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Ephesians 2:1-3
The Condition of the Adamic Man

Last week I took a brief break in our study of the book of Ephesians and talked about understanding emotions. We're going to pick back up with Ephesians today starting in chapter 2 verse 1.

While you turn there, I'll just review briefly what we said about the end of chapter one. Most of you know that the books of the Bible were not divided up into chapters and verses when they were originally written, or for several hundred years afterwards, for that matter. They were written simply as letters, and so when you see a break between chapters, it doesn't necessarily mean that there is was any break in the flow of spiritual thought going on in the heart author. In fact, quite often you'll find that chapter divisions interrupt a flow of thought and, in my opinion, would fit better elsewhere.

Anyway, Ephesians chapter one ended with Paul describing the church as Christ's body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. And I went into some detail trying to describe that we, the church, are not just people who are getting resurrected bodies. We are, in fact, the body of His resurrection on earth. Paul and the New Testament Apostles describe us, the church, as the multi-membered corporate vessel of the risen Lord Jesus. And so in this way, we are quite literally His body.

And just like any body, our purpose is to be the expression of the Life that dwells within it. We are not meant to become the expression of a bunch of members trying to be like Jesus. We are meant to be, like any body, the expression of the life that dwells within. How many hands do you know that are trying to express a hand? The only hands I know are trying to express the person who's hand it is. Bud's hand expresses bud. Christine's hand expresses Christine. **We, the members of Christ's body are meant to be filled up with Christ unto His expression and not our imitation. His manifestation and not our imagination. His exhibition and not our religion.**

T Austin sparks says the church is not a "what"; the church is a "Who". The church is Christ living in a people. And the church is only functioning as His body when the "Who" is formed in and living through that body. One person I know says that the church is the "presencing of Christ" or it is nothing at all. It is not the presencing of a belief system, a code of ethics, a social gathering that strive towards similar behavior...or any such thing. The church is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

And so we dealt a little with the words "the fullness of Him" because they can seem a bit odd at first glance. How could we be the fullness of Him? Well, we cannot in the sense that we "perfect" him. But we can be in the sense that we become the full manifestation and expression of Him IF He is the "all in all". Do you see? I gave the weird example of the bodiless pastor. If my head were up here on this table

preaching this morning, you would certainly have Jason. But you would not have the fullness of Jason until you had a body in which my life was filling every member in every way. Until my life was formed in a body, there would be no way for me to fully express or manifest myself in the earth. And this is no different than what Paul says in Galatians 4:19 – “my little children, with whom I am in labor until Christ is formed in you”.

This is the goal of God. Not that you and I would try to express Jesus in the earth through learning about Him. But that you and I would become the expression of Jesus through Him being formed in us. Not that you and I would try to manifest the one we know to be our Head. But that the Head would be the one “working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure”. And that is through the renewing of the mind, the revealing of Christ. But that is off our topic.

But what isn’t off our topic is that this description at the end of chapter 1 of what we are meant to be in the eternal purpose of God is followed up immediately by a description of what we are by nature. Paul first tells us what we are to become through new birth and the transformation of the soul. He tells us the eternal purpose of God. But makes sure that we realize where we came from. He makes sure that we realize that those who are to be His body, His fullness, started out as His enemy – children of wrath, dead in trespass and sin, and even worse than that – vessels of the spirit who works in the sons of disobedience. That is our verse for the day, and we’ll read it in a minute.

But this isn’t Paul trying to make people feel bad. This is Paul trying to help people realize the reality and power of the cross. Because only when you realize what you were, and that you had nothing to offer Him, and therefore what God put away by His cross, can you really begin to realize what you have become, and what God’s eternal purpose is with your soul.

You see, **until you have seen with spiritual understanding that your salvation and service in His kingdom is not the improvement of what was there, but the removal and replacement of what was there, you will continue to try to offer to God what He has condemned, judged, and put away.** We’ll get more into that, but lets read Ephesians 2 :1 – 3

Eph 2:1 And you ~~He made alive~~, who were dead in trespasses and sins, **2** in which you once walked according to the course [Lit. “age”] of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, **3** among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

What an analysis and critique of the natural man. Apart from Christ’s actual life working in you, here is what Paul is telling us about ourselves. We are dead in trespass and sin. We walk entirely according to the world, and are under the power and are the expression of the devil. We conduct ourselves according to the lusts of the flesh. Our aim is to fulfill the desires of the flesh and the carnal mind. And we are by nature children of wrath.

