

From Death to Walking on Water Ephesians 2:1-10 – Part 3

I wanted to start out this morning asking if you are rooted and grounded in your relationship with Christ. Are you rooted and grounded to the point that no matter what life throws at you, you not only weather the storm but you do it in a way that brings strength to those around you and bring glory to God.

This part of the prayer Paul lifts up for the Christians who are in Ephesus. He prays, **Ephesians 3:16-17, “that God would grant you...to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner person, so that Christ may dwell in your heart through faith; and that you being rooted and grounded in love...”**

Are you rooted and grounded in Christ, in the love He has for you, in the life He has made available for you?

This time of the year is challenging for flower and vegetable lovers isn't it? Trying to cover some flowers but realizing if it gets as cold as they say, covering won't help them.

There are two types of flower we plant. Perennials and annuals. Annuals have to be planted each year. They are not strong enough to survive on their own when the harsh, cold winters come. Perennials on the other hand, have the great God-given capacity to pull their energy back deep back into themselves when the snow flies and the temperatures plummet to below freezing.

God's plan is for His children is to be like the perennials. Blooming in the springs and summers of life but yet because of their inner strength they are able to endure the harsh times of life. They withdraw their energy within themselves, within a relationship with Christ.

David said, “you are my hiding place.” Christians don’t just withdraw from life, withdraw within themselves, they withdraw into their relationship with Christ for He is their life, their vitality.

Let’s continue to our study in Ephesians to see how we can tap into all that strength and vitality that God has for us as His children.

To pick up where we left off last week let’s look at some verses from Ephesians beginning with verses 5-10.

Ephesians 2:5-9, “even when we were dead in our transgressions and sins, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created (or recreated) in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

Last week we saw from these passages that it was God’s great grace, His love for us, that reached down to us, even though we were in a sinful state He not only forgave us, gave us life, but He also...

- 1. God has seated us with Christ in the heavenly places**
- 2. God positioned us so He could show His surpassing riches of His grace in kindness to us**
- 3. God has good works which He prepared for us to walk in**

This morning we want to identify that fact that we are created in Christ Jesus to have strength, to have spiritual vitality, to be able to be involved in the spiritual battle that rages around us. I think most of us would agree that we are in a battle, a spiritual battle against right and wrong, good and evil.

Ephesians 6:12, “For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

We see this battle happening in the world around us, within our families and even within ourselves.

Since we know this to be true, that we are in a battle, then wouldn't it make sense for us to have a battle plan.

Paul, speaking of forgiveness and the trap one can fall into by not forgiving another, he says the following in **2 Corinthians 2:11**, “**So that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are ignorant of his schemes.**”

There are schemes, ways that Satan has learned over time that can keep us under his thumb where we are ineffective as Christians. Ineffective in our pursuit of righteousness or right living according to God, ineffective in our ability to be perfected in love, ineffective in the spiritual battle that wages around us and ineffective in completing the works God has prepared for us to do during our stay here on earth.

I believe for us to fully position ourselves to be effective for Christ there are two things that must occur.

- 1. We must know who we are in Christ.**

This has been the basis of my preaching for many weeks now. Knowing who we are in Christ. Knowing we have been fully forgiven, past present and future sins have been all taken care of by the work of Christ on the cross.

We are now holy and blameless before God. Jesus really did pay it all. And until we come to that conclusion we will be beat up by who Satan tells us who we are or are not. We can become beat up by the world around us and even by the lies we tell ourselves.

If we are not careful we will end up like the guys in this video. Be warned, it is a bit graphic but it makes a strong point.

VIDEO

These are Muslims who, because they deem themselves unworthy of Allah, they whip themselves to a bloody pulp.

Now before you are too hard on these guys I know some Christians tend to beat themselves up too. Not outwardly like these guys but inwardly. They feel unworthy because of their past, because of the lies Satan has told them over time, because of the lies their family, society or even their own flesh has laid on them.

They say things like they you're not good enough, pure enough, worthy enough, too sinful, too messed up plus your still are messing up. And guess what? You are not good enough and you never will be, not by your own works or goodness. It took something much, much more powerful than what you could generate to bring you from life to death, to seat you beside Christ, and to empower you to do the works God has created for you to do. It took the powerful blood of God's own Son.

This morning I want to emphasize this again, Jesus paid it all. And not only this but Jesus paved the way for God to seat you with Jesus in the heavenly places, positioning you so He could pour out even more blessings on you and empower you to do all the good stuff He has for you to do.

I know this is hard for most of us to believe but that is why it says in Ephesians 2:8 we must have faith, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith;**

Faith in the finished work of Christ. Faith in what God says is true.

Our salvation, our position of being seated with Christ is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of things you have done or should be doing, but it is by having faith in the finished work of Christ in your life.

The only way you can fully enter into the fullness of the salvation God has made available to you is to say...

FOR POWERPOINT ONLY...I don't understand it fully but I see what You say God in Your word and so by faith I believe it. I have been raised up with Christ and I am now seated with Him and empowered to do those things You have for me to do.

