

Ephesians 2 - The Walking Dead

Episode 4

Automated transcript, please excuse grammatical and typographical errors.

Pastor Alex Catarroja 00:55

The title of this message is the Walking Dead. Young guys kind of went, huh? Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

So as we know, for many decades, there has been many movies, many television shows that were made about zombies. And we all know what a zombie is, right? So a zombie is basically a body of a dead person, but that's been given the semblance of life but was has been empowered by some sort of supernatural evil force, but in and of themselves, right, they're, they're evil, they're void of love. They have no feelings, they have no morals, and really all they do is seek to kill and destroy.

So in fact, the title of this message is the title of a zombie show that's in production today and that's called The Walking Dead and, and that TV series has captured. It's very popular and it's captured the hearts of many of our young people today and, and just for the record, I just want to put this out there I'm not into zombie movies, some of you might be, I'm not. So I'm just simply reporting what I was able to gather, but bring that up.

Because I guess if I were to try to use an illustration to, to give an example of what the natural condition of every human being, at least from God's perspective, and I think that this comic book series could help serve as a parable to communicate that truth.

So here's, here's where I'm getting at all of humanity. And this is from God's perspective, we're experiencing to some sort of Apocalypse, but not from fictional zombies. But from other evil spiritual forces, we find ourselves right as believers in Christ, we are not only battling these evil forces to survive, but we also have to battle evil that is present in each and every human heart.

So after a close examination in our passage today, this is what we're going to see. We're going to see that humanity as God sees it, is totally depraved. And we'll get into that a little bit more and as and consequently are held captive under the influence and power of sin, and Satan. So all of humanity are like zombies and we, you know, we're people, right? We appear to be alive, but in God's eyes, we are in fact, dead men walking, and as a result, we are objects of God's wrath.

So there's going to be three lessons that we're going to learn today. Let me sum that up for you. Lesson number one, all of humanity since Adam are born spiritually dead and depraved lesson number two all of humanity and this is by default by just being a being and existing, you are dead and trespasses and

sins, and therefore you are objects of God's wrath. And lesson number three, despite all that, God and His love He intervened and saved us. unto good works. So with that, let's turn to our passage in Ephesians chapter two.

And we're going to be covering verses one through 10. And, as I customarily do, what we're going to do is we're going to read verses one through 10. And then we're going to start from the top and go verse by verse, exposition style. And I'll be reading from the New American Standard translation.

So Paul writes, and you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formally 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 to all formerly live in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and we're by nature children of wrath, even as the rest, but God being rich in mercy because of his great love with He loved us even when we were dead and our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved, and raise this up with him and seated us 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 in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we would walk in them.

So starting back from the top, Paul says there and you were dead in your trespasses and sins, and then something you want to just kind of keep in mind as we're kind of start from verse one and following. Paul is talking in the past tense. He's speaking formerly, he is speaking us before Jesus Christ. So, so keep that in mind, because I'm going to repeat that quite a bit as we kind of go along because we don't want to lose focus of that.

So Paul says, and you were dead, talking about believers were in the past dead and the Greek for dead there. It's gross, and it actually means a dead body, or a corpse, which is why I was drawn to the zombie illustration because they too, are like a dead body or a dead corpse. But Paul says, before we before we became Christians, before we believed, we were a dead body, or a dead corpse.

And here's where it gets a little confusing. How can a human being be alive and dead at the same time? It's a paradigm. It's a paradox. And apart from Scripture, we can't really, we can't really understand. What do you mean? You know, someone who's breathing right now has a heartbeat has life, you know, is existing as it being How can you say that that person is dead? And again, we're talking from God's perspective and to kind of help illustrate how can it both be true at the same time, I want to I want to go to an Old Testament passage in the book of Job where Job mentions, and he uses this illustration of a tree. And I think this illustration of a tree will kind of help communicate how we were once quote unquote, dead and that's in job 14. And the context here Job is speaking about the finality of death. He's actually speaking about how death is final. And here's what he says. And he uses the tree illustration in the beginning of verse seven. He says For there is hope for a tree. When it is cut down, that it'll sprout again, and it shoots will not fail. Though its roots grow old in the ground and its stump dies in the dry soil. At the scent of water, it will flourish and put forth sprigs like plant.

So here's where I'm kind of going with this imagery here, that job uses all of humanity in our natural condition, how can we liken it to? It's like a dead tree without water.

Have you ever seen, you know, let's say there's a kind of a barren land and there's a tree. And it's weathered and died and it's dead, but it's in the ground. That's kind of like how the human, the natural human condition is. It's like a dead tree without water.

And here's another illustration. Have you ever seen a tree kind of pushed over by a storm, and you see kind of the roots exposed, because the roots are not in the ground, what's going to happen to that tree? It can't grow again, it's dead. There's no opportunity for that tree to be brought to life again. So humanity is kind of like that. We've kind of been uprooted. we've kind of been disconnected from the life source they gave us life to begin with. And that's kind of, you know, hopefully the kind of stayed with me on that on that illustration. But that's how human you know humanity are kind of like alive, but dead at the same time. We're kind of like dead trees or uprooted trees from the ground.

So why are we like that? Why is that our natural condition? And Paul says that here, he says, because of our trespasses and sins, and we're familiar with the term trespass. Do any of you have any like private property, side private property, trespassers will be biased or you know, prosecuted? Are you ever had that? So if I if I if you were to show up and private property unwelcomed you are trespassing someone's property? Right. So that's what trespass means. It means a misstep. It means you've trespassed on someone's private property, literally. And we're all familiar of the term.

And the word sin, right? We're so we're dead in our trespasses and sin. And sin simply means failure. And again, it's really an archery term. If you were to try to hit the target and you miss that sin, so it's saying we were dead in our trespasses and sins, we've had a misstep against someone. And we've actually not only that we actually fall short of what that someone requires, and to no surprise, what did humanity trespassing trespass against? And what did all of humanity fail to meet? We trespassed. We transgressed God's law, in thought, in word, and indeed, so because of that we were dead in our trespasses and sins.

So kind of the question, how did all of humanity become dead in our trespasses and sin, and it goes all the way back, right? To the first man and the first woman, Adam, the short you know the story and I won't get too much into it. But in short, when Adam sinned, he plunged all of humanity with him. So, and I've kind of said this before, and you know, try to stay with me on this. How is that? So every human seed, every human being that was ever produced, ultimately came from Adam. Ultimately, so meaning, when Adam and Eve had offspring, and they had offspring and an offspring, an offspring had an offspring, all of that offspring really started in Adam. So every human produced after Adam because of his sin, as a result, by default, we were born in trespasses and sins.

You don't trespass against me. You aren't. What's the saying, you aren't a sinner because you've sinned. you've sinned because you are a sinner. Over time, truth will come out whether it's thought

word, indeed, of how evil and how corrupt, we really are in our natural condition. So if I were to say, okay, how can we kind of describe sin and the consequence of Adam's sin that affected all of the human race? This is my preferred kind of definition of sin and the consequence of that sin. Here, here's what sin really means. Its failure to love God perfectly. That kind of sums it up. If you fail to love God perfectly, you've sinned. If you fail to love God with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength, that is sin. And I think we've all can ascribe to the right and another in an extension of that sin may be defined Failure to love our neighbor perfectly. Not only have we failed to love God perfectly, it's a failure to love one another perfectly. That is sin.

In other words, sin is failure to be as loving and as holy as God is. So as a result of Adam's sin and here's the consequence because Adam sinned. All human beings, we are incapable of loving God or our neighbor perfectly. That applies to all human beings are incapable. Here's another thing we can't conjure up within ourselves, the perfect life and the perfect obedience that God requires to inherit eternal life or eternal glory.

So not only can we not love God perfectly, and not only can we not love our neighbor perfectly, but we can't make ourselves perfect to love or to obtain eternal life, and we can't make ourselves love perfectly, and that's the predicament of all humanity. And that's another word for human depravity when you hear that term, it's kind of a big word. But it's another way to say that depravity is the failure to love God perfectly, love your neighbor perfectly and to live a perfect and obedient Life. And here's the truth. That yes, it is depravity is the default position from every human being. And that would include babies.

You're like, wait a minute! And this is where we kind of get into the doctrine and you might have heard this term of original sin. So our babies born perfect? How about this, let that baby develop and let that baby start to mature in their mind. What are you going to find about their baby are they inclined to do good know they're inclined to do evil? Do you have to teach a child not to lie? No, you have to teach them not to lie, right? Because time will tell the true condition of any human heart as they are able to grow and mature it's just gonna manifest itself.

But Paul is saying that is no longer the case for believers in Christ. Believers in Christ, Paul says you we were past tense, we were dead in our trespasses and sins. And he goes on to describe our pre Christ condition in verse two, 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.

And again, there's a term again formerly walked and it speaks of a manner in which believers used to live before and the way believers used to conduct our life. Before and Paul says before we became Christians, we were like walking dead men who lived according to the course of this world. And John summarizes this summarizes that for us in first john two, in verse 16. He says there for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. It's not from the Father, but it is from the world.

So the course of this world, the way that we used to live, it can really be summarized in these three things. It's desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life policy saying before we were a Christian, we live to please our sinful flesh. Whatever made our flesh feels good, and it's different for everyone, but it's wrong. We live to please our eyes, not holding back our heart's desire, even though it might be morally wrong or can even be disrupt this destructive Paul says before we were Christian, we live prideful and boastful lives. We like to brag about ourselves. We brag about our relationships, we brag about our family, we bragged about our friends, our possessions, and we sought approval and acceptance from men. That pretty much encapsulates and encompasses all of us.

But Paul says, not only were we living according to the course of this world, but he says, but according to the prince of the power of the air of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. And it's no surprise that the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, it's no surprise that he is referring to Satan himself.

So Paul is pointing out that Satan is now working. He's active right now. He's actively working in the sons of disobedience. So here's another. If you were to put it, let's kind of categorize who's sons of disobedience. He's talking about unbelievers right now.

So here's where I want to say this in love. And you know, don't, take this the wrong way, but I have to be faithful to Scripture. If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, you are at this point, a son, or a daughter of disobedience. You are under the control under the dominion, under the influence of Satan and his work and you have, there's nothing you can really do about it. You're overcome by that. So Paul is reminding us that how before we were Christians, we used to live a life with sinners, our master and in doing so when we live to please sin. We are in effect following Satan, the prince of the power of the air, who is in was a sinner from the beginning. And as such, we were formerly sons of disobedience in regards to standing before God, or create our, or Paul is getting at is this believers, we used to act like children of Satan. But now as believers, we now act like children of God. So Paul goes on in verse three, among them, we to all formerly lived in the lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and we're by nature, children of wrath, even as the rest.

Okay, when we kind of get to this verse, I'm gonna step on a lot of toes, but it's not me. It's the Word of God. So, just kind of putting that up there first. So Paul says, formerly again, speaking about believers formerly lived in the lust of the flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind and Paul saying before We were Christians we live to please and satisfy sin and satisfy the flesh with our minds. Another way to say it before we were believers, we serve three people. Me, myself, and I, who was the first to serve Me, myself and I, the enemy of our souls. Because of this, Paul says, because we were like that, by nature, we are children of wrath. Before we were born again, I do want to talk about that phrase a little bit children of wrath, and we hear that term a lot, right wrath.

And I've used this example before, and I'll use it again. When I think of wrath. I think of the Incredible Hulk. Smash. Right? And I mean, you do not want to get in the way of the incredible Hulk when he's upset. For those of you kind of follow me with that, but the idea is just this wrath, and it's unmitigated, and it's just going to smash and nothing is going to stop it. But can I just say this, the Incredible Hulk

wrath pales in comparison to the wrath of God that's going to be unleashed. unmitigated, it's going to be released. He's going to smash Satan. He's going to smash the fallen angels, but you know what he's going to also do. Unfortunately, he's going to smash and judge unbelievers because they refuse to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. There's no other recourse.

Verse four and five, but God being rich in mercy See, because of his great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ by grace, you have been saved.

And I want to talk a little bit of a little English here see that term, but, you know what, that actually negates everything that was just said, and like, how can I use this example again? I've used this before. Have you ever told someone that you like them? And the person comes back and says, oh, you're really cool. You're really sweet. You really make a good husband or wife one day, but not for me. Right?

So that but just negated all of the things that was just said, and that's really the English kind of grammar when pulling him on pause this here but God he just negated we are not going to be objects of God's wrath. Why? Because he was being rich in mercy. In other words, God intervened. Why, because of his great love which is the highest and most noble form of love have by which he loved us.

So here's the Marvel in God's great love, he intervened. Even Paul says when we were dead in trespasses, he made us alive together with Christ. So despite our sinful state, and despite us, habitually sinning in that city, state, God intervened, Paul says and made us live together with Christ. And this sounds familiar, right?

Paul touches on that thought, in Romans five. Beginning in verse six, he says, For a while we were still helpless. At the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man though perhaps for a good man someone would dare even to die. But God there is that but again, but God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, much more than having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved, there it is, from the wrath of God through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son much more having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

So here's another way to say it. If God didn't act, if God wasn't proactive, if God just kind of sat back and given us to ourselves, all of humanity is on the path to hell in destruction. Even when we were living in the living rebellion to the things of God, whether it's knowingly or unknowingly, God, God demonstrates His unconditional love toward us. And that while we were still sinners, God intervened, and Christ died for us.

So here's the truth, because God did something because God intervened. Believers are no longer children of wrath, but children of God. Believers are no longer children of wrath, but we're in now children of blessing. And this Paul says the latter part of Ephesians two, verse five, he says, it is by grace, you have been saved. And we'll talk a little bit more about that.

A few verses later. So how were we made a life together with Christ and God save hoe did that happen? We were made alive with Christ. When we heard the gospel, and believe we were made alive when we encountered the living word of God. We heard the biblical preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And upon hearing and believing this message, we were born again and made alive.

So remember going back to that dead tree analogy? How can we be alive and dead at the same time, and we use the illustration of the dead tree. Here it is in Christ. We are not like the dead trees without water. In Christ, we are like the tree that was given water. And in Christ we are now okay. In Christ, we are no longer like the uprooted tree with its roots exposed and removed from the earth. In Christ. It was as if that tree got in the roots got put back into the soil so that he can get the vital nutrients and with the water and then begin to sprout.

Again, believers are grafted back in if you will, through faith to the life source, the giver of our life and that is through faith. We got connected back to eternal life himself when we believed believers now have a new condition when we believed we took on a new condition, there was this new birth. And as a result, there was this new nature. And Paul says, that is all by God's grace. So if anyone is saved throughout all of eternity and throughout all of human history, every human being are saved on the basis of God's grace. Scripture is abundantly clear on that.

Here's the thing. God's grace doesn't end with that alone. Let's look at verse six. He says there and raise this up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places, in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So you see here, it's also Paul's also talking in the past tense, he says, raised, past tense, us up with him seated again past tense with him.

Here's what Paul is getting at. Believers are guaranteed the same resurrection as Jesus Christ. Believers are guaranteed a seat with Jesus in the heavenly places in Christ, believers are guaranteed to share in the glory, the same glory of Lord Jesus Christ. And interestingly, Paul, he doesn't stop there. He goes on to speak of a new era or kind of a new age. Also in verse seven, he says, so that in the ages to come, he might show the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us, in Christ Jesus and the ages to come.

That's another study in and of itself, but here it is, in a kind of a nutshell. The ages discuss the ages to come. It's really speaking about that future time when we will receive our glorified bodies. And when Christ establishes his kingdom on earth, so the ages to come really in, and I'm just really consolidating this, it's this. It's eternal life with Christ that begins now in the hearts of believers. And it'll carry on until we receive our glorified body and be with Christ in His Kingdom throughout all eternity. So this passage just confirmed the doctrine of eternal security, and in just the short us of our salvation. So, why did God plan all this? Paul answers that in that same verse so that in the ages to come, he might show the surpassing riches of his grace and kindness toward us, in Christ Jesus. So if you were to ask the question, How can God demonstrate if How can he prove how can he show His kindness toward us. And it's really simple. And it's really sparing us from his judgment, sparing us from the wrath that I

mentioned earlier that's going to be unleashed than unbelievers. In other words, God can demonstrate his love for us in sparing us from hell, and instead, giving us Heaven, which is wherever God is.

So let's look at verses eight through nine. 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 must, so that no one may boast, to understand to really kind of unlock verse eight. There's a key term there, it's the word that that is referring to something and in order for us to kind of unpack or understand what the truth in this verse is, we need to follow what Paul is we're referring to, and I like the Amplified Version of this and I'll read that to you of this verse. Here's how that reads this: for it is by grace, for it is by free grace, God's unmerited favor, that you are saved, delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ salvation through your faith. And this salvation is not of yourselves of your own doing. It came not through your own striving, but it is the gift of God.

So the antecedent for that in verse eight, it is referring to saving faith, saving faith policy for God by God's unmerited favor, you are saved through your saving faith and catch this and that saving faith that you have to believe that brought about your salvation. That's not from yourselves. It is the gift it is God's gift to you.