Hmmm....there goes the argument that humans are inherently good until we learn evil from society, the Smurfs, and Rock music.

Listen, there is this great misconception in the church world today that once you are born again, God simply wants to harness and steer your natural passions, thoughts, abilities, desires, etc. and use them for His purposes. Hopefully I'm not the first to pop your bubble this morning, but Paul is telling you here that we are by nature – in our mind, our will, our emotions, children of wrath, dead in trespass and sin, and manifestations of the spirit who works in the sons of disobedience.

This nature is not modified by the cross of Jesus Christ. This nature is not adjusted or customized to a more God-friendly format. This nature is crucified. And until you realize what you are in God's sight by nature, you will never see what He wants from you – because what He wants from you is not a better you, but a body that is filled with His Son. He wants you to become the fullness of HIM who fills all in all.

Now I realize that's not politically correct. And I also realize that preaching that may never fill all the seats in this room. But there is simply no way around it. You must face your end at the cross before He can become your beginning. You must find your death there before you find Him as your resurrection and Life. You must realize in the deepest recesses of your soul that you are contrary to Him in all natural ways, before you can allow Him to replace what you were with what He is. And this is why Paul makes sure, after laying out God's eternal purpose in chapter 1, to remind us of where we came from in chapter 2.

The road to God's eternal purpose for your life begins with the Spirit-given realization that "in the flesh dwells no good thing." The road to Christ being formed in you starts with the recognition that prior to Him there was another spirit who worked in the sons of disobedience. Or you could say the road to spiritual enlargement begins with realizing the reality of our spiritual bankruptcy. If you and I want to grow up in the Lord, then we must understand how deeply and profoundly contrary to Him we are by nature. We must allow Him to deal with us about the otherness of Christ.

You could not be like Christ any more than you could be like a fruit bat. You can flap your arms and eat a melon, but nobody is going to be fooled. You can't "do" Christ, but He can be formed in you. **But that journey begins when our impersonation of Him ends.** We have to see what Paul is saying here in these verses.

First of all he says that we are dead – dead in trespass and sin. What does it mean to be dead? Well, obviously there is a death spoken of here that has nothing to do with the death of the natural body. He was sending this letter to the **church** at Ephesus, not the cemetery of Ephesus. Biblically speaking, death is not a ceasing to exist, or becoming inanimate, but simply the lack of spiritual Life. The lack of God's Spirit residing in a soul.

Death is actually a very dynamic and active force. It just lacks life. God did not find us alive, just lacking righteousness. God found us dead, lacking His Son who's life in us is righteousness. God did not find us alive, just lacking peace with Him. No, God found us dead, lacking His Son who's life in us is our peace with God. Again, God did not find us alive, just struggling with sin. No, our verse says that God found us dead in trespass and sin. And this death reigned in every man and woman until God offered the Person who said "I am the resurrection and the Life".

The Law exposed the deadness of the natural man, it held up a righteous standard against the adamic man and showed him to be dead in sin, but death still reigned in all even before God gave the Law to Moses.

Rom 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

And in that state of death all we could produce was trespass and sin. This is called the law of sin and death. Sin is the fruit of death's tree, even as righteousness is the fruit of the Tree of Life. And so what the cross really offers us, as strange as it might sound, is **death to death**.

Now this can be a bit confusing at first. But the failure to understand this is why we Christians spend so much of our lives trying to clean up death and offer it back to God. Its why we try to patch Adam and put him back in the game. Its like we take the nasty, rotten fruit off the tree of good and evil and think that God will accept it if we make it into an apple pie. Adam pie, with ice cream.

You have to see that in God's view, that's like giving him back the garbage He just took to the curb. Can you imagine if, right after you took out the trash on garbage night, your wife went out to the curb, dragged the can back to the house, brought it inside, and started putting everything away on your shelves. Friends, when we fail to face the death of death, then we will blindly try to offer it to God in His house.

