

Ephesians 2:1-3 - **And you were dead in the trespasses and sins (2) in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience - (3) among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.**

INTRO - Nobody denies there is EVIL in the world. Even those who don't believe in GOD have some definition of EVIL. Terrorism, sex trafficking are EVIL to all. Poverty, racism, abortion - also things we regularly overlook, and matters of pornography, and political oppression - all things we probably forget about, but help reinforce the EVILS in our world.

Even the NON-CHURCH, NON CHRISTIAN WORLD is asking "How do we get rid of such EVIL." **Politics, Democracy** will do away with evils. When that doesn't work, they talk about the need for education. **Education** will remove evils. Educate the oppressed of the inner city and they can thrive. I know of rich, white, suburban kids who are in elite schools - and drugs has won their souls, and they have lost everything, including their lives. Education is not. **Social programs** - and when the same people are coming for their same free meals every week with no motive internally to change - you quickly realize much social programming does nothing - we still have poor, oppressed, homeless among us - in every generation.

And the church is the one voice in the world that has the answer to why and the solution. And yet our voice is silent. We don't even all have a good defense of the matter. That is my hope in this. That we are awakened to how real the ROOT problem is. And if what was said last week was about where we are at as a world, this week is about how we actually got here and the ROOT of it all. The ROOT - by NATURE EVERY PERSON is ENSLAVED to SIN, DEAD IN SIN, and DESTINED TO WRATH if God doesn't intervene. But the world refuses to listen - 1) it is unflattering to humanity, 2) it has to be revealed by GOD to the heart of a man. A dark dire message, but do listen. **Brightness is not known in the middle of the day, so much as it is in the darkness of night.**

Trace Paul's thinking with me, but let's start in v. 2. He says there is a way **in which you once walked**. That word **WALKED** is by no means here a reference to physical walking. It is a term Paul regularly uses to speak of patterns of ones life. What was that pattern? It involves 3 parts. The World Itself, the Devil, and Ourselves

The first 2 parts of that here in v2 - he sums up the WORLD and the DEVIL in these phrases. First of all- 1) **following the course of this world**

There is a **course of this world**. We feel the shifting of the tides in and out in various seasons of life. Our world moves and we move with it. There is a value system in the world. A way of thinking. **Much of which we talked about last week so I'll not camp here long.** It sucks people in and they buy whatever the world is throwing at them.

Isn't this the very world in which we live? Reason is dead in our world. Logic doesn't exist to our world. **Paypal - raising a stink because of Religious Freedom Bill that was passed in North Carolina, is threatening to remove business expansion and 400 jobs to the state if they don't retract it all. Paypal does business in 25 countries where homosexual behavior is illegal, including 5 countries where the penalty is death, yet they are upset about a law that restricts a man from walking into a woman's bathroom. Where is the LOGIC in that?** Oh wait - Money is the Way of our world. And enough powerful voices, not even necessarily the masses but a few voices on a subject and we all buy a LIE over LOGIC.

4 words -Money, Sex, Materialism, Power - that about sums up the ways of our world. Get what you can. Get all you can. Well, not wanting to preach last week's message yet again.

Secondly, Paul brought up this idea that - the way we once walked (lived) was **following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience**

Paul uses rather cryptic language here, if we only use the immediate context. But piecing this together with a few other things he says elsewhere. EPH 6:11-12

He uses 6:11 to set up our understanding of just where the devil is - he is not in hell, he is among us, in our world, but in the air, or heavenly places (skies, and air we breathe, all around us) and according to v12 - he is not alone, there are forces that are spiritual.

We all breathe air. It is everywhere we are. And there is no place we go where air is not. This is the pervasive nature of the battle we are in, born in, live in, and will one day die in. Your whole life, unless you live it outside of air, in a perpetual vacuum, you will be under the grip of Satan's influence and power.

You think ISIS is our problem? Why has terrorism always existed? You think GUNS are our problem? Why has murder always existed? You think the INTERNET is our problem with pornography? Why has prostitution always existed?

