

Ephesians 2:1-6 by Wayne Barber

PREVIOUS [Messages on this page](#)

NEXT

[Ephesians 2:1: THE LIVING DEAD](#)

[Ephesians 2:1-3: THE WALKING DEAD](#)

[Ephesians 2:4-8: THE MARVELOUS GRACE OF OUR LOVING LORD](#)

[Ephesians 2:4-6: THE MARVELOUS GRACE OF OUR LOVING LORD—PART 2](#)

Ephesians 2:1: THE LIVING DEAD

by Dr. Wayne Barber

What a wonderful experience it was to go through chapter 1 of Ephesians. If I had been an Ephesian believer, I would have been shouting by now because of all the things God has done for me to give me so great a salvation. He is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. In finishing out that chapter we saw our Lord Jesus far above all things and all things far beneath Him.

Now in chapter 2 Paul is going to look back to what they used to be, and then bring them up to what they are now in Christ Jesus. He starts it off by saying,

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins."

Did you know there are people who live and breathe and laugh and love and at the same time are dead? Living dead people? "You were dead in your trespasses and sins." How can somebody be living and breathing and be dead at the same time? Try to convince somebody who is lost that they are dead. They cannot understand it: "My heart's beating, my lungs are breathing. You are telling me that I am dead?"

One night I watched the old movie, "The Night of the Living Dead!" The people in it were ugly. They were supposed to be dead. They had big circles around their eyes, and they are walking around hurting people. They were living dead people.

In a strange way, that's exactly what Paul is talking about here. The people he's talking about, however, don't look as ugly and don't look as dead. They are alive, and yet they are dead. Now this is an enigma. How do we figure this thing out? "You were dead in your trespasses and sins." They are living, laughing, loving people, but they are dead in their trespasses and in their sins. Everyone who does not know Jesus Christ personally, who has never received Him into their lives personally and bowed before Him, is a living dead man.

The theme of Ephesians 1, 2 and 3 is the fact that the Jew and Gentile are equal when it comes to being dead in their trespasses and sins. As a matter of fact, Paul brings it up here. In verses 1 and 2, speaking to the Gentile Ephesians, he says: "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 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." Then in Verse 3, he says, "Among them we too..." Who is "we too"? Paul is a Jew, a converted Jew, and he says, "...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."

He mentions every group of people in the world. He mentions the Jews and the Gen-tiles who represented every other nation. Every one of us are equal when we stand before God. If we have not received Christ, we are all dead in our trespasses and in our sins. No man is any different. The Jew didn't get a special exemption because of the Covenant promises and all the Law. They are just like the Gentiles. All of us stand dead in our trespasses and in our sins until we receive Jesus Christ into our life. That is as far as we are going to go in this study. There are three things I want you to see that might help you better understand how a person can be living but dead at the same time. First of all, let's look at the definition of being dead. What does it mean to be dead in verse 1.

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins"

The word "**dead**" in the Greek language is the word nekros. It comes from the word **nekus**, which means "corpse." Now that pretty well tells you the story. A corpse is one which has no life. A person who is not a believer is devoid of life. Now you say, "How can he be alive and yet you say he is devoid of life?" That gives you the first clue. We are not talking about physical life, we are talking about spiritual life. You must be able to distinguish between the two. If you don't, then you'll miss heaven. You've got to understand you can be physically alive but spiritually dead.

Now, to explain this, we are going to have to take a journey in the Scriptures, so turn first of all to 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Here we see that man is essentially in three parts. Paul, in his closing remarks to the church at Thessalonica, says, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit [1] and soul [2] and body [3] be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now what does he mean by the difference in spirit, soul and body?

Well, the spirit is where a man communicates with God. That's what makes us uniquely different from the animals. It always amazes me that people can abort a baby and yet at the same time they try to save one of these animals that doesn't even have the spirit within them to communicate with God. We take a lesser form of life and make it as if it's a more magnified form of life. You can insure the colt of a pure-bred stallion at the moment of conception, but you can't even look at a child as being a true life at the moment that child is conceived. It is all upside down. A man, a human being, has something that no other form of life has. He has a spirit, and it is in that spirit that he can communicate with God.

Jesus told the woman at the well in [John 4:24](#)

"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

"Listen, God is spirit. It's not what you do externally that worships God. It is what you do from the heart. You must worship Him in Spirit and in truth."

So we have the spiritual part of man. Every one of us has a place called our human spirit.

Secondly, we have a soul, the immaterial part of us that causes us to be able to relate to the world around us. It's the mind, the will, and the emotions. Now, to a degree even animals have a soul. They relate to the world around them. That is the immaterial, psyche, part of man.

Thirdly, we have our body. A body brings identity to an entity. That is what we live in on this earth that relates to our environment. When we move into our new [heavenly] environment, we are going to have to have changed bodies because we won't relate to that environment until they are glorified and changed. We are going to have to have glorified bodies to be there.

You might be asking: "Where did man first possess spiritual life and where did he lose spiritual life? If we are dead spiritually and yet can be living physically, then when did it disappear? Did man ever have it? Was it ever lost?"

Look with me in [Genesis 2:16-17](#). This is the first man and the first woman ever put on this earth. God breathed into them the breath of life, not only physical life, but spiritual life. They were created with God's life in them. They could fellowship with Him, walk in harmony with Him, and walk in oneness with Him. Look at Genesis 2:16. They were in a garden, a lush place.

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it, you shall surely die.'"

Remember in chapter 3, he ate of it. Did he die? Some people would argue and say, "No, he lived to be 800 or so years old. He didn't die the moment he ate of it." But yes, he did! You must look at man in three essential parts. Physically he didn't die that day, but physical death became a reality. Immediately he began to decay and corrupt. Not only that, his mind, his will, his emotions, and his soul were immediately disengaged from the wisdom he had once of God. Now man's mind pulled away with such a humanistic fervor that in Genesis 11, he is found building a tower in order to reach God. God had to curse him, break him into tribes and nations and confuse his language because he had become so engrossed in what he could do in ascending to the level of God. Look at the secular world. Do you wonder why do they talk that way? Folks, listen, people without God's life don't know how to do anything else. The thing that makes it miraculous is when sinners don't sin. Their soul has been far removed from anything God says and from any understanding that He can give.

Then look at Adam's spirit. That's where he immediately died. He immediately spiritually died when he sinned in Genesis Chapter 3. That means God's life left him. Now he is physically alive, he is mentally competent, but he is spiritually dead. There is no influence of God within man. He was alive in one sense, but God was not in him. He couldn't communicate with God. He couldn't know the things of God. Physically and mentally he was alive, but he was spiritually dead.

So in Ephesians 2:1, he says, "You Gentiles, that's the way you were. I was, too, as a Jew. We all were." Why? Because of Adam. Romans 5:12 says

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned--

When that one man sinned, sin entered the world and death by sin. Death became a reality. Men were alive, but they were dead.

Let me share with you 1 Corinthians 2:14 about the man who is a natural man.

