

Ephesians

You were dead...**but God!**

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11

Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you?
...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why?**
- Pastor Doug noted that every human being is born in a state of **spiritual** deadness. Think about your own experience in the presence of death—either of a family member or beloved pet. In what ways is spiritual death **similar**? In what ways is a spiritually dead person **unlike** that.

- Let's explore some of the other descriptions the Bible gives to those who are spiritually dead:

"ensnared" or **"captured"** (2 Timothy 2:25-26)

"foolish" and **"depraved"** (Romans 1:22-28)

"hostile" and **"opposed"** to God (Romans 5:10 and 8:7; Colossians 1:21)

We have a saying, "*Where there's life, there's hope.*" If God doesn't give us life, we're _____.

- We all **know** that we've sinned but often think that we can "do better" moving forward. According to Galatians 5:3 and James 2:10, why won't that work?
- Pastor Doug pointed out the glorious phrase in Ephesians 2:4 which serves as a hinge: "But God..." and urged us to look up some of the other occurrences of those words. What do you learn in:

Genesis 50:20

1 Samuel 23:14 and Philippians 2:27

1 Corinthians 1:26–31

Luke 16:15

Sermon Summary

Last week we saw that Paul prayed that we would live in the spiritual blessings which are ours through union with Christ. Now Paul explains who we are by nature. It is not encouraging. Only after understanding our true spiritual condition apart from Christ does Paul show what we can become by God's grace. All of us are born into this world physically alive, but spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1-3). We are dead in trespasses (false steps—either the crossing of a known boundary or a deviation from God's moral path) and sins (missing the mark of God's required standard). Together these words cover the active and passive aspects of human wrongdoing; our sins of commission and our sins of omission. We're not talking about the occasional misstep. This is human identity. We are both rebels and failures. We lived in rebellion (1) according to the course of this world, (2) according to the prince of the power of the air, (3) of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Prior to salvation we walked in step with the "world"—the system organized, headed and run by Satan, God's rival. The world literally is a "cosmos diabolicus". If we love this satanic world system, then the love of God is not in us (1 John 2:15-16); we walked according to the course of this evil world system, "according to the prince of the power of the air." We not only engaged in an evil, anti-God lifestyle; we may not have been unaware of it but we followed Satan himself! We also followed the passions of our flesh. This is true of every unsaved person. Our rebellion was both of the flesh and of the mind. We were subject to evil influences both from within and from without. Outside was the world—the anti-God systems in which we live. Inside we have the flesh—our fallen human nature. We were subjects of Satan. The world, the flesh and the devil—our threefold enemy. We willingly were "sons and daughters of disobedience". But it gets worse: we were rightly under God's wrath (Romans 1:18; 2:5-6). Without Christ we are dead (v. 1), disobedient (v. 2-3a), depraved (v. 3b), and doomed (v. 3c). Apart from Christ, every human being is already judged guilty by God and under his wrath (John 3:18). Our predicament could not have been more dire.

Then come two of the most beautiful words in Scripture: "But God!" Had Paul not taken the time to describe our depravity and destitution before God, these words wouldn't have the impact they do. Just when our situation seemed hopeless, God provided a remedy! We were dead in our transgressions, but God made us alive together with Christ. (That's why Paul prayed that we would understand and enter into all the wealth that God has put at our disposal by virtue of our spiritual union with Christ. 1:18–21). And how God did this is affirmed twice (v. 5 and 8): by grace. God's gracious salvation manifests itself in three ways: God (1) made us alive together with Christ, (2) he raised us up with Christ, and (3) God seated us with Christ (2:5-6). These verbs ('made alive', 'raised' and 'seated') refer to the three successive historical events in the saving career of Jesus, and as we recite the Apostles Creed we declare our belief in these historic realities which Paul says also apply to us! I don't understand all this, but it's true of us because of Jesus' victory on the cross. By nature we were sinners, spiritually dead and under God's wrath, but in Christ, by grace, we are alive and enthroned!

And all of this is by grace, through faith, and not by works (2:8–9; cf. Galatians 2:16). Although we are not saved by our good works, we are saved to do good works (2:10). We were created—we might say "re-created"—in Christ Jesus for good works. That is our purpose. We are God's workmanship—in the Greek, literally God's poem—created for good works. (As we'll see in a few weeks, the good works that God, in eternity past, prepared for us to do are described in chapters 4-6.) But for now, why has God lavished His love on us undeserving sinners? In order to demonstrate the riches of His grace (v. 7). Had there been no sin, and sinners deserving of hell, God's great mercy and grace would never have been displayed. But by it, God is glorified!

Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time

***Is it possible that salvation is the greatest miracle that you could ever experience?
Let's explore what the Bible says about our "great salvation"...***

Monday What is humanity's situation—**your** situation—apart from Christ?

- Romans 2:1-8
- Romans 3:9-18
- Romans 9:16-22
- Revelation 20:11–15

Tuesday How likely are you—**or anyone**—to be able to solve our sin problem on our own?

- Matthew 5:48 and 1 Peter 1:14–16
- Matthew 7:17–23
- Matthew 19:25–26
- Psalm 24:1-4

Wednesday What was required in order to remove God's wrath against us?

- Isaiah 53:3-12
- Mark 14:32-36 and Luke 22:44
- John 18:14-16
- Matthew 27:39-44

Thursday What is the "New Covenant", who accomplished it, and what does it do in us?

- Luke 22:14–20
- Hebrews 12:18–24
- Jeremiah 31:31-34
- Ezekiel 11:19-20 and 36:22-32

Friday If I am "in Christ", what has happened to me?

- 2 Corinthians 5:17–21
- Romans 5:1-11
- Romans 6:3–8
- Colossians 1:9-14; 2:6-14; and 3:1-4, 12-17

Saturday What awaits us? How certain is our glorious future?

- Job 19:25-26 and Isaiah 26:19
- John 14:1-6
- 1 Corinthians 15:17-28, 50-58
- Revelation 21-22