This a part of it. There is a power **at work**. Note those words **NOW AT WORK**. Yes, Satan, his cohorts, demons, fallen angels, they all have been working, and are working. There are limits on their power, but they DO HAVE POWER. Our world won't believe it, but it makes incredible sense to me that there is another dimension. I don't see text messages whizzing through the air from my phone to yours, or radio waves, or microwaves heating my food, but all that is going on.

Where do lies come from? Satan, the father of lies. Where does temptation come from, rebellion to God? Satan. He know only how to steal, kill, destroy, and lie. And that is his work. That reality that HE WORKS is troubling. he is not passive. he is not dormant. he is on the move, and he is sneaky, smart, subtle. Look at all the variety of ways in which our world has changed. He BLINDS EYES/MINDS. (2 Cor. 4:4)

One man argued his rule over tv, radio, i might argue internet, cell phones - all this that depends on signals, and satellites in the heavens, the air above and around, serves as a reminder that he has

power and he rules. And he's flexed his muscle in these regards and expedited much evil.

So far what Paul has spoken of points - EXTERNALLY. A World Keeping you from GOD. Satan keeping you from God. All the EVIL. But look at this development of his 3rd angle here. It points INTERNALLY - to the hearts of him, his readers, and indeed the WHOLE WORLD, now, then, and before. UNIVERSAL REALITY. You KEEP YOU FROM GOD.

v3 - **among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.**

This is ALL. Look how he sums that up. WE ALL - he and his readers. All of us - And then he points at the end of this verse to **the rest of mankind**. What the rest of the world is apart from Christ, so too were we. We ALL sinned, we all lived in the decadent luxurious sinful desires we had.

Marvel at this for a moment. Horrific as it all is. I've always been amazed that animals that are newly born, know where to go to find milk. Who taught them? Intrinsic to them. Yes, there is a lot we learn, but that is a lot we, and animals never had to learn. It was in our very NATURE.

Why are we like this? Craving sin. Resisting parents. Talking dirty. Lusting. Craving Money, Materialism to satisfy us. Loving our pride? Why? That is the most troubling thing about what Paul says here - Piece all this together - WE ONCE LIVED in this sinful manner, following cravings of our flesh, desires in our body/mind - and **WERE BY NATURE** - and the **REST OF MANKIND** is **BY NATURE** doing what the internal wicked, sinful, cravings tell them to do.

Now I don't want to give the sense that what Paul is saying is that we do the worst possible things. That is not what he is saying. He is simply saying that we didn't follow the beat of something in us that is good, but simply that our cravings and desires are from a mind that is WARPED, tainted. It is INNATE to all of us.

So much talk in our world of the goodness of man. But the bible speaks something quite otherwise. We are not good. We are sinful, wicked, evil. We don't like these words though. But what else defines all the evil around us? If we are all good, why all the evil? If we are inherently good, why all the wickedness?

He says we all live in a manner in **PASSIONS OF OUR FLESH, CARRYING OUT THE DESIRES OF THE BODY AND THE MIND**

He is not saying we are just out to fulfill our sexual/carnal appetites, but also that every one of us has ANGER, RAGE, ENVY, SELFISH AMBITION that rules in us. We are enslaved to it - and all humanity is. And it is not to say we don't at times do things that may LOOK GOOD.

even you and I as kids said, Thank you. I love you. We gave things away. We helped an old lady cross the street. That's not EVIL, or WICKED right? No it isn't. What then is Paul saying?

Here is what he is saying - v1 - **you WERE DEAD in the trespasses and sins** - now that is all he is explaining in the verses 2-3. How/Why we lived as we did. But note again that condition. DEAD. It is a confusing word - after all, everything we just looked at, everything that Paul explains would indicate we are not DEAD.

So what does DEAD mean? We are dead spiritually. We are not concerned about GOD. We are not out to please Him. We are living for the moment, in light of the world, the power of Satan, and that internal ticking that tells us chase only our own PLEASURE in things physical.