That term refers to somebody who has never received Christ. He has been naturally, physically born, but he has never been spiritually reborn. He does not have that newness of life that must come at salvation. This verse describes the natural man, the man who was born as a result of Adam. Verse 14 reads,

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

There was a time in your life and in my life when the gospel was nothing more than foolishness because we couldn't understand it. Something was missing in our life. We were alive physically, but spiritually we were dead. Oh, folks. Can you see it? In every man's heart there is a vacuum. We are not complete. We are not made whole until the Lord Jesus comes and takes that place in our life. The life was gone. Now He's the one who has to come and give it back. We'll look at that in detail later.

I meet people all over the world. They know the vacuum is there, but they don't know where to go to satisfy it. They try works. They work themselves to death. They make big names for themselves. They try sex, or they try alcohol, or they try religion. People will try religion in a minute, but it won't satisfy the vacuum that is there. There is no life in religion. Life is only in the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the giver of life. People can be alive. They can laugh. They can love. They can live and yet at the same time be dead. He is talking then about spiritual death.

Secondly, I want us to look at the evidence of being dead. You may be thinking, "I wonder if I'm alive or if I'm dead." Well, if you have any confusion, we will at least have some evidences here that you can check out. How do you know that you are alive or dead? What are the evidences of being spiritually dead? Verse 1 again says, "And you who were dead in your trespasses and sins." He describes the lifestyle of the Gentiles before Christ came to them and the lifestyle he had before Christ came to him..

Two words clarify it beautifully. First of all there is the word **'trespasses'**, paraptoma. It comes from two words, **para**, which means "alongside," and **pipto**, which means "to fall." It means a fault, an error, a wrong doing. In this context, it refers specifically to a willful transgression of a known rule of life. It also has guilt associated with it. In other words, if you find a person who is lost and doesn't know Jesus, there is guilt in his life. He doesn't even know where it comes from. He willfully sins against the things God has said. He knows it is wrong to be immoral, but he'll be immoral. He knows it wrong to be deceitful, but he lives deceitfully. He knows these things, but he is not willing to bow to them. He can't bow to them until the Lord Jesus comes into his life. He is in bondage.

Titus 3:3 says

"For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."

Titus 3:3 says he is blind, he is deceived and he is enslaved to the very trespasses that we speak of right here.

The second word he uses here is **hamartia**. Here is the lifestyle of a person. It's the first picture you get. He lives lawlessly. The Word of God doesn't control his life. He does what he does because he wants to do it. He lives for himself. The word hamartia means he misses the mark in everything that he does. The word hamartia is plural, which means it's not referring to one simple result. Everything in his life shows that he is completely missing the mark. It is an outward manifestation of the inward nature of a person without spiritual life.

A spiritually dead man is dead in his transgressions and his sins. Those things that miss the mark are evidences of the fact that there is no spiritual life in him whatsoever. Romans 3:23 says that

"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

They have missed the mark of the glory of God. Romans 6:23 says

"the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"

Here's where we've got to be careful. Some people are not equal to others in their corruption. In other words, we are all equally depraved when we are born, but the outcome of that may not be equal. This is what confuses people. Some people's corruptness,

their sins, hamartia may be much more vile than other peoples. Inwardly their natures are equally as corrupt. That is what you've got to see.

You say, "Now how in the world can that happen?" Some people have learned how to restrain their sin. First of all, they do it because of personal pride. You've got some people who are in positions so they wouldn't do certain things. It's not because it would be displeasing to God, but because it would be displeasing to the people they are trying to impress. So, therefore, they restrain their sin. What appears to be goodness is nothing more than a mask over that corrupt nature that is within.

Some people can restrain it by public opinion. If you are running for office, all of a sudden you will stop doing certain things. Not because you want to please God, but because you want somebody's vote. You'll do whatever it takes if you are a lost person. If you are a Christian, that's different. We are talking about lost people, now. Third, some people do it because of selfish interests. If you want something bad enough, you will restrain your own depravity in order to convince others so you can get what it is you want, your own selfish interests.

Or perhaps they do it because of the fear of its consequences. Do you know there are some people today, especially in the day we are living in, refusing to be immoral with someone because they are afraid of AIDS? That's good, but folks, it has nothing to do with righteousness. It has nothing to do with spiritual life. They are just scared to death of what might happen to them, so they restrain themselves.

Just because somebody is not corrupt outwardly, don't let that fool you. If there is no life inwardly, then he is just as depraved as the man that you can easily spot in a crowd.. People without spiritual life are lawless people. They are people who live in their transgressions, and every single thing they do misses the mark of what God requires. Day in and day out, there is no trace of spiritual life in them at all.

Well, there is one more point. I want to show you how you get this new life. I want to look real quickly at the vital signs of having spiritual life. Let's see how we get it first of all. Go back to Ephesians 1:13:

"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise."

After we hear the message of truth and understand it, we respond to it in belief.

What is the gospel?

2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

1 Corinthians 15:2-4 tells you that Jesus Christ, the God-man, the Messiah, God's Son, died for our sins. He shed not just human blood, not just divine blood, but divinely human blood on the cross. God accepted that. He died, rose the third day, ascended and was glorified. That is the gospel. If you are going to be spiritually alive, the life that you desperately need is wrapped up in a person. His name is Jesus.

Now, look at 1John 5:12. I want to show you the vital signs. He tells you how the life comes back in. You can't work it up. Verse 12 says,

"He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God, does not have the life."

It is as clear as it can be. In 1 John there are three vital signs that I want you to see regarding this life being in Him. Look first of all in Chapter 2 verse 3. This is the first clue that a man has received Christ, and that life is working in him:

"And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments."

The first attitude of a person receiving Christ is a willingness to obey.

You have a root of willingness to obey.

That doesn't mean Christians always obey. But you cannot habitually live disobedient unto God. You may have an area that will trip you up. But at some point you will confess, repent and come back to God. Why? Be-cause life is inside of you. It is a person. The divine seed of life is in you, and you can't be left to do what you want to do. God will either take you out of here, or He'll prune you.

He'll cut you back and cut you back and cut you back until finally He disciplines. He scourges and chastens those whom He loves. He doesn't let us get away with lawless living. You find a person who claims to know Christ and lives in sin, lives lawlessly as a habitual practice, that person does not know Christ, according to I John.

In 1John 2:10-11 it says,

"The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes."

Automatically you begin to see an attitude towards God of a person with vital signs. He loves His Word, not just the promises, but the commands. But he also loves his brother. There is a brand new look that he has towards his brother in Christ. What does it mean? 1 John 3:16 helps us understand what he is talking about. He says,

"We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

It's His attitude in us. It is not just us loving. It is Christ loving in us.

In 1 John 5:2 we read,

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments."

You can't love them until you love Him by obeying what He says. There is one other place I want you to see. This gets more into that habitual sin problem I talked about.

1 John 3:6 reads,

"No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him."

That means habitually sins, lives with sin as his lifestyle. You can have "a" sin, something that just eats on you and drives you nuts. Chapter 5 speaks of that. You deal with that, but you cannot habitually sin and claim to have spiritual life within you. We are brand new creatures in Christ.

Every now and then I choose, because of my old putrid flesh, to go back and chase after the things He saved me from. I used to know they wouldn't satisfy. What's wrong with me now? Am I going back to get satisfaction from what I know wouldn't satisfy? That's how we can be deceived by our flesh. But friend, as soon as I go back, I am most miserable of all people. I don't know how you feel when you are convicted, but I feel like a horse has just kicked me right in the chest. I have got to do something about it. The grace and the precious blood of Jesus releases that pressure off of me. A person who can go back to it and go back to it and go back to it never left it to begin with. You see, the difference is, when you are saved, you don't chase sin any longer. Sin chases you. That's a big difference. That's a huge difference. You still deal with it, but you are not after it. It is after you. That's the difference.

The vital signs are:

You have a new spirit of obedience towards Him

You love your brother, because it is Him loving in you

You don't live habitually lawless anymore.

Scripture says there is none that seeketh after God. There is none righteous, no, not one. Sometimes we doubt our salvation. If we are not saved, why are we seeking after God? That's not the characteristics of one in his transgressions and in his sins. Well, the definition of dead is spiritual death, not physical death.

Spiritual Death

The definition or the evidence of being spiritually dead is a lawless lifestyle. Everything you do misses the mark. You know that, because when you see it hit the mark, you know immediately the difference. Sin misses the mark. The vital signs—a life lived with obedience. When I am disobedient, I am willing to come back and repent and obey immediately. Romans 10:9 says, we confess Him, not as Savior, but as what? As Lord. That's as clear as anything you can see in Scripture. He comes in and brings life with Him. He abides in us. Thank God, I was dead, but now have been made alive in Christ Jesus. Are you?

Ephesians 2:1-3: THE WALKING DEAD

by Dr. Wayne Barber

[Return to TOP of page](#)

We talked about the living dead in the last study. This time we are going to talk about the walking dead. It is so tragic to look back and see what all of us used to be. Sometimes I think one of the problems when you get into the wonderful joys of our salvation is that we have forgotten what it was like to be lost. The text is reminding us of that. Paul in chapter 1 talked about the joy of our salvation, what God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit did for us. Then in chapter 2, he takes them back and reminds them and him-self of what it was like being without Christ. He says, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins."

Last time we saw that the definition of being dead is not physical death, but spiritual death. When Adam sinned, immediately the Spirit left him. He was no longer able to communicate with God, to know God, to experience God without God's personal intervention in his life. That's the way it is with a lost person. He has no ability within himself to communicate with God, to know God, to experience God.

We saw that the evidence of being dead, spiritually dead, was also there. He says,

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins."

The word "**trespass**" means "a willful neglect of God's Word." A sinner, a person without Christ, sins and breaks God's Law and breaks God's Word with no consciousness whatsoever as to offending a Holy God. The result of that is sins, **hamartia**. It's in the plural, and it refers to anything that we do, when we don't have Christ in our life, that misses God's mark. Because of Adam, the whole situation was set off course. The whole focus is off. You can go to church, you can give, you can pray, you can do whatever you want to do, but if you don't have Christ in your life, everything you do apart from Christ misses the mark. As a matter of fact, Isaiah said all of our deeds or righteousness are filthy rags in God's eyes. They're awful, soured rags in God's eyes.

We also saw the vital signs of having spiritual life. It is so helpful to contrast these two. You don't want to just leave people dead in trespasses and sins. You want to make sure you bring them over to the other side and show them what life is all about. We looked at I John. We could have looked at many passages, but we just chose I John.

1 John 2:3 says

"And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments."

1 John 2:3 says that a believer, a person with God's life in him, obeys the commandments of God. Now why does he obey?

Jesus said in John 14:15

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

In other words, the obedience flows out of the loving relationship with God. If I love Him, I will obey Him. You don't obey Him so you can love Him, you love Him so you can obey Him. That's the way it works. That's the mark on a believer that life is inside of him. He doesn't just love the promises of God. He loves the commandments of God.

Psalms 1 says,

1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

"Blessed is the man who loves the law of God," not just the promises, but the will of God. A person who loves somebody wants to do whatever they can do to please them. He will do that.

If you love God, you will want to please God. If you don't love God, you won't obey His commandments. That proves to everybody you don't love Him. What's the mark? You love the Word. You love the Commandments. You love His will. That's the mark of people with life inside of them. Not only that, we also looked at 1 John 3:16 and 5:2.

3:16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

You will also love your brother.

It's not going to be your love that you have for your brother, it's going to be His love. Listen, love didn't just happen. It has already happened. Jesus has loved us, and now that love He gave to us is **in** us and now reaches **through** us and touches somebody around us.

Jerry White, the speaker at a recent conference, said something that really pierced through my heart. He said the love of God is so powerful that it even loves the Judas that is in your life. I know that if I love God, that love He has for me is going to love even the people who betray, who belittle and who spread things falsely about me. Jesus can love the Judas in your life through you. How do you know a person loves God? How do you know he's got spiritual life in him? Watch him in his relationships to others.

The third thing we looked at is in 1 John 3:6:

No one who abides in Him sins (continually); no one who sins (continually) has seen Him or knows Him.

A believer does not habitually commit sin. Now, every believer has a problem. All of us have our weaknesses, but we don't live lawlessly. We may fall into the trap of sin, we may go for a while in that one particular sin, but it's not sin in general. It's not a lawless attitude. A person who has been weakened perhaps by not loving God may fall into that trap, but he doesn't live lawlessly. There is no such thing as a habitual, carnal Christian, because the seed of God's life lives in us. That's what salvation is all about, God putting His life in us.

Well, we looked at the living dead, let's look at the walking dead. There are two characteristics.

First of all, the walking dead, people who are dead in their trespasses and sins, walk according to the people of this age. Now, I want you to look in verse 2. If you put verse 1 with it, it makes the thought complete.

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world."

Now, the word "course" there is the word "age," aion. The word "age" has to do with a period of time. We are living in a particular age. Each age has particular characteristics about it. We know that at the last of this age, the church is going to be taken up and there is going to come another age and then another age when Christ comes to rule and reign on this earth. The word "world" there has more to do with people than it does with the lifestyle of people or the system of the world.

What Paul is saying here is, that as unbelievers, the Gentiles used to walk according to the people of this age. There was a certain characteristic of those people of that age. What was that characteristic? Verse 1 says,

"in your transgressions and sins,"

But look at verse 3. It clarifies what it was like once when we lived in our transgressions and in our sins. That is not only the characteristic of the people of the age they were in, but also in the age that we are living in. People don't understand the things of God, folks, because they don't have life in them. Therefore, they live in a certain way.

In verse 3 look at what he says. Paul puts himself not only with the Gentiles, but also the Jews. This is the theme that carries through Ephesians.

"Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh."