Did you know that faith is a gift, that if you have saving faith in Jesus Christ, it is on the basis of God's grace. It was God's gift when you believed. So another way to say it is all of our salvation, everything from saving faith until our glorification, all of it is a gift from God. When we get to the doctrine of election, what this truth what it upholds, is that when God chose those who would be saved, this is what he did. He operated on the basis of his pleasure of his will, on the basis of he's God, a love that God chose. And catch this. God didn't choose anyone because he saw the work that we're going to do. God didn't choose us because oh, I see that that guy over there is going to believe in me. So I'm going to choose him. No, no, no, no, no.

What this beholds is God's unconditional election. God does whatever he pleases, but it is consistent with who he is. This way when God chose us, he did it because he loved us, and to show that He sent His Son to die for us, and to redeem us and to ransom us, and to bring us to himself. So this upholds God's unconditional election. God wasn't operating under any conditions of the future, that God was purely operating under his perfect Divine Will.

Verse nine, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast, and I've said this and I'll say this another way. And kind of put it simple salvation 100% of your salvation is a gift of God. You had nothing to do with it. You had nothing to do or to contribute to the salvation that you receive all of your salvation. Even your faith is a gift from God. Why? So that no one can boast.

What happens if you put any conditions? Naturally? What are we going to do? Good job, God. You saw that I was gonna pick you, didn't you? Good job, God and doing your part to pick me to inherit eternal life. What I mean really, it's completely foreign. That's why that the doctrine of God's unconditional election, there is no injustice with God. He there is no evil in him in him is light. He does everything

that's consistent with his holiness. With his all of his attributes, his righteousness, his love, but also his judgment, and all those things. God upholds everything.

Verse 10, For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in him. So Paul says we believers are His workmanship and that word workmanship. And if he were to go to the Greek and get, you know, what's the kind of connotation of that word? It really describes the work of art. So we are in effect believers, you're God's Canvas, and God Himself is the artist. It's as if, when God saved us and from our salvation experience, including our sanctification. God the artist is working on us and God, the artists, his goal is to conform us more and more like his Son, Jesus Christ.

And I don't know about you. Have you ever asked this question? You know, once we got saved, why doesn't God just take us out of here? Okay, God achieved, mission accomplished. Take me. Now, why doesn't he just do that?

Well Paul, Paul says it here in this verse. We are created in Christ Jesus for good works. We are saved for good works. And so how does that kind of play itself out? Okay, we were saved for good works. Well, it starts in the body of Christ, the church. God's purpose and plan is to indwell believers and to use believers as his body and his instrument to build up and edify the body of Christ so that we can evangelize the world Not only that, God leave us here so that we can build up the church and to be instruments evangelize the lost.

But God also left us here, to strengthen families, to strengthen relationships, to leave a lasting legacy to the glory of God. So here, here's kind of in practical ways, why did God just not take us? Here it is in practical terms, so that we can be a godly husband, so that we can be a godly wife, so that we can be a godly son or daughter so that we can be a godly minister so that we can be a godly friend, a godly co worker. In other words, God's good works, that he prepared for us. It's sharing Christ to those who Christ to who God put in your path. God's good works is for us to love one another, not just in Word, but also indeed.

But here's the truth. You know, these good works not only that, he predestined them as well. Well, God does God already prepared the good works. He's already orchestrated the days of your life. From the time you were born till the time you're dead, he already he already ordered your days. You're simply walking day by day. And your objective and my objective as believers is this. be sensitive to the will of God. be sensitive to the truth of God. Be sensitive so that whoever God puts in your path, you can share Christ that you can speak truth into their life, that you can speak hope into their life and this hope is not from yourselves, obviously, but it is the Holy Spirit in you. And in the word the words which you're getting from Scripture, doing its bidding. Next week, we'll continue in our study of chapter two. As we will see that there's much more in store for us and that Paul's actually going to get more into the mystery that God had planned before time. This includes how we came to Christ. Amen?

Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece 38:57

Thank you for listening to the Truth Matters Church podcast today. Ephesians chapter two really captures the essence of the sinful human condition. We all the walking dead. While we're going about our business thinking we're alive, thinking everything is just fine. In reality, we are dead, utterly and totally lost in our sins. And really, what can a dead man do to help himself? Absolutely nothing. In our state of depravity we can't even ask God for help. But this is where Christ steps in and through divine intercession, he made us alive in him while we were still dead in our sins. Praise God for His plan of salvation, and thank him for the gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

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