**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**From Death to Life**

Ephesians 2:1-7

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 We are in our series, Brought to Life; Brought Together, from the New Testament letter Ephesians, looking at chapter two today so if you have your bibles, turn to Ephesians 2:1-7. Paul continues the theme of God’s initiative in salvation. He does by painting a bleak picture of the human condition, dead in sin, (1-3) against the stark contrast, God made us alive (4-7). He wants us to understand our bleak condition so that we can understand the see the greatness of the miracle of God making dead people alive. It is like looking at a diamond at jewelry store. The jeweler lays out a black velvet cloth on the counter to display a diamond. It is only against the black backdrop that the clarity, the brilliance, and the beauty of the diamond shines in the light. In the same way the clarity and beauty of the miracle, God making us alive, shines brightly against the bleakness of our spiritual condition.

Big Idea: God makes dead people alive to enjoy him for eternity.

**We are Dead in Sin (1-3)**

He begins by describing our *spiritual condition,* we were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked (1). Christians or Christ followers were spiritually lifeless, no spark of spiritual life. He compares physical death to spiritual death. When one is physically dead there is no ability to feel or respond to physical stimulus; dead people don’t respond. The bible describes this condition elsewhere as being blind or deaf to spiritual truth (Mat 13:13; 2 Cor 4:4-6) or seeing the gospel as foolish or nonsense (1 Cor 1:18). The source of our spiritual deadness, is in trespasses and sin. We are born sinners and separated from God.

This is how we all once walked or lived swayed by *three corrupting influences*. We were captive to this age, to Satan, and our own sinful desires. First, we were *captive to this age*, following the course (literally age) of this world (2). The bible divides time into this age and the age to come. This age is described as this present evil age (Gal 1:4), corrupted by sin since the fall. The age to come is free from sin, inaugurated by Christ. Because of the work of Christ, the age to come has invaded this age so that we taste or experience the age to come. One day the age to come will swallow up this age and Christ will usher in the New Creation (Rev 21-22). Following this age means that it shapes us, we are at home with its morality and ideologies and narratives. This age sees itself as morally right, progressive, and enlightened and biblical truth as a fairy tale, outdated, and repressive to human good. Secondly, we were *captive to Satan*, following the prince of the power of the air, who is now at work in the sons of disobedience. Satan is a malevolent angelic creature, the prince of the power of the air. Satan’s influence on fallen humanity is as pervasive as the air we breathe, his influence is everywhere as the god of this world (2 Cor 4:4) and he works (see 1:11, 19,20) in fallen humanity who are blind to his influence. They are children of disobedience who knowingly or unknowingly disobey God. It does whether they are religious or not; moral or not. Paul is painting a bleak picture of our spiritual condition, laying out that black velvet cloth for us.

This is how we all once lived in the passions of our flesh (3), our sinful nature,[[1]](#footnote-1) which points to our third corrupting influence, *captive to sinful desires*, carrying out the desires of our flesh and mind. We were just following our natural desires, what we want shaped by how we think. We are captive yet also captivated, enslaved to these influences but all the while thinking we are free because we are doing what we want. Every Christ follower identifies with this description of our lives before Christ.

Then he draws this *conclusion*, you were by nature children of wrath. By our very nature we are under God’s rightful anger against sin (Jn 3:36; Rom 5:12-21). This is the universal human predicament, dead in sin, under God’s wrath, and facing a horrifying eternity. This is the plight of every one of us, if it were not for the first two words in verse four, *But God.* If you do not see the bleakness of your predicament then you will not see and feel the wonder and beauty and power of those two words, which leads me to my second point.

**But God Made us Alive (4-7)**

Paul could have just said, But God made us alive together with Christ and we would have understood him. But he wants us to see that God acted on our behalf because is rich in mercy and because of his great love in which he loved us (4). Mercy is showing pity toward those suffering from being dead in sin. This great love is the motive for making us alive and points us back to God’s love described in the first chapter, in loved God predestined us to adoption (1:5). God making dead people alive illustrates what he said there. Just as our adoption, redemption, and inheritance is the result of God’s initiative, so too is God making us alive. And his prayer that we would know the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe describes this, even when we were dead, God made us alive.

And then, it as though he cannot contain himself, he interrupts his thoughts, by grace you have been saved (5)![[2]](#footnote-2) Grace by its very nature is opposed to human effort, human ability. It is not like Jesus puts his hand over the coffin and you reached out and grabbed it or that he calls you to rise up and some spark within you responds. Dead people don’t respond. It is more like Jesus standing before Lazarus’ grave and calling out, Lazarus come out, and Lazarus, while he was still dead, God made him alive so he responded to Jesus’ words and came out. Your perspective you believed, but from God’s perspective, he made you alive.

Then Paul describes God making us alive as already *perfected in Christ*, he raised us up and seated us with Christ in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (6). What happened to Christ physically, happened to us spiritually. In God’s sight, we are now and eternally positionally perfected in Christ, having been raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenly places until we take possession of our inheritance (1:14). Finally, he gives God’s purpose for making us alive, *to secure our eternal happiness* (7). In eternity God will show off the immeasurable riches of his grace to us by being all that he promises to be for us in Christ. We will be trophies of his grace!

This grace is *endless*, in the coming ages he will show the immeasurable riches of his grace in Christ. His grace will never be exhausted, there is an infinite supply. And this grace will be expressed through his kindness toward us, his tender and loving kindness. At the center of it all will be God; heaven without God would be hell. When the apostle John describes heaven, what he talks about Jesus. Every moment in eternity will be a new experience of his grace towards us in Christ. Our knowledge of God, our relationship with God, and our joy in God will be an ever increasing incrementally, progressively, and incessantly growing experience. It will be like an endlessly increasing tidal water washing over us so that our joy will be ever increasing because our fascination with God will be ever increasing. And Peter tells us to set our hope on this as it is what gives us strength in the present (1 Peter 1:13). God makes dead people alive to enjoy him forever.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. What is the big idea of Ephesians 2:1-7?
2. What are the three corrupting influences on those who are dead in sin?
3. Why is the picture of our being spiritually dead so bleak (vs 1-3)?
4. What does it mean to be children of wrath? How should you respond?
5. How does the bleakness of spiritual death set up the contrast, But God made us alive (vs 4-7)?
6. What does it mean that in the coming ages God will show us the immeasurable riches of his grace in Christ?
7. How is God speaking you through this passage?
8. How does this passage support the command to make disciples
1. Flesh is not always used in the bible in a negative sense. It has a variety of meanings, one of which is in the negative sense as it is here. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. He develops this more thoroughly in vs. 8-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)