What in the world is he talking about? Suppose somebody asks you the question, what does it mean to live in your transgressions and sins? Well, it means to live in the lusts of your flesh. The next question is, what does that mean? Let's see if we can figure it out.

First of all, the term "to live," anastrepho, literally means "to spend your time, to conduct yourselves, within the sphere of something, to live in something." The tense there is passive, which means we did at one time, but we could do nothing about it. We were forced into it. Why? Because of Adam, we were born that way, as he will tell us in just a moment. We would get up, go to bed, and live in the lusts of our flesh. Now what does he mean, "the lusts of our flesh"?

The word for "lusts," epithumia, is referring to the sinful passions of the flesh. It is in the plural. When most people think of lust, they think of one thing. They think of sensual, sexual lust. Yes, that's part of it. But it's a whole lot beyond that. The word "lust" could be described by an 800 pound parrot: "Polly wants a cracker, NOW!" You've got to immediately fulfill that desire. That's the desire you have within you that pulls to satisfy itself. It's not only the lust to have sex, but it is also the lust to eat, to feel good, to get our way, and to manipulate and control others. You can make a list ten miles long. These lusts, as many as they were, dominated and controlled our lives. A man lived solely to please himself, not to please God. That's how it used to be. It's not supposed to be that way now.

Remember in our last study we said that man is made up of three compartments. They are body, soul and spirit. What's the spirit? It's where he communes with God. That's where God's life left Adam. His soul is his mind, will and emotions. That's how he relates to this world. In fact, that's why we've got to have this spiritual life, or we will relate to it in a wrong way. Then you've got the body, the flesh. That's where all your desires come from.

In 1 Peter 2:11 he tells them they are no longer like they used to be. They don't belong in this world which everybody else is living in. They are different. He says,

"Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul"

That is where those lusts are, in our bodies. They are fallen bodies, which wage war against the soul.

Galatians 5:16-17

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

Galatians 5 says the flesh wars against the spirit, here it says it wars against the soul. No, that's not contradictory. It is easy to understand. What's the battleground? Where does it take place? On one side is the spirit, the life of God. On the other side is the flesh, the old self life, what we were in Adam before we came to know Christ. What is the battle-ground? The soul, which is the mind, the will and the emotions. The old flesh says, "Come on, let's go do this. Let's go do that. Let's go do this. Let's feel good." I saw a sticker one day, "Do it if it feels good." That's exactly the way we all used to be before we were saved. Maybe we were not as belligerent as some people. Maybe we were not as obvious as some people. Maybe we were more cultured and restrained in ours, but it was all the same thing. We were all pulled that way. You see, that's where the war is.

Well, there is no battle at all to a person who is lost. He has nothing in there to counter that pull of the flesh. Therefore, he is dominated by it every day. That's why he willfully lives in his transgressions and in his sins. He is living to please himself, whether it be religious pride or whether it be any other kind of flesh, it's all the same thing. But when life comes in, oh, now we have a choice. Now the battle is on. The war rages. The flesh is not used to not being satisfied. The spirit says, "No! He's conquered death. You are no longer people of the flesh. You are people in the Spirit of God. You are children of light, not of darkness. Now, live this way. Here is the power to do it. You just choose and love God. God will give you the energy. Don't fear the flesh. Don't fear sin. Don't fear the devil. Fear God and look to God and live for God, and you can conquer the desires of the flesh."

Galatians 5 says if you fulfill the desires of the spirit, you won't fulfill the desires of the flesh. It didn't say you wouldn't have them. It said you wouldn't fulfill them. Thank God he didn't say you wouldn't have them. Man, if he says you wouldn't have them, all of us would just need to go and repent in sackcloth and ashes. It is not the temptation. It is how you respond to it. How did we used to live? We used to live in such a way we were totally in bondage to whatever the flesh wanted. Now we can die to the flesh. Now we can submit to the spirit. Why? Because life has come inside of us.

Well, Paul goes on and explains it even further in Ephesians 2. He says in verse 3,

"we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind."

"Indulging the desires" really means "doing the wishes of the flesh." It is in the present tense. This was your lifestyle! Can you believe we used to live this way? Whatever the flesh wanted, the flesh got! If we were too proud to do certain things in one area, we just transferred all that energy into another area. We were all living for self, regardless of what it was.

The word "mind" there is "understandings". He is saying our minds were preset like a compass on fulfilling the desires of the flesh. That's the way you and I used to live. We live in the day of watered down evangelism. But friend, if you are a believer, life is in you. Oh, you might be in a trap. You might be in a sin, but you will repent. You will make it right, somehow, because the spirit of God lives within you. That person who lives that way habitually might be the nicest person you know, and may not know Jesus from a hole in the wall.

Verse 3 goes on to tell us the real problem. He says we

"and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."

That word "nature," phusis, is the word that refers to the natural condition of birth. Boy, anybody who ever doubts that we are born depraved, there it is right there. By the natural condition of our birth, we were this way. Hey, we were all this way because of Adam, by birth.

Folks, once somebody said that if you could take a little baby, when it is squalling at 3:00 in the morning, and give it the vocabulary of a 20-year-old adult, what you would hear would ruin your ears for years to come. The first thing they learn to say is "mine, mine, mine." From then on it's downhill. Folks, listen, you've got to realize you are not just dealing with immaturity. You are dealing with a nature. The nature of Adam himself is in those children. We are children of wrath. Moms, that's why the greatest thing you could ever do for your children is take them to the gospel of Jesus Christ and show them what Jesus came for, what they are like and what they can be like if they receive Him as their Lord and as their Savior.

People do what they do because they are what they are. You do what you do because you are what you are. You can't change that. Jesus can. You can't. We used to walk according to the people of this age.

There is a second thing here that is more scary. Verse 2 says,

"...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."

Not only did our flesh control us, but there was another power controlling us, the prince of the power of the air. The word "power" is **exousia**. It means "the authority of the air." Let's see if we can understand who this is.

The word for prince is the word archon. It is the word for ruler, chief, and magistrate. It is the word Jesus used in John 12:31, John 14:30, and John 16:11 when He referred to the ruler of this world. Guess who he is? He is Satan himself in all of his demonic powers. "You mean to tell me, if I don't know Christ in my heart, I am totally under the control and domination of Satan?" That's exactly right. He has every right and reign to walk in and out of your life to use you however he wants to use you, to make whatever depravity come out of your soul. You have no control against him whatsoever, if there is no spiritual life within you.

Oh, folks, if I could draw a picture for you. The apostle John said the whole world lies in the arms of the evil one. Picture darkness as being a big globe. In the center of that darkness put the world. If you could do that you could see all the demonic forces around the world. You could see Satan ruling and reigning through those forces. The world is totally saturated and dominated by all the darkness. The darkness has infiltrated mankind. It has gone in through Adam, and it has gotten into every person ever born on this earth, from Genesis 11 until now. It has gotten into every nation on this earth. There is no nation that honors God. None seeketh after Him, the scripture says. There is none righteous, no not one.

The Lord Jesus, however, is Light. Nobody can turn Him off because nobody ever turned Him on. He is perpetual light. He came down to this earth. He broke through the darkness, and He came to the cross. Why do you think it was so irritating?

John 3:19 "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.²⁰ "For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

John 3:19-20 said men loved the darkness because their deeds were evil. They would not come to the light because it exposed them, and they loved what they were doing. People of darkness hate the light. They took Him to a cross, and Satan smiled until He said, "It is finished." Then Satan said, "Uh Oh." He went into the lower parts. He came out the third day. Buddy, when that Light rose up, the eternal, perpetual Light that has always been there, He ascended and was glorified. Now He comes to reign in you and me.

There is not just one light on this earth. There is a light here and a light there and light here. Ephesians says,

"You were once darkness. Now you have become light."

In the midst of all the surrounding darkness of our world which infects everything that we know, the lights shine. That's why our lights are to shine forth in this darkness. We have the authority over darkness. You don't turn light on or off as far as Christ is concerned. Light definitely puts out darkness. That's why the Apostle John said to keep on doing what you are doing because the darkness is passing away.

There was a day when we were so dominated by this darkness and by all the demonic forces Satan could muster, we couldn't get out from under the control of our flesh. We were by nature the devil's children. That's what we were. But oh, thank God, the message doesn't end there.

Folks, I don't want you to leave thinking, "Oh, how depressing." Oh, no. How exciting. There are two words that I want to share with you in our next study. Look what it says in verse 4:

"But God"

Chapter 1 of Ephesians tells us God had a much better way. Before the foundation of the world, He knew that darkness was coming. He knew exactly what was going to take place. He designed the salvation, folks. So many of us say, "Ho-hum" and go to sleep when we hear it preached. We have forgotten what it was like to be lost. He says, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)."

Look with me in Psalm 40. Have you forgotten what it is like to live as if we are controlled by darkness? We listen to the deceitfulness of darkness. We listen to the lies of the world. We are not listening to God. What's wrong with us? We used to be that way. We are not that way any more. Psalms 40:1 says,

"I waited patiently for the LORD. And He inclined to me, and heard my cry."

Aren't you glad! I remember that morning I prayed to die. I had been in the ministry eight years. I cried out to God and said, "God, I don't know what's wrong with me." I didn't even know I was lost because I didn't understand the terminology. I've learned a little bit of it since then. I said, "God, help me." I prayed to die. Diana will never forget the morning. I'll never forget the morning, because I have never been the same since. God heard my cry. "God, I can't do anything. I can't save myself. The things I don't want to do, I do. I can't do it." Psalms says, "...He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay."

The word for "miry clay" gives us the picture of how they trapped animals. When an animal fell into a pit, if it was a solid foundation, he could get out. Fill the pit with quicksand, and it becomes a mire. The more the animal struggled to get out, the deeper it got in. That's exactly the picture of a person without Christ.

Folks, our hearts ought to break. We used to be that way. We need to get the message out that when you cry out to God, God hears you. Whether it is a child six-years-old, 11-years-old, or a man 70-years-old, God hears you. God reaches down, and the verse says, "He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay," those old sins and transgressions that I was mired in. "And He sat my feet upon a rock, making my foot-steps firm." Verse 3 blesses me. "And He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear, And will trust in the Lord."

Can you remember that day when God brought you out of that old miry clay? Isn't it wonderful?

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoso-ever believeth in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life."

Hallelujah. God brought us up. He set our feet on the rock. He put a new song in our life.

[Return to TOP of page](#)

Ephesians 2:4-8: THE MARVELOUS GRACE OF OUR LOVING LORD

by Dr. Wayne Barber

[Return to TOP of page](#)

Turn with me to Ephesians 2. We are coming out of those verses which talk about what it used to be like when we were sinners, before we came to know the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to entitle this study, "The Marvelous Grace of Our Loving Lord." We sing a hymn with those words, but we also see it in our text as we look beginning in verse 4. Let's go back, though, and read verses 1, 2 and 3. Let's remember what it was like one more time to be lost.

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 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. 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."

It is so sad to realize that all of us at one time were the living, walking dead, controlled by our flesh and used as pawns by the devil to accomplish his work. Isn't it awful to think that at one time in our life the devil had full reign and rule in our lives? Until Jesus came into us, we were his very tools on this earth to get his damaging work done. In Ephesians 2:1-3, Paul is reminding the Ephesian believers of what they used to be. Folks, we need to realize where we've come from. So often as believers we take it all for granted. We forget that we were once dominated by the flesh. We were once the pawns of the devil. We need to realize now that we are in newness of life. We don't live like we are lost. We live differently. We are saints. That word means we are set apart now for God's use. We are totally, drastically changed. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a brand new creature. Well, verses 1, 2 and 3 provide a backdrop for the rest of the chapter. If you want to highlight something that is beautiful and expensive, you put it in front of something that is black, the deepest black that you can find.

They say in South Africa that the people who sell diamonds enhance their diamonds that way. They always find a piece of black velvet, and they put those diamonds on it. Diamonds, pearls, whatever it is, the blacker the backdrop, the more eloquent the pearl or the stone.

Well, you see, nothing could be any blacker than our sin. Verses 1-3 show us that's what we used to be. Paul uses that to highlight the grace of God that comes in verses 4- 10. Nothing is as beautiful. Nothing is as expensive. It is freely bestowed, but it was very expensive to God. It cost God the death of His Son upon the cross.

The first two words of verse 4 are among the most powerful words in all of Scripture. Coming right out of that awful, sinful, dreadful condition, it says,

"But God"

That is so powerful to understand. That phrase is used 41 different times in Scripture. I picked three of them just to show you what I am talking about. When man couldn't, and man wouldn't, God did. "But God..." In the midst of the darkness of sin, in the midst of the mire of sin, "BUT GOD..."

It is used in Romans 5:8 to describe His love towards us when we were unlovable. In the context it says that men would not even die for good men. Then it goes on and says,

"**But God** demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

No man would ever die like that. Jesus, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, emptied Himself of His glory, came to this earth and took upon Himself the body of human flesh. He lived a sinless life and took our sin upon Himself. He did what no one else would do. "BUT GOD..." While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

When I was in college, one of the things that used to always irritate me were these real brainy students that had no common sense whatsoever. In one of the classes I was in, I loved the professor. He couldn't see real well.

One day, in this particular class on world religion, we were talking about the different religions in the world, comparative religions. One of these brains, you know, who absolutely did not have enough common sense, said, "What right do we have to go to other countries in the world and to tell them that Christ is our God and should be their God and that we serve the only true God? Why not let them serve Buddha or Allah or whoever it is they want to serve. I mean, after all, what you call Him doesn't matter." Well, I didn't know that my professor had it in him. He took off his glasses. Now that's dangerous, because he couldn't see with them, much less without them. He had big tears in his eyes. He walked around and steadied himself on the rostrum there and for the next 30 minutes there was not a dry eye in that place. He said, "You name me one god who would come down to this earth and die on a garbage heap for the very creation that had rejected him." He went down through the religions of the world, named every one of the gods and when he finished, there wasn't a dry eye in that class. That fellow never opened his mouth again. He understood now why it is we need to "go ye therefore into all the nations" and tell them about our wonderful Lord Jesus Christ.

