

How's Your Memory?

Ephesians 2:11-13 Sunday AM, June 25, 2023

Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-13

(NASB95) 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. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. ¹¹ Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands— ¹² remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Praise God for these believers in Ephesus! In order for you to truly praise God, you must see something praiseworthy—here's the back story. Life lived out from under Christ's authority, lived 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—this is a life shrunk to size of the lusts of our flesh, where we live indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, focused on protecting ourselves and our personal happiness. This is not merely a pattern of living, it is our nature, leaving us children of wrath—objects of the wrath of God. Why? Because according to the only reality that matters, it is DEAD living, full of stench and decay, separating us from the living God. In the face of all this, we heard two wonderful words—But God! And following those words came an amazing description of the character of God as He acted on behalf of these objects of wrath. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Why? ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. God gives to make salvation possible, ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; no as a result of works, so that no one may boast. God also gives to cause us to trust His words and live inside them. We are His workmanship—His poem, sculpture, created for good works—existing through life in Christ to carry out the works God prepared beforehand for us to do. This is what God did for these Ephesian believers! Do you care about them? YES, it can be for you too, but to be saved is to increasingly be freed from only praising what benefits you! Only God's grace can save us in a way that frees us from living for our desires, freeing us to see more of what He is doing in the world and joining Him in that work! Praise His power and His love to bring it all to pass in THEIR lives AND then in yours and mine! The attention is all on our Great King!

*Hymn #228: Rejoice, the Lord is King

Are you okay if THEY seem to get what you desire easier than you? I'm not just talking about a new car or good health, but I'm talking about security, peace, and contentment? Are you okay when those who started “without” seem to pass you who started “with”? Do you feel you deserve something from God or others that you are not getting? Respect, a listening ear, common courtesy? Be careful. It is easy to say we are undeserving sinners, and then not do well when the Gentiles are included—even seeming to get what belonged exclusively to the Jews. ¹¹ Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands— ¹² remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus. Christ is the ONLY thing separating both Jew and Gentile from not belonging. Your security as a Jew OR Gentile comes from releasing all other identities than Christ alone. Get this straight, or you are still trusting in yourself, not Christ.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): Not What My Hands Have Done *Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: Crucified with Christ Scripture:

Jonah 3:1–4:11

(NASB95) Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, ² “Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you.” ³ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days' walk. ⁴ Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, “Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” ⁵ Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. ⁶ When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes. ⁷ He issued a proclamation and it said, “In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. ⁸ “But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. ⁹ “Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish.” ¹⁰ When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it. ¹¹ But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry. ² He prayed to the LORD and said, “Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. ³ “Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life.” ⁴ The LORD said, “Do you have good reason to be angry?” ⁵ Then Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city. ⁶ So the LORD God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant. ⁷ But God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day and it attacked the plant and it withered. ⁸ When the sun came up God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with all his soul to die, saying, “Death is better to me than life.” ⁹ Then God said to Jonah, “Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?” And he said, “I have good reason to be angry, even to death.” ¹⁰ Then the LORD said, “You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight. ¹¹ “Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?”

Offering: *Doxology: ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Were you, are you “far off”? Then you can come the way God provided—through Christ Jesus. God has always had a way back to Him. Jonah knew that and some of the Ninevites gladly accepted that way back, repenting and worshipping. Jonah, you are God's prophet—shouldn't knowing God make YOU worship? Apathy or resentment shows that either you don't know Him rightly OR you see your own standing with God through a different lens than God. Remember the words from *God's Own Fool?* To live under an all-wise God, you must at times “surrender the hunger to say you must know have the courage to say I believe for the power of paradox opens your eyes and blinds those who say they can see.” Brought near by the blood of Christ. Why blood? It's that serious. Only Christ's blood. You live by and through Him—it is the goodness, the mercy of God, not the wisdom of your choice. Paul pushes the sore spot of being an excluded Gentile because it no longer needed to be a sore spot. They have a new identity—in Christ. Do you?

***Hymn #474 (Red): Only a Sinner You may be seated.** How does this live? Thank-you choir and those making it possible for another season of leading us in worship. We LIVE, crucified with Christ—we no longer live, but Christ lives in us—we live by faith in the Son of God. This means He is your life—HE leads you in the paths you should walk—not “safe” ones according to you, not the ones you dream, but the ones He dreams. Lest you think this is not safe or good, remember who He is. Learn another new song with me. Our God Will Go Before Us. Walk under and with Him, and you will see that His presence and word are more than enough to make these paths good. He is our God. Remember this as Pastor Jahn prepares to preach on our true position apart from Christ.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): Our God Will Go Before Us

Message: “How's Your Memory?” Ephesians 2:11-13 *Hymn #522: He Lifted Me *Prayer