end, the apostle is praying that those who believe will know something about God: that we will know the exceeding greatness of the power God exerted in our coming to faith in Christ.

Remember that we are working with a very long sentence, starting in 1:15, in which the apostle makes several blessed digressions from the point he is making

Here is the basic sentence:

I heard you believe in Jesus; so I pray God will give you knowledge of the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe.

It is a key part of Paul's assertion that you were dead in trespasses and sins. But it is clear to us all that we human beings are not quick to accept that evaluation of ourselves.

His main point is: You who were dead, God made alive.

Since we immediately would object, "Hey, I wasn't dead," he must add, "You who were dead in trespasses and sins"

But that is not enough, either, because our minds will object, "What do you mean we were all dead in trespasses and sins? I was not that bad of a person. My sweet old grandma definitely was not that bad of a person. My dear little child is not that bad of a person. Ghandi was not that bad of a person."

If you harbor ideas like that

- that certain people are not really all that bad as to be dead in sin; or
- that people at certain stages of development are not really all that bad as to be dead in sin; or
- that people who have never actually heard the gospel and rejected it are not really all that bad as to be dead in sin; or
- that you are not really all that bad as to be dead in sin, or to have been in the past dead in sin,

the result will be that you will not be able to give all praise to the glory to God, all praise to the Lord Jesus Christ, because you will be reserving some praise for the glory of yourself or mankind.

In order to give all praise to the glory of God's grace, you need to know the exceeding greatness of the power God exerted in bringing you to saving faith in Christ. Which means you need to know that your coming to faith in Christ was a raising you from the dead. Which means you need to know and accept that you, and your whole race, all mankind, truly were dead in trespasses and sins.

Last time, we labored in this idea:

- being dead, it must have been God, not ourselves, who brought us to faith in Christ

This time, we labor on this idea:

- Is it right to say that we were dead?
- Is it really true that the part of us that can see the kingdom of heaven, was dead, so that we could not see it?
- Is it really true that the part of us that can hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and understand it, was dead, so that we could not hear it?

TEXT: Ephesians 2:1-5

BODY

Were we really dead in trespasses and sins? Yes, you really were dead in trespasses and sins. You can see it in at least two things:

1. By conduct, you were a son of disobedience
2. By nature, you were a child of wrath

I. By Conduct, You Were a Son of Disobedience; We All Were Sons of Disobedience (1b-3a)

- A. You walked in trespasses and sins (1b-2)
 1. according to the course of this world
 2. according to the devil who was at work in you
- B. You conducted yourself in the lusts of your flesh (3a)

1. fulfilling the desires of the flesh
 - the desire for sexual fulfillment
 - the desire for revenge
 - the desire for enjoyment of material pleasures
2. fulfilling the desires of the mind
 - pride, conceit, jealousy, envy

C. APPLICATION: Understand this of those who seem to live good lives.

Philippians 3:4-6 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: (5) circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; (6) concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

II. By Nature, You Were a Child of Wrath; We All Were Children of Wrath (3b)

All of us were by nature children of wrath.

- A. illus. cockroaches; rats; mosquitos; flies; wasps
 just crawling across the floor we step on them
 their kind are hateful to us by nature
 they have no right to take what is ours
 they have not right to try to live in the place we have reserved for ourselves

B. Doctrine of original sin

1. Psalms 51:3-5 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. (4) Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight-- That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. (5) Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

2. If Christ were in Adam, He would have been by nature a child of wrath; that He was not in Adam and is not a child of wrath shows that the rest of us are

C. This is the harder of the two to acknowledge

Was I really dead in trespasses and sins?

If I was

1. by conduct, a son of disobedience, and
2. by nature, a child of wrath,

then, yes, I truly was dead in trespasses and sins

1. my eyes could not see the kingdom of heaven, because they were dead
2. my ears could not hear the gospel message, because they were dead
3. my tongue could not taste and see that the Lord was good, because it was dead
4. my fingers could not reach out and touch the hem of His garment, and feel the healing power flow, because they were dead

- 5. my nostrils could not smell the savor of life in the gospel, because they were dead
- 6. my heart could not be stirred by the tender strains of the hymns of grace, because it was stone

III. But God Made Us, Who Were Dead in Transgressions and Sins, Alive Together with Christ (5a)

A. APPLICATION: So, then, give all glory to God, and none to yourself

B. APPLICATION: So, then, no longer live as alive to sin but dead to God; live as alive to God and dead to sin

CONCLUSION

Titus 3:3-7 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. (4) But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, (5) not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, (6) whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, (7) that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

“desires of the flesh and of the mind”

Romans 8:6-8 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (7) Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. (8) So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Calvin:

the mind includes reason, such as it exists in men by nature, so that lusts do not refer exclusively to the lower appetites, or what is called the sensual part of man, but extend to the whole

Poole:

see 2 corinthians 7:1

see Romans 8:7

the superior and rational powers, to denote the depravation of the whole man even in his best part, and which seems to have rectitude left in it

Gill:

universal is the corruption of human nature; not only the body, and the several members of it, are defiled with sin, and disposed to it, but all the powers and faculties of the soul; even the more noble and governing ones, the mind, understanding, and will, as well as the affections; and great is the power and influence which lust has over them

Barnes:

the wicked thoughts and purposes of the unrenewed nature --- the sins which relate rather to the intellect than to the gross passions. Such, for instance, are the sins of pride, envy, ambition, covetousness, etc.

JFB:

our thoughts; Mental suggestions and purposes, as distinguished from the blind impulses of the flesh.

“we all . . . were by nature children of wrath”

Calvin

All men without exception . . . are here pronounced to be guilty . . . so that out of Christ there is no righteousness, no salvation . . . Christ of wrath are those who are lost, and who deserve eternal death. Wrath mans the judgment of God; so the children of wrath are those who are condemned before God. . . Such had been all the excellent men that were now in the church; and they were so by nature, that is, from their very

commencement, and from their mother's womb. . . sin dwells naturally in us, for God does not condemn the innocent. . . Paul affirms that we are born with sin

Trapp

as Augustin hath it, damned ere born into the world

Poole:

worthy of or liable to wrath

Gill:

deserving of the wrath of God . . . and they were such by nature . . . by and from their first birth

Hodge:

We were born in that condition. It was something natural. We did not become the children of wrath, but were already such as we were born. . . Mankind as a race are fallen; they had their probation in Adam, and therefore are born in a state of condemnation. They need redemption from the moment of their birth

Carroll:

Sin is lawlessness, first of all --- lawlessness in nature before there have been any external manifestations in overt actions.

What a succession of thought, and what a climax! Dead by nature, dead by practice, swept along on the tide of the world spirit, under the domination of Satan! What a hopeless outlook for salvation by human merit! What a predicate for salvation by grace!

- I. Walked according to
the course of this world
the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience

- II. Conducted ourselves in
the lusts of our felsh
fulfilling the desires
of the flesh

of the mind

prince of the power of the air

Griswold:

born by nature citizens of the kingdom of darkness

“worketh” = energizes; the dead sinner is the devil’s zombie

in the kingdom of evil, the devil holds the preeminence

1/3 of all the angels that God created participated in Satan’s rebellion against God with him, and were cast out, and now make up his

“sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath”