

LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST

Ephesians 2:1-3

INTRODUCTION:

1. The book of Ephesians is a beautiful book.
 - a) The first **14 verses** are ***Paul's hymn of praise to the Godhead*** for the work they have done in redemption.
 - b) We often point out that in the Greek this is just one long sentence.
2. In chapter 2 Paul's thought flows on, again without regard to any rules of grammar.
 - a) He seems to begin sentences that he never finishes.
 - b) He starts with one construction and halfway through he glides into another.
 - c) That's because this is far more ***a lyric of the love of God*** than it is ***a deep theological exposition***.
3. Paul is pouring out his heart.
4. When Paul speaks of "**you**", he is speaking of the Gentiles' when he speaks of "**us**" he is speaking of the Jews, his fellow countrymen.
5. In the first three verses of ch.2 he shows how terrible a life without Christ was for BOTH Gentile and Jew alike. **Eph.2:1-3-** *"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2) 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. 3) Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."*

I. A LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST IS A LIFE WITHOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS: [viz., We're Continuing In our Sins And Trespasses.]

- A. The Word For Sin is "HAMARTIA" - a shooting word.
 1. It literally means a miss.
 - a) A man shoots his arrow at the target and 'the arrow misses' – that is "HAMARTIA".
 - b) Sin is the ***failure to hit the target*** in a life of service to the Lord God.
 2. We commonly have a wrong idea of sin.
 - a) We all agree that the robber, murderer, drunkard, etc. are sinners.
 - b) However, since most of us are respectable citizens, in our hearts we think that sin isn't that big of a problem with us.
 - c) I'm sure we would resent being called sinners.
 3. But "HAMARTIA" brings **US** face to face with what sin really is - ***THE FAILURE TO BE WHAT WE OUGHT TO BE – AND CAN BE – in our relationships of life!***
 - a) "Am I as good a ***husband*** as I can be?"; "Do I try to make life easier for my wife?"
 - b) "Am I as good a ***wife*** as I can be?"; "Do I take an interest in my husband's work and try to understand his problems and his worries?"
 - c) "As parents, are we really what we ought to be?"; "Do we discipline and train our children as we ought, or do we often shirk the issue?" [***Current reports: "Teenagers less likely to DRINK or engage in pre-marital sex IF PARENTS TEACH THEM & URGE THEM THAT THEY SHOULDN'T!"***]
 - d) "Am I as good a ***citizen*** as I can be?"
 - e) "Am I as good a ***neighbor*** as I can be?"

- f) "Am I as good a **servant** as I ought to be?"
- g) "Is every working hour filled with my most conscientious work and is every task done as well as I could possibly do it?"
4. SO, when we come to truly realize what sin is, we can understand that it is **NOT SOMETHING THAT PREACHERS HAVE INVENTED.**
- It is an impairment of man's existence which permeates every facet of our lives on earth!
 - It is the failure in **ANY** sphere of life to fulfill what a loving God would compel us to be!
- B. The Word For Trespass is "PARAPTOMA".
- And it literally means a slip or a fall.
 - It is used of a man losing the way and straying from the right road.
 - It is used regarding a man failing to grasp the handrail and slipping off of the pathway! ***[AS ONE who fails to grasp and cling to the truth will slip away from the righteousness of God!]***
 - So Trespass, is taking the wrong road when we should take the right one! IT IS disallowing in our lives the truths of God, that **we should have known** and should have **been holding onto!**
 - Therefore, it is the failure to reach the goal we ought to have reached.
 - Am I in life where I ought to be?
 - Have I attained to the **goal of efficiency** and skill that my gifts will enable me to reach?
 - Have I achieved the **goal of service** to others that I should have reached?
 - Have I arrived at the **level of goodness** where I should be?
 - The central idea of sin is **FAILURE.**
 - FAILURE** to hit the target.
 - FAILURE** to hold to the road.
 - FAILURE** to make life what it was capable of becoming.
- C. Now This Is Supposed To Describe One Who Is Without Christ.
- The sad fact is that it describes **MANY WHO CLAIM TO HAVE CHRIST.**
 - Christ makes alive those who are "dead in trespasses and sins."
 - True followers of Christ don't continue to walk in sin; they are new creatures, walking in newness of life (See **Rom. 6:2-4**- "*May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 3) Or do you not know ...*"

II. A LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST IS A PERPETUATION OF SPIRITUAL DEATH: IT IS AN ON-GOING SEPARATION FROM GOD!

- A. Paul Speaks About People Being **DEAD IN SINS.**
- While it is true that a life without Christ produces an eternal separation of the soul from God, Paul is here talking about this present life.
 - There are three directions in which the effect of sin is deadly – causes us to be **DEAD IN OUR SINS!**
- B. Sin **KILLS OUR INNOCENCE.**
- No one is EVER exactly the same after he has sinned.
 - Sin leaves SCARS that are PERMANENT, and VISIBLE, and that ARE SO THOUGHT-PROVOKINGLY MEMORABLE!
 - We can **receive forgiveness** but the **SCARS STILL REMAIN.**
 - Just ask Paul about those scars and he will tell you that they are deep. cf. **1 Tim.1:15**- "*It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.*"