"In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." When we were unlovable, "BUT GOD" died for us.

Secondly, it is used in 1 Corinthians 1:27. It is used to describe His choice of us when we were unlikable.

"**but God** has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, 29 that no man should boast before God.

1 Corinthians 1:29 says, "that no man should boast before God." In other words, when the world rejects us, when the world calls us fools because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to remember He is the one who accepts us. I think rejection is the worst thing a human being can go through. Many of us have been rejected in life, and we need to hear somebody say, "I accept you. I love you. I choose you."

When I was growing up in high school, I was tall, skinny and uncoordinated. I was loud, and nobody seemed to really want to be around me a long period of time. I mean, it was okay for a while, but then everybody disappeared. I never knew exactly what to do next. I never knew whether to laugh, be quiet, or do something. I was always doing the wrong thing. I couldn't walk and chew bubble gum at the same time. I was never picked to be on anybody's team. I was always the last one chosen. I always felt rejected. Well, I went off to college and my coordination began to come along. Athletically I began to do better, but socially, it seemed to get worse. I remember coming home from college one year. I miss my Mama. Sometimes I enjoy just saying that. I just miss her. I wish sometimes I could get hold of her just for a second or two just to talk to her. She was such a loving, loving individual. I had come home from college, and I was so rejected inside. I felt so foolish because there were some things I had done I wished I hadn't done. Every time I opened my mouth, it was just to change feet. I sat on the couch and said, "Mama, I don't understand. I don't feel accepted by anybody. I feel stupid. I feel foolish. I feel awkward. I look different." My Mama laid my head over in her lap, and she just took her hand and began to stroke my hair. I'll never forget it as long as I live. It is almost like I can feel her touch on my head. She kept saying, "Wayne, God loves you. God loves you just like you are. Wayne, if you'll let Him, God will use you. It doesn't matter

what the world thinks about you. God didn't throw away your identity. God didn't throw away your personality. God didn't throw away your individuality. God loves you, Wayne, and He wants to do something in your life. Just let Him choose you. He's chosen you. You receive that choice in your life."

It is a wonderful thing that He chose us when we were unlikable. The world throws us out. God loves us. He chooses the foolish things to manifest His glory in our life. Not only that, that little term "BUT GOD" is used to describe His design for us when we were unusable. So many people come into the Kingdom of God, and they think that God should be real excited because we are on His team. They bring in all their baggage. They bring their expertise from the world. They bring in their way of thinking. My friend, God's got a different design, and we haven't got a clue. God gifts us and makes all of us useable. Until we realize that, it will never function the way He wants it to function.

1 Corinthians 12:24-25 says,

"But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another."

Oh, how we see the marvelous grace of God. "BUT GOD..." He's the one who changed it. Man could not have changed it. God changed it. He revealed His love for us. He revealed His choice of us. He revealed His design for us. That's God. God did it. We were in the darkness and the blackness and the mire of sin, "BUT GOD."

Our text goes on to say in verse 5,

"...even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus."

Oh folks, when we speak of "us" in this context, don't forget who we are talking about. Ephesians 1:1 tells us we are talking about the saints who are faithful in Jesus Christ. They are the only ones who will appreciate this. Those that aren't faithful don't appreciate this. The people who are faithful are overwhelmed by it.

In Ephesians 1:13 Paul says those who have heard the gospel, the truth of their salvation and have believed, He made alive. He raised them up and seated them in the heavenlies.

Verse 8 is the key verse in the context of Ephesians 2:4-10. Look at it very quickly.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

That's why we are looking at the marvelous grace of our loving Lord.

What does it mean when you mention grace? So many people don't seem to understand what grace is. The word *ischaris*. It comes from the word *chairō*, which means "rejoice, to rejoice." Oh folks, listen, when you start understanding what grace is, it'll turn something on inside of you. You have to rejoice. It's wonderful to understand what grace is. It's not what man can do. It is what God would do.

If I asked you, "What do you think grace is?", you would likely say, "It is God's unmerited favor." You are exactly right, but what does that mean? Let's take it a step further. It is what God and God alone can do to a man, for a man, in a man and through a man. Man on this earth will never deserve any of it. It's what God does, not what man does. Well, let's begin looking at the marvelous grace of our loving Lord. First of all, I want us to take a good look at the giver of grace. Look back at verse 4. "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,..." We are going to look at the character of God, the giver of grace. You see one of the attributes that comes out in this verse,

"But God, being rich in mercy,..."

It is not just His grace. So often when we talk of God we speak only of His grace. It is like a coin. On one side you have heads, and on the other side you have tails. Well, if you take grace and this other word that comes out in the verse, it is like the flip side of the same coin. On one side there is grace. On the other side there is mercy. Who is the giver of this grace? He is a merciful God.

Now, what in the world does the word "mercy" mean? We know what grace is. It is what God does to, in, for and through a man, that

a man could never deserve. It absolutely has to do with a man's sin. Look at the state man was in. He was dead in his trespasses and sins. So therefore, grace dealt with that sin. Do you know what mercy is? It is the word eleos. It refers to God's compassion. Oh folks, God cares about Wayne. He cares about you. It's the compassion of God.

There is a word that we use all the time. We say, "The Lord Jesus Christ." Do you realize that word "Lord," kurios, in their culture was never used of a person that they didn't already know had compassion and concern for them. There was another word that was used for those kinds of lords. That word is despotes. He was somebody who was a master, yes, ruler, yes, but he could have cared less about the people he ruled over. The word kurios, had built in it the fact that He was a compassionate caring concerned Lord. That's the word we apply to our Lord Jesus Christ. Grace is what deals with our sin. Mercy is what deals with the consequence of our sin.

I want to tell you that mercy was displayed at the same time God's grace was displayed. What is the ultimate consequence of being dead in your trespasses, of walking formerly according to the course of the world, of formerly living in the lust of our flesh, all of which is found in verses 1, 2 and 3? It is separation from God. God cared about that ultimate consequence. He is merciful. Therefore, He showed grace by allowing Jesus to come and die for us. He did what nobody else could do. He was willing to pay what nobody else would pay.

But folks, it goes beyond the cross. God cares about the consequences of our sins, even now that we are believers. He is a merciful, merciful God. He is interested in the consequences of our sin.

As a matter of fact, if you will look at verse 4 it says He is rich in mercy.

"But God, being **rich in mercy**, because of His great love with which He loved us"

I love that. "**Rich**" there is the word plousios. It means "abundance of wealth." In other words, if you want to talk about riches, you go to God. The first thing you'll find is that He is rich in mercy. Our God abounds with mercy.

Why is He so merciful? Why does He want to show mercy to you and me? Why does He care about the consequences of the stupid choices that you and I have made? Well, go on in the verse.