Now its not difficult to see that prior to Christ dwelling in our soul we were without Life. But I remember being confused about why the dead had to be crucified with Christ. Here we have Paul telling us that we were dead in trespass and sin. And in so many places, the New Testament talks about us being "crucified with Christ", "baptized into His death", "buried with Him", "when one died, all died" etc.

If we were dead, how could we be crucified with Christ? If we were already dead in trespass and sin, how could we become more dead? I remember exactly where I was, driving on the road, when that question popped into my mind. And I remember it being confusing.

I had seen that apart from Christ I had no life. I don't mean that I had come to believe that as true, I mean the Spirit of Truth had confronted my soul with that reality and I knew it as a reality of faith. I also knew, however, and had seen with equal clarity and spiritual reality that I had been crucified with Christ, died with Him, was baptized into His death. And so for a while, these two deaths seemed to stand in contradiction.

And yet, not only are they not contradictory, like all spiritual reality they made perfect and necessary sense in the light of His Life. The Light that shines in the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Let me try to explain. Yes Adam is dead. Dead in trespass and sin. Adam as a kind, as a nature, is separated from Life. From Adam to Christ was like the night of the living dead. However, this death was not a death that could be escaped. This death was not a death that had any hope of resurrection. This death was lifelessness, but not judgment. It was emptiness, but not justice. It was separation, but not

punishment. In other words, it was not a death that rectified anything in terms of relatedness to God. It was simply the lack of spiritual life. And Adam was hopeless in this condition, unable to be freed from anything by this death.

God said "eat this fruit and you will die". He ate the fruit, and died. And yet that death did him no good. Do you see? **It ended nothing. It didn't satisfy the Father. It didn't deal with sin. It didn't put away the old man. It didn't change his nature. It didn't justify Him before God. It didn't end the problem that man had with God. It was the problem that man had with God.**

What spiritually dead Adam needed was an **end**. What Adam needed was some sort of putting away of this death so that there could be life out of death. And you see, that is what Christ IS. That is not just what Christ "does". That is who He is – "I am the resurrection and the Life", not "I do resurrections". So Adam and his creation needed to be put away if God was going to be able to relate to us in Christ, in spirit and truth, in the heavens, in a new creation. Adam needed to be more than dead in trespass and sin, he needed to be judged, punished, separated, and put away from God's sight so that all that live could live by another Life. They could live in Christ.

Joh 6:53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you **have no life** in you.

Joh 5:25 Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, 27 and has given Him authority **to execute judgment** also, because He is the Son of Man.

You see? Here we have Jesus offering the living dead a life they have never known. Now you have Him speaking of the dead being judged in and through His death. That is what eating his flesh and drinking his blood means. I won't spend much time on that this morning, but to eat his flesh and drink his blood is to bear his death and live by His life, the New Covenant.

So what Christ offers the dead is a death that has resurrection on the other side. Adam's death produced nothing. But if Adam was brought into the death and judgment of the Son of Man, **then those who were dead IN sin could actually become dead TO sin, and alive to God IN Christ Jesus, and walk in the newness of His life.** That is simply the beginning of Romans chapter 6.

So the cross doesn't change Adam's status before God. In other words, the cross didn't make Adam alive. The cross judged Adam eternally in the death of Jesus Christ. That is why Jesus is called the last Adam. That is why Jesus says "when I am lifted up I will draw all men unto myself". **He offers death an end. He offers death a crucifixion. He doesn't change Adam's dead status before God, but He offers you an exodus out of Adam.**

The cross doesn't change Adam's nature, but it has given us a door out of that nature. It doesn't undo the garbage that Adam is, but it grants you a ladder out of one realm and into another. **It grants the dead who hear His voice a Person in Whom they can live.**

So, the spiritually dead Adam was brought into the death of Christ ("crucified with Christ") and was judged eternally...separated permanently from God with the entire old creation ("buried with Christ"), so that now we, by new birth ("born from above") can step out of one humanity and become partakers of Another ("raised with Him to walk in the newness of life").

