

How Dead Were You?

Ephesians 2:1-3 Sunday AM, June 4, 2023

Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 1:15-2:3 (NASB95) ¹⁵For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might ²⁰which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. ¹And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ²in 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. ³Among 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.

Overwhelmed with God’s gracious goodness, Paul offers a prayer of thanksgiving to God for these saints at Ephesus. I praise and thank-you God for your great and gracious mercies toward these believers. Help them see more of these blessings so they will be faithful to Your purpose for calling them. Help them not only see this purpose clearly, but upon seeing the human impossibility of faithfulness to that plan, help them see “the surpassing greatness of [God’s] power toward [those] who believe.” What kind of power? The kind that is in “accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.” The raise from the dead part looms large for us, but how about God becoming man--What does that mean? Not mean? The holy came in contact with the profane—how could He still be holy to once again sit and rule with the Father in heaven? But Paul does not stop with these seeming impossibilities, but continues to the present rule of Christ, who reigns ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. If the believers in Ephesus live this prayer, where will they focus? On Christ—His leadership, His word, His power to bring about that word because He is not only powerful, but He is God. Christian, worship the One whose word is above all earthly powers.

*Hymn #26: A Mighty Fortress is Our God

It is VERY important that you keep the power of God’s Word to give His Spirit and these gifts right in the front of your mind, because today, we focus on something we too often wrongly see as more powerful—desires finding their fulfillment outside of God. We are too comfortable with the lusts and desires of our flesh, our mind, and it is NOT OKAY. Our passage says those who walk here, those who indulge these desires are by nature children of wrath. Note the seriousness of our passage. The church consists of those tied to Christ through rebirth. They are indwelt by the Spirit of God, and as such, do NOT have the option of walking/living according to these desires—you FORMERLY walked, you FORMERLY lived—you have promised to follow Jesus. If you find yourself wavering in that promise or feeling overwhelmed or defeated, realign yourself with Christ as you sing this song showing the preciousness of relationship with Christ in the face of the sights that dazzle.

*Hymn #369: O Jesus, I Have Promised *Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: Thou O Lord Scripture: Ezekiel 16:1-43, 60-63