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us."

Paul is showing us that God has already proven that He loves us. Out of His love, He shows mercy to us. He uses a phrase here that points us back to the cross. He uses the aorist tense and talks about something that has already happened. He said,

"...with which He loved us,..."

If you ever find somebody that questions the love of God, the character of God, quickly take them to the Word of God because they evidently are denying something that has already taken place. The very fact that Jesus came and died shows how much He loves us.

"We love Him because He first loved us." (1John 4:19)

It points back to the manifestation of His love.

Yes, He loves us. How do we know that? Jesus came and died for us. It's out of that great love that He has here that His mercy flows. Why does He show mercy? Because He loves us. Oh, I'm so glad that I'm not God, aren't you? There are two absolutes. One is there is a God, and two is, you are not Him and neither am I. I am glad of that. There's no man who would be merciful like that. Oh no. We live in a world where everybody has to fight for what their rights are. That is not true with God. He loves us. He shows us His grace, and He shows us His mercy.

Go back and read verses 1, 2 and 3 and think about all the consequences of sin that He is dealing with there. He says, "But God, being rich in mercy,..." God loves you. If you are turning to people to find it, you will not find it there. You have to go to Him. You can't come to church and find it. You go to Jesus and find it. We've been saying this for 12 years. I don't know what else to say. You are not going to find it in an organization. You are not going to find it in a person. It is the Lord Jesus. We've got to come to Him.

Maybe you are a believer and somehow have forgotten what it was like to be lost. You've gone back into that old sin. God still loves you, and God's grace can still meet you. God's mercy will help you bear up under the consequences of the wrong choices in your life. Our God, is an awesome God. He's a God of mercy, and He's a God of grace. We will look at the greatness of grace what it does for us in our next study. When you think of grace, don't ever think that doesn't involve mercy. It's the other side of the same

coin. On one side is the sin. On the other side is the consequence of the sin.

"But God, is rich in mercy,..."

"But God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, He died for us."

[Return to TOP of page](#)

Ephesians 2:4-6: THE MARVELOUS GRACE OF OUR LOVING LORD—PART 2

by Dr. Wayne Barber

[Return to TOP of page](#)

Would you turn with me to Ephesians Chapter 2 as we continue in our study on "The marvelous grace of our loving Lord." Verse 8 is one of the key verses of all of Chapter 2. If you will look there again, let's read that and understand afresh a little what he is saying:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

It's wonderful to me to see how God has worked salvation. If a man goes to hell, he can never blame God, but if a man goes to heaven and is saved, he can never pat himself on the back. God has orchestrated it in such a way that it is just absolutely magnificent. "It is by grace that we are saved through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast." Grace is what only God can do to a man, for a man, in a man and through a man that a man could never deserve on this earth, and certainly could never do himself.

Let's go back and read verses 1, 2 and 3:

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 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."

That's the backdrop. The apostle Paul is showing the Ephesian believers where they had come from. He shows that awful, awful mire of sin.

Verses 4-10 gives us the most beautiful picture of the grace of God. It's always up against the backdrop of the blackness of man's sin. We looked at the giver of grace in our last study. We discovered some wonderful things about Him. It says in Verse 4,

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,..."

He's **full of love**, and because He's full of love, He's **full of mercy**. Now remember, **grace** and **mercy** are two sides of the same coin. Grace deals with the sin. **Mercy** deals with the consequences of our sin. It says He is rich in mercy. **Mercy** always is that wonderful thing that we are so desperate for. Yes, we can be forgiven, but oh, the consequences to what we have chosen. We used to have a sign in front of the church that read,

"You are free to choose whatever you want to choose,

but you are not free to choose it's consequences."

Those consequences are what are so difficult. The main consequence of verses 1, 2 and 3 is that we were separated from God. God, being rich in mercy, sent Jesus to this earth to die for our sins, to help us to bear up under and to bring us out of the mire of that consequence. God cares about you and about me. He is full of mercy. He is rich in mercy. Why is He? Because He loves us, He died on a cross to prove His love for all of us.

So much then for the giver of grace. Let's look at the quickening of grace. Look at verse 5:

"...even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)."

Now think about the quickening power of that grace. Grace, being what God alone can do to a man, in a man, for a man and through a man, made us alive together with Christ. Paul says we were in a state of deadness when God's grace intervened. He says, "we were dead in our transgressions." The tense there when it says "we were dead" is present active. Literally it would be, "we were existing as dead people." We looked at that in verses 1, 2 and 3, and now we see it again in verse 5. Now to make sure you understand that, let's go over it again. Man's spiritual life was lost when Adam sinned. A man without Christ has no spiritual life whatsoever. Yes, he has a spirit, but God's Spirit is no longer in his spirit. He cannot know God, communicate with God, or understand anything about God. His spiritual life was lost when Adam sinned. Man's soul, at the same time, was immediately disengaged from the wisdom and the knowledge of God when Adam sinned. Man could no longer understand God, comprehend God or know God's will. Man's body began to decay when Adam sinned. Now this is the state of deadness that men were in. While

we were existing as dead people, in the state of being dead, through His grace, God did what no one else could ever do: He made us alive together with Christ.

When a person receives Jesus Christ, at the very moment of receiving Christ, he is immediately made alive in Christ. That spiritual life comes back within him. Let's look at the text a minute. The Greek word for "made alive" is *szuopoieo*. It comes from two Greek words, sun, which means "together with" and *zoopoieo*, which "means to make alive or to quicken." It's an aorist indicative active which means at a certain point in time. In other words, the very moment I bowed down and received Jesus into my life, immediately I was made alive with Christ. You see, God has given me back that spiritual life. What does it mean to be made alive together with Christ? Jesus rose from the dead, completely and wholly arose from the dead. Jesus now has given us as complete a resurrection from a life of sin to a life of righteousness as His body had being raised from the dead.

When we believe, immediately the first thing that had disappeared in the garden is regained: spiritual life comes back within. That's part of that resurrection. That's part of that newness of life that we are talking about. 1 John 5:12 says that he who has the Son has the life. The life comes back in. If you have never received Christ, you don't understand God, you can't communicate with God, your prayers go unanswered. When you do receive Christ, then the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, comes in and that life returns. You are raised to walk in newness of life. It's a brand new day when a person becomes a

believer. It's a resurrection of spiritual life.

Immediately something else happens. Somehow we now can understand the things of God. Why? Because the Spirit who is that life, now brings with Him the ability that we need to understand spiritual truth. It doesn't happen overnight. There is a progression. This is what sanctification is all about. I've got to make some choices. I've got to get in the Book. I've got to know Him by obeying Him. All of this progressively begins to happen, but there's been a resurrection. There's been a newness of life. Now I can understand the deep things of God.

1Cor 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God,

1 Corinthians 2 says we didn't receive the spirit of the world, but the spirit is from God who teaches us the deep things and searches the deep things of God. That's why Romans 12:2 says that we ought to renew our minds.

