

He Made Us Alive

Ephesians 2:1-7

6/30/02

Intro

- All church picnic today.
- Vacation Bible school this week.

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Last week, we read of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians. He wanted to them to know of the surpassing greatness of the power of God for them, he wanted the eyes of their hearts to be opened.

Now, in these verses, Paul wants them to know and to be certain of who they are. He begins by telling us about the human condition. Frankly, he paints a rather ugly and hopeless picture.

Any counselor will tell you that one of the root problems of the human condition is the problem of identity, we have an identity crisis.

But then, Paul contrasts the human condition against that which God has done for us in Christ Jesus. All of that is summarized in one glorious truth; He made us alive in Christ Jesus.

I. We were dead in our trespasses and sins.

We must begin with this stark truth. It's only when we come to realize this dark truth that there is the possibility of finding the way to life. Jesus said, *those that think they are well do not desire healing.*"

What does it mean to be dead? It means to be separated from God. We've all "missed the mark" and the result is death; a life without God now and in the age to come. The mark of death is everywhere around us.

Paul says we are dead in our trespasses and sins. To trespass is to walk where you're not supposed to walk. To sin is to miss the mark. It's all in contrast to God. Without God, there is no sin. But in contrast to a holy God, that's where our deadness is seen most.

Paul gives a three-fold explanation of this.

Vs 2 A. We have walked according to the course of this world.

- Literally, this means, "According to the day in which we live."
- There is a great pressure to conform to the world.

Illus- This is why fashions and styles have such power over us. We want to be like everyone else, we feel the pressure to go with the flow.

That's why there were no hippies with crew cuts. They rejected a world where everyone conformed. But in the world of hippies, everyone must conform.

- The same is true with our attitudes.

Illus- If you tried to be like a rock in the middle of the river, you would feel the great pressure of the river against you. Maybe the best place to be a rock is not in the middle of the river. Jesus said, "Come out and be separate."

B. We have also walked by another influence, the prince and the power of the air.

- Paul is saying that one of the great influences of our lives has been the prince of darkness.
- The same spirit that is working in the sons of disobedience. There is a disobedient spirit at work in men.

- What Paul is saying is that Satan is a great influence in the direction and course of this world and has influenced us as well.

C. Thirdly, we all lived in the lusts of the flesh.

- Literally, this means, the passions of the flesh.

Illus- Jesus used the same word when He said to the disciples, “With great desire I have desired to eat this supper with you.”

- This is broken into two parts – The passions of the flesh and the passions of the mind.
 1. The passions of the flesh are the desires of the body, but these desires become masters over us. Eating, sleeping, sex, etc. are desires that can master us.
 2. The passions of the mind are the attitudes of the mind that can also master us. For example, anger, hurt, bitterness, revenge, can all master us.

II. But God... made us alive.

Vs 4

- A. When did God first start loving us?.
- When we became lovable??
 - We were loved while we were dead.
 - In fact, we can go so far as to say that we were loved from eternity past. There has never been a time when we were not loved.

B. He made us alive WITH Christ Jesus.

- There is no work that we can do to make ourselves alive. We don't have to slay the 7 headed dragon, or...

Illus – at our newcomers fellowship we learned from Sam who is from Sudan, that in order to be qualified to get a wife, a man must first kill a lion...with a club.

- Being made alive means that we are no longer dead to God. In the world, people are afraid of God, but that changes in Christ. Now He is Father, with a Father's heart and love.
- We're alive because we are in Christ. Jesus said that we should ABIDE in Him.

Illus – Like a hand finds its life from the body.

III. We are also raised up and seated with Him.

- A. To be raised up with Him is to live now by a new power in our lives.

Illus – Jesus didn't remain in the grave holding counseling sessions with anyone that come to Him, He lived again, but in the power of the resurrection.

- In this new power we can love the unlovable, endure the unendurable, and forgive the unforgivable.

Illus – In the days after Sept 11, the world was amazed at the mature, gracious response of America, I believe that was because of the influence of the church. We prayed, we worshipped, and we drew nearer to God.

B. And we are seated with Him in the heavenly places.

- What does it mean to sit down? It means to end the striving.
- We need to stop thinking that we can anything in the flesh. We need to learn what it means to rest in Him.

Illus- I remember reading in a book of Chuck Smith's where he said how important it is that we not organize the church too much. Let the Holy Spirit lead.

Conclusion

Notice that these things are stated in the past tense. It is already done. What we need is to learn to walk in these truths.