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: ²“Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations” and say, ³“Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem, “Your origin and your birth are from the land of the Canaanite, your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. ⁴“As for your birth, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water for cleansing; you were not rubbed with salt or even wrapped in cloths. ⁵“No eye looked with pity on you to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you. Rather you were thrown out into the open field, for you were abhorred on the day you were born. ⁶“When I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you *while you were* in your blood, ‘Live!’ Yes, I said to you *while you were* in your blood, ‘Live!’ ⁷“I made you numerous like plants of the field. Then you grew up, became tall and reached the age for fine ornaments; your breasts were formed and your hair had grown. Yet you were naked and bare. ⁸“Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine.” declares the Lord GOD. ⁹“Then I bathed you with water, washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil. ¹⁰“I also clothed you with embroidered cloth and put sandals of porpoise skin on your feet; and I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk. ¹¹“I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your hands and a necklace around your neck. ¹²“I also put a ring in your nostril, earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. ¹³“Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your dress was of fine linen, silk and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour, honey and oil; so you were exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty. ¹⁴“Then your fame went forth among the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of My splendor which I bestowed on you,” declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁵“But you trusted in your beauty and played the harlot because of your fame, and you poured out your harlotries on every passer-by who might be willing. ¹⁶“You took some of your clothes, made for yourself high places of various colors and played the harlot on them, which should never come about nor happen. ¹⁷“You also took your beautiful jewels made of My gold and of My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images that you might play the harlot with them. ¹⁸“Then you took your embroidered cloth and covered them, and offered My oil and My incense before them. ¹⁹“Also My bread which I gave you, fine flour, oil and honey with which I fed you, you would offer before them for a soothing aroma; so it happened.” declares the Lord GOD. ²⁰“Moreover, you took your sons and daughters whom you had borne to Me and sacrificed them to idols to be devoured. Were your harlotries so small a matter? ²¹“You slaughtered My children and offered them up to idols by causing them to pass through the fire. ²²“Besides all your abominations and harlotries you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare and squirming in your blood. ²³“Then it came about after all your wickedness (‘Woe, woe to you!’ declares the Lord GOD), ²⁴that you built yourself a shrine and made yourself a high place in every square. ²⁵“You built yourself a high place at the top of every street and made your beauty abominable, and you spread your legs to multiply your harlotry. ²⁶“You also played the harlot with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, and multiplied your harlotry to make Me angry. ²⁷“Behold now, I have stretched out My hand against you and diminished your rations. And I delivered you up to the desire of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, who are ashamed of your lewd conduct. ²⁸“Moreover, you played the harlot with the Assyrians because you were not satisfied; you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. ²⁹“You also multiplied your harlotry with the land of merchants, Chaldea, yet even with this you were not satisfied.” ³⁰“How languishing is your heart,” declares the Lord GOD, “while you do all these things, the actions of a bold-faced harlot. ³¹“When you built your shrine at the beginning of every street and made your high place in every square, in disdainful money, you were not like a harlot. ³²“You adulteress wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband! ³³“Men give gifts to all harlots, but you give your gifts to all your lovers to bribe them to come to you from every direction for your harlotries. ³⁴“Thus you are different from those women in your harlotries, in that no one plays the harlot as you do, because you give money and no money is given you; thus you are different.” ³⁵Therefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD. ³⁶Thus says the Lord GOD, “Because your lewdness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered through your harlotries with your lovers and with all your detestable idols, and because of the blood of your sons which you gave to idols, ³⁷therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, even all those whom you loved and all those whom you hated. So I will gather them against you from every direction and expose your nakedness to them that they may see all your nakedness. ³⁸“Thus I will judge you like women who commit adultery or shed blood are judged; and I will bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy. ³⁹“I will also give you into the hands of your lovers, and they will tear down your shrines, demolish your high places, strip you of your clothing, take away your jewels, and will leave you naked and bare. ⁴⁰“They will incite a crowd against you and they will stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords. ⁴¹“They will burn your houses with fire and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women. Then I will stop you from playing the harlot, and you will also no longer pay your lovers. ⁴²“So I will calm My fury against you and My jealousy will depart from you, and I will be pacified and angry no more. ⁴³“Because you have not remembered the days of your youth but have enraged Me by all these things, behold, I in turn will bring your conduct down on your own head,” declares the Lord GOD, “so that you will not commit this lewdness on top of all your other abominations. ⁴⁴“Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. ⁴⁵“Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters, both your older and your younger; and I will give them to you as daughters, but not because of your covenant. ⁴⁶“Thus I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD, ⁴⁷so that you may remember and be ashamed and never open your mouth anymore because of your humiliation, when I have forgiven you for all that you have done,” the Lord GOD declares.

Offering: *Doxology: In our passage, fleshly desires loom large as does the prince of the power of the air, the spirit working in the sons of disobedience. Were you comfortable with the Scripture reading? It was graphic--from helpless baby to disobedient adult—And what made their disobedient actions so dirty, so abominable? The kindness and care of God. As pastor preaches, don’t let the power of sin keep you from seeing the purity and power of the love of God to reach into the filth of your defiance and rebellion to call you to Himself. Pastor will preach this in the weeks to come in the verses immediately following our passage. Your hope comes NOT from your righteous living nor from your logical mind, but from God alone. This song is a testimony of those who have seen the priceless treasure in the work of Christ. I pray this is your testimony, but if struggling with this, look around and be encouraged—there are many in here who not only know these words, but who LIVE them from the bottom of their heart.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): All I Have is Christ Message: Power: Defined and Delivered Ephesians 1:19-23

***Hymn #522: He Lifted Me Welcome of New Members** Where do you get your identity? The only identity that matters is not your ethnicity, your financial status, your job past or present, your family—it’s your relationship with God. Are you part of His people? This is the privileged identity we affirmed with these who just joined us here this morning. It is the only identity stronger than the spirits of darkness our song sings about.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): People of God *Prayer