Romans 12: And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Rip out the old way of thinking and put in the new way of thinking. There has been a resurrection not only to spiritual life, but now the ability to comprehend His wisdom, His will, and His Word.

One day, the third thing that was effected in the garden when Adam sinned will be restored: our bodies will resurrect one day. When we die, we put our bodies in the ground. Why do we do that? Well, it's like planting a body. When you plant it, what do you expect it to do? You expect it to come up one of these days. We know what is going to happen to that body. When we are saved, a newness of life comes in, and one day everything that was lost in the garden will be restored. It's a resurrection of a brand new life that God has given to us.

1 Corinthians 15 documents that it will take place. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 tell us when it is going to take place, at the Rapture of the Church. That final thing that needs to be restored is going to be given back to us, a glorified body. In the same progression that it was lost, it will come back. We have been raised up with Christ Jesus. We have been made alive with Him. Oh, the quickening power of the grace of God. He's not just the giver of grace but He's also the quickener of grace.

Look at that little last phrase there in verse 5:

"by grace you have [already] been saved."

It was God's grace that reached down and saved us. It was what He could do, not what man could do. The word "saved" means "delivered out of, to be rescued." It comes from the word *sozo*. The perfect tense is used there. When the perfect tense is used it describes the state that something now is permanently in. We were in a permanent state of what? Being dead in our trespasses and in our sins. Because of the grace of God we have been rescued out and made alive with Christ Jesus. What God makes alive, He keeps alive. It is in the passive voice. It is not up to us. It's up to Him.

If you've been saved, you've been born from above, made alive in Christ and made inseparable from the mysterious union that man now has with Him. That's the quickening of grace. Oh, the marvelous grace of our loving Lord. He's the giver of grace. He's full of compassion. He's full of mercy. How do we know that? Jesus came and died. Why? To effect a brand new way of living for you and

me. I once was dead, but now I am alive with Christ Jesus. We are not the same anymore.

You know caterpillars are not really fun to look at, are they? That caterpillar secretes a little fluid inside of its own body and makes a cocoon that he wraps around himself. He loses all of his identity. You wouldn't know it was a caterpillar with that cocoon wrapped around him. Then one day, something happens. That cocoon begins to break open, and you wouldn't recognize that little caterpillar. He is a brand new creature. We call that metamorphosis.

That's the word "transform" in Romans 12:2 when it says, "Be ye transformed," that means "be ye *metamorphosized*." "Be ye being changed and transformed in your life." That's what happens to us. When you are a believer, you are no longer the same. You've been made alive with Christ. Just as the order in the garden was lost, now it is going to be regained. The final thing will be the glorification of our body.

First of all we saw the giver of grace. Then we saw the quickening of grace. Now thirdly the identification of grace. Verse 6 is the toughest verse I've dealt with in a long time. What do I mean by the identification of grace? Well, there are two words that stress identification. One is the word "with," and the other one is "in."

Look in Verse 6:

"and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus."

The word, "with" and the word "in" are identification words. I'm in Him. Somehow, we are identified mysteriously together. We are one together. Not only did God make us alive with Christ, but He raised us up and seated us with Christ in the heavenlies.

We've been raised up and seated with Christ Jesus in the heavenly places. I think in order to believe it, we've got to better understand it. Look back in 1:20. Look where Jesus is seated:

"which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places."

He is seated by the Father in the heavenlies. Now I am in Him so, therefore, I am seated with Him in the heavenlies at the right hand of the Father.

Maybe somehow this is what was on Paul's mind when he wrote Romans 8:37. Here's Paul, talking about always being a conqueror:

"But in all these things [speaking of persecution] we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us."

He is saying we are always conquerors in Jesus Christ. Now wait a minute. We know that Christians are martyred, we know that Christians die; what does he mean, "we are always conquerors in Christ Jesus"? Could he have on his mind that positionally we are seated in the heavenlies with Christ Jesus?

Look in 2 Corinthians 2:14. He says,

"But thanks be to God, who always lead us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place."

We saw in Ephesians 1 that Christ is far above all rule and dominion and powers and every name that's ever been named. He's seated at the right hand of the Father, and mysteriously, we are seated with Him in the heavenly places.

We are identified in Him and with Him.

Those are identification words. Paul was in a Roman prison when he wrote Ephesians, and yet there's no smell of a prison in Ephesians. There is no clank of prison chains to be heard. Why? Because Paul is not bound in his spirit. He is only bound in his body. Where is his spirit? Well, technically and positionally, it is seated in Christ in the heavenly places. He is identified completely and wholly in Jesus. He claims not to be a prisoner of Rome in Ephesians. He says, "I am a prisoner of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul knows that he is in Christ and seated with Christ. Therefore, he can go through anything down here on this earth. His spirit is free, though his body is imprisoned.

This is positional truth.

Yes, we are down here, but we are seated in the heavenlies with Christ Jesus. It's finished. It's done. It's over as far as God sees it. We are victorious in Christ, and we are always led in His triumph.

The key to understanding this is in the word "heavenlies." He is saying to those people at Ephesus, "You are at Ephesus but you are in Christ." We are in Chattanooga, but we are in Christ. Yes, we are here, but we are there! That's hard to grab hold of. The word

"heavenlies" there refers to the things that pertain to or that are in heaven. Now we've got to realize that we are not of this world. Paul has already shown us this in the same book. Ephesians 1:3 says,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

In other words, they are not material blessings. This is something much greater than that. They are the spiritual blessings of God. So another way of saying we are seated in the heavenlies is to say we are no longer of this world. We are in it, but we are not of it. We are of a different world. We do not live as if we are still dead in our trespasses and our sins. We don't walk according to the course of this world any more.

Our position is now in Christ.

What did it used to be? It used to be that we belonged to the world. If you know somebody that is lost that doesn't know Jesus, they totally belong to the world and the devil until they come to receive Christ in their life. That is the only moment they will know freedom from the domination of their flesh and from the domination of Satan using their lives.

I want you to see one more thing. In 2:6 it says,

"...and seated us with Him in the heavenly places."

He seated us. You know, that depicts rest. We can rest, folks, because we are in Him and we are with Him. In Him we find and have our victory. We triumph in Him. Whatever happens to us down here can't affect what's going on in that inner man and in that position that we have spiritually with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you learned to rest in the conqueror who is far above all principalities and powers. I thought I had, but something will pop up, and immediately I get under it, and I forget. All I have to do is listen to Him. He is the One who has already conquered. If I'll just surrender to Him, I can rest in the fact that He's far above all principalities and all power.

Nothing can come against you or against me that He cannot handle. He is far above. We are seated with Him. Don't ever get the idea you can do anything. It is what He does in accordance to our willingness to surrender to Him.

That's why it says in Ephesians 5,

"Be filled with the Spirit."

If that wasn't in there, then we could be arrogant. But no, it says you have to be up under the control of the Holy Spirit of God. As you are, then you walk in victory, and you are always caused to triumph. He, has seated us with Him in the heavenlies.

[Return to TOP of page](#)