DEAD spiritually. It is the reality for us all. All Humanity. DEAD. And the reason - WE ARE BORN SINNERS. Scripture says it again and again - ALL SINNED. Psalm 51 - in sin I was conceived. Everyone after Adam and Eve, because of their sin, got it passed along in their DNA per se. Matt. 8:21 - a disciple ready to follow Jesus had one reservation - "Let me go first bury my father." The response of Jesus

- "Leave the DEAD to bury the dead." Those physically ALIVE are DEAD to these spiritual things

And we are SINNERS not because we SIN, but we SIN because we are born sinners. That is the grave **NATURE** of our condition as humans. We don't desire GOD. We don't desire to be holy. We don't desire to do what HE tells us. We desire what we want. This is the very definition of evil - that eternal joy in God, eternal peace in God, a perfect path laid out by God laid before Adam and Eve and they chose their own way. And for us, that God's perfect will and way to walk as laid out here in words preserved for us are there to KNOW THIS GOD, be filled with JOY in HIM and live with purpose now and forever - and we DON'T CARE. No regard.

Further, we are **children of wrath**. God's just judgment coming on us. A ticket not to some slammer, but HELL. All because we are DEAD in sin, prone to sin, and only desiring SIN before CHRIST.

Want to know why so firmly I believe my salvation hinges 100% not on my choice of GOD, but His choice of me - I was DEAD. And the reason I am now saved is HE brought me to life. He brought me to life SPIRITUALLY so I could hear and Bible and it made sense. So I could believe in Jesus, His Work, even though physically I never saw. He revisits this in v5 - to say WHEN WE WERE DEAD GOD MADE US ALIVE.

What does all this amount to?

so many reflections here of reality and of GOOD NEWS

You don't know how great water is unless you are thirsty. you don't know how great his grace is unless you know the ugliness of you and your sin. And Eph 2:4ff will SHINE even more, after this darkness.

1) You and I will continue to watch a world fall deeper into chaos. At the root of it is this reality - we are born SINNERS. And SIN permeates all the evils of the world. it is the cause. And until that problem is eradicated, we will have these pronounced wicked problems in our world.

Our world doesn't need the message they've been given by many of us - Fix Yourself, or Take our Morals, Or Change Political Views, or

let's get rid of ISIS, Rapists, Drugs... The change that needs to take place is something THEY/WE CANNOT DO. Christ must do it. we need this Miracle Worker. One Message - CHRIST, the GOSPEL!

2) when you talk to people about Christ, don't anticipate they will just GET IT. They won't, they can't. You didn't. You couldn't. It all reminds me that GOD needs to AWAKEN. He needs to bring to life. Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus, his friend. And all Lazarus' family there. Nothing they could do, and nothing they could say to bring him back to life. he was dead. Jesus came up - and raised his voice - LAZARUS COME OUT. And guess what - HE DID. That is what GOD does to us. He awakens us to hear that Message, when it clicks. Do you have a day? Do you remember when the light bulb when on? It was because God called and God gave us life. He does this - through our call to people keep calling. Keep inviting. Keep telling them about Jesus. Don't quit. nobody ever came to life apart from the MESSAGE. This is the LIFE GIVING MESSAGE. Talk to me after if this isn't yet true of you.

3) Watch your own steps - live as though you are alive. We look too much like the world at times. Paul tells them they ONCE WALKED in a manner after the world and powers at work, and ONCE LIVED to their own cravings of the flesh/body/mind. What of your life looks different? Are you any different? What needs to keep maturing and growing? Dark World - ONE THING ILLUMINES IT ALL - The WORD. This is our Light. It Lights our Path. And we Become brighter in a dark world as a result of how much we know this, believe it, and keep living this.

4) WORSHIP GOD - because of grace. Enemies of God. DEAD TO GOD. We didn't just need a little help to do better and follow Him. We didn't just need that doctor to come in our room and help medicate us to get us off life support. We needed this miracle working One, with Power to Raise the DEAD to come to the morgue and give us LIFE. He gets all the GLORY for this.