3. The **experience of sin** leaves a filmed blemish on the mind and things never look quite the same again.
- It's like getting a scratch on a brand new car.
 - Sin does something terrible to a man – it kills his innocence; and **innocence once lost can never be recovered.**
- C. Sin **KILLS OUR CONSCIENCE.**
- There is a kind of tragic process that many of us go through in stifling our conscience!
 - First we may regard a wrong action that we've committed with great horror and distress!
 - AND THEN we're tempted into DOING IT AGAIN, but even as we are doing it, we may still be unhappy, and ill at ease, and still very conscious that it is wrong.
 - The final stage is when we have engaged in an unrighteous action so often that we are then doing it without a qualm.
 - Each sin makes it easier to do it again the next time!
 - Sin is a type of suicide, because it kills the conscience, which governs man's life.
- D. And In The End, Sin **KILLS OUR WILL** – viz., any personal desire we might still have remaining to precisely serve the Heavenly Father!
- At first a man engages in some forbidden pleasure because he wants to ("I'm free and I'll do as I please!" OR, "Nobody can tell ME what to do!" OR, "I AM GOING to do this NOW, but I'll straighten it out later on!").
 - But when LATER ON gets here, we engage in it because IT HAS BECOME OUR NATURE; We have become the SLAVE of OUR SINS! - **Rom. 6:20-21**- *"For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21) Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death."*
 - ANYTIME WE allow some habit, or some indulgence, or some forbidden practice **TO MASTER US**, we become A SLAVE TO IT!
 - As the old saying goes, *"SOW AN ACT AND REAP A HABIT; SOW A HABIT AND REAP A CHARACTER; SOW A CHARACTER AND REAP A DESTINY."*
- E. Even as we look with great horror at the man who kills his wife & kids who were going to leave him, or the baby sitter who shakes the child to death, we need to also see the profound truth that **THERE IS A CERTAIN MURDEROUS POWER IN SIN.**
- And so SIN kills our innocence; and even though ***sin may be forgiven its affect still remains***
 - And sin kills our conscience; we start doing without a qualm the very things which we once regarded with horror.
 - And finally, sin kills our will; the things that cause us to sin get such a grip on us that we become slaves to them!
- F. **BUT CHRIST IS ABLE TO MAKE ALIVE THOSE DEAD IN TRESSPASSES AND SINS.**
- But *"God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."* - **Romans 6:17-18**
 - "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."* - **Romans 6:22**

III. THE LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST IS WITHOUT MEANINGFUL PURPOSE, OR HOPE! [AND HAS CHARACTERISTICS AND CONSEQUENCES THAT ARE BOTH PITIFUL AND DISTRESSING!]

- A. If YOURS is a life w/o Christ, it is a life lived in the way this present age lives it.
1. It is a life lived by the world's standards and with the world's values.
 - a) Christ demands us to have a forgiving attitude, but the world says it's a "*sign of weakness not to avenge yourself*" of injury.
 - b) Christ demands service, but the world doesn't understand the person who seeks out the good of others before himself; and who is not willing to step on top of people to get to the top.
 - c) The essence of the world's standard is that it sets self in the center; the essence of the Christian's standard is that it sets Christ and service to others in the center.
 - d) The essence of the worldly man is, "*he knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.*"
 - e) The world's motive is profit; the Christian's motive is the desire to serve.
- B. It is a life lived under the dictates of the prince of the air – Satan!
1. The man who is under the domination of Satan has taken sides against God.
 2. This not true merely of the devil-worshippers.
 3. Job's wife was under the domination of Satan, though she would never have admitted such. - **Job 1:11-2:9** - "*But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.*" "**2:9** - "*Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"*"
 - a) When God says – "*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,*" and we DO forsake, whose domination are we under?
 - b) When God says – "*In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel,*" and we dress immodestly, under whose domination are we?
 - c) When God says – "*Study to shew thyself approved,*" and we don't study, **who are we under then?**
- C. It is a life characterized by disobedience.
1. God has revealed His will, what He wants man to do to please Him.
 2. But the man w/o Christ takes his own way, even when he knows what God's way is.
- D. It is a life that is at the mercy of desire.
1. The word for desire is "EPITHUMIA" which characteristically concerns a desire for **that which is forbidden.**
 2. To YIELD to that desire is inevitably to come to disaster.
 3. Desire is a bad master, and to be at the mercy of desire is to be a slave.
- E. It is the life which follows the desires of the flesh.
1. A life lived after the flesh is a life lived without considering what God wants.
 2. It is living the way we want to live without taking God into account.
 3. Thus we need not think that only of sexual sins here.
 - a) In Gal. 5:19-21 Paul lists the works of the flesh and while he begins with fornication he goes on to idolatry, hatred, wrath, strife, envying, sedition, heresies.
 - b) Anytime I do what I want to do that's different from what God would have me to do, I am fulfilling the desires of the flesh. [Watching TV instead of getting Bible lesson/ or Playing when I should be Praying/ or Just talking a "talk" when I should be "WALKING THE WALK!"]

CONCLUSION:

1. A life w/o Christ is not the best life one can live.
 - a) It is a life lived in sins and trespasses.
 - b) It is a life of death.

- c) It is a life characterized by worldliness, dominated by Satan, defined by disobedience, at the mercy of lust, and in pursuit of the desires of the flesh.
2. There is a better life: **Eph.2:4-7**- *"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5) even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6) and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7) so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."*
3. Are you living a life with or without Christ?
- a) We are here to assist you if want to begin living a life with Christ.
 - b) Won't you respond now?