And of course that raises the natural question – why then do I still manifest Adam? Well, we've talked at length about that in other series', but just briefly, the answer has to do with the fact that the Lord needs to take out of our heart, our understanding, our soul, what He has already taken out of His sight by the cross. We have been born of His Spirit. Our soul must now be transformed by the renewing of the mind to bear the image of what (WHO) has already happened in our spirit. If my spirit is born again, united with Christ, filled with His life....but my soul (mind, emotions, will, etc) is entirely or mostly unaware of Christ as its life, and it continues in all of its darkened understanding, carnal affections, natural minded blindness...it will fail to manifest, realize, express, or have formed in it what has already been freely given.

He who is our life must become manifestly so by the "saving of our soul", and by that I don't mean the saving of your soul from hell, but the saving of your soul from you. The transforming of our soul into the image of His life. That is why Paul often speaks of those who are "being saved". Not being saved from Hades. But being saved from the muscle memory, the un-renewed soul of the natural man.

So again, dead Adam, having been put away from God through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, **must now be crowded out of our darkened, earth bound, carnal, sense-based, flesh-loving soul through the revealing of Jesus Christ who is our life.** Colossians 3:3 "whenever Christ, your life, is revealed then you are revealed with Him in glory". The cross that finished God's work, must now work in my heart to put off the old man and put on the new man through the renewing of the spirit of the mind. (Eph. 4:22)

Now that last part took us a little bit away from our current Scripture, but is important to say nonetheless. My main point today is simply to point out from these three verses how God sees the natural man.

This Scripture doesn't say that you were headed towards death. It says you **were** dead. It doesn't say that you had some struggles with trespass and sin. It calls you dead in trespass and sin. It doesn't say you had some worldliness issues. It says you walked entirely according to the course of the world, the age of the old creation. It doesn't say that you were tempted by Satan, but that he was your prince, and in fact, you gave him expression in the earth. It doesn't say that you had some hang-ups with lust, it says you "conducted yourself in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind. It doesn't say that you did some things deserving of wrath, it said that you were by nature a child of wrath.

Can you see how Paul is taking great care to describe the dead and depraved condition of the adamic man? I hope we can, because again, its only when we see what we were and why it needed to be destroyed and not refined, that we can understand what He has given us. And that is what Paul goes on to describe in the next few verses.

Before we close I just thought I'd say a few things about verse 2 where Paul says that we all once walked according to the "prince" or ruler of the "power" or authority of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience.

As far as why Paul refers to Satan by this title, I'm not entirely certain. Most every commentator on this verse makes reference to the fact that every Jew of that time, as well as countless pagan religions, were of the mind that the air or atmosphere was the abode of demonic spirits. For whatever reason, it was the commonly held thought of the day that the air was a realm that was teeming with fallen angels, and so Paul makes reference to their prince here. I can't say for certain that that is why Paul uses that title, but whatever the reason, I'm sure he is right.

The point I want to make has less to do with the title for Satan here and more to do with the fact that Paul calls him "the spirit that works in the sons of disobedience." Now, my personal opinion is that Paul is not necessarily saying that every unbeliever is demon possessed like the Gadarene demoniac, but rather that the adamic man and his creation are the territory and "playground" of the enemy.

The human soul was created by God to be a vessel. That vessel is either the expression of one kingdom or the other. There are only two. There is no neutral ground. There is no grey area. Jesus made that clear in His teachings. Paul does so as well. In Colossians chapter 1 he says that when we were born again we were "translated out of the kingdom of darkness and made to dwell in the kingdom of the Son of His love". Two kingdoms. Two reigns working in and through the soul of man. You are born into the one. You are born again into the other.

And so we are the expression of one of two princes. One of two rulers. One of two kingdoms. Satan is called the "god of this age", the "ruler of the world", the "prince of the power of the air". And the natural man, the adamic man, is not just deceived by him, but in fact, in a multitude of ways, has become the expression of his reign.

That is why Jesus can say what He says to the Pharisees in John chapter 8.

John 8:38 I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." 39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41 You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.

I don't believe that these Pharisees happened to be uniquely more evil than the rest of their peers. I think that Jesus is simply saying that man, by nature, is a child of wrath, deceived and a deceiver, just like the Father of lies.

I say all of this this week not just to paint a bleak picture of the adamic man – although that is certainly part of my goal. I say this more so that we can, from this perspective, from this vantage point, understand more the salvation that God has granted us in and as the Person of Jesus Christ. The next