Say it with me... I don't understand it fully but I see what You say God in Your word and so by faith I believe it. I have been raised up with Christ and I am now seated with Him and empowered to do those things You have for me to do.

This is the starting place of your salvation. This is the foundation upon which everything else is built. Without this, your faith is on shaky ground.

Jesus said in **John 8:33**, **“Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”**

Knowing who you are in Christ, the full forgiveness and the position you now have with Christ in heaven is the first part of truth that will set you free, enabling you to move on with Christ.

The second thing I believe we can do is to...

2. Free yourself from the past, the residue of who you used to be

For this we must move back to the first three verses of Ephesians 2.

Ephesians 2:1-3, “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 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. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desire of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”

One of the ways Satan keeps Christians from being strong, effective and able to weather tough situations and challenges in life and even producing good works in the midst of them is to keep them stuck in the things, the ways of life that, as Paul said and I have underlined, they used to live.

3. Formerly, those who have accepted Christ, lived...

- a. According to the course of this world**
- b. According to the prince of the power of the air**
- c. According to the spirit of disobedience**
- d. According to and indulging in the lusts of our flesh and minds**

I don't want to go into detail on these things. If you want a good explanation of them go on-line and look at the sermon that was entitled Ephesians Part 12. Two weeks ago I covered these things and I emphasized that, as Paul did, that as Christians we did these things in our former life but we no longer do. That was the expectation Paul had of those who had been saved, redeemed, brought back to life by God and seated with Christ in the heavenly places.

Again, I would recommend that you go on-line and read through the sermons from the last two Sundays to get the full context of what is Paul is talking about here. I don't think they are on-line today but I will get with Tracy to make sure they will be soon.

But let's be real. Even though we have been delivered from death, even though we have been given a privileged seat in the throne room of God right beside Jesus, we can still enter into these behaviors can't we?

It is easy for us to indulge in the lust of the flesh and mind, following what the world says is okay. It is easy for us to do this because that is the way of the world, the way things are happening all around us.

But let me share just a couple things that occur and do not occur when a Christian enters into this type of behavior.

4. Christians living out the lusts of the flesh experience...

a. Breakdown of relationship with God.

Before I go any further I want to say that if you have truly accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior your salvation is secure. You have been sealed for salvation by Jesus' blood, by the Holy Spirit and you are set for heaven.

But others and I can testify, as Christians, when we follow the lusts of our flesh, our ability to hear from God, to be empowered by God and to accomplish the things He wants to do during our stay here on earth are severely diminished. The breakdown of relationship happens on our end not in His. He is always right there, willing and able to start up where ever we choose to stop. We cut Him off, He does not ever cut us off.

The second thing we have to deal with if we are Christians and we are following the lusts of the flesh is the guilt.

b. Guilt, one of Satan's strongest tools

David spoke about this in one of his Psalms. If you know the story of David you know that he was not where he was supposed to be and he saw something, he saw Bathsheba taking a bath. This ignited something within him and he did things he never thought he would do. He committed adultery, then he lied about it, he denied it to himself and God, he tried to act like it didn't happen. He tried to cover it up and finally to protect himself and Bathsheba, he pulled his chief commander and his army into sin. He allowed Bathsheba's husband to be killed in a battle.

Following the lust of the flesh will take a Christian farther and deeper than they ever planned on going and the guilt of sin will create all kinds of emotional blockage between them and God.

Look what David wrote about this.

Psalm 32:3-4, "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away. Through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon my; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer."

Following the lust of his flesh and all that went with it drained away his life force and his life force was God.

The same can be true of us, if we are following the lusts of our flesh and of our minds. Our spiritual vitality can be drained off and we can actually become like an annual flower. Bright for a moment but dead to longevity and fruitfulness.

This is not what God wants for His children. He wants you, me, to be full of vitality, to be bright eyed and excited. To be confident, motivated and moving forward in the battle and the things He has already planned out for you to do.

After David repented and restored his relationship with God look what he wrote about God.

Psalm 32:5b, “You forgave the guilt of my sin.”

This is a big, big statement. Not only was David’s sin forgiven but the guilt of it was forgiven. The same is true of you. Not only is your sin forgiven but the guilt of it will be removed if you ask.

David goes on...

Psalm 32:8, “I (God) will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.”

Church, Christians, God is there for you. He is for you. Always, no matter what has happened in the past, no matter what is happening now.

His heart hurts when He sees you following the ways of the world, the ways of the flesh because He know how damaging it is to you, to His relationship with you.

It is His desire to set you free, set you free from sin and from guilt. And to empower you and to instruct you how to live out your new position at the right hand of His Son.

This is our God and the love He has for us.

I have asked BlesT to come and sing the song they sang earlier. Potter’s hands. This is where we get to be every day of our lives.

We get to be, in His loving hands, molding and shaping us, rooting and grounding us in His love. Give this some thought and prayer as we listen and sing.

From Death to Walking on Water Part 3, Ephesians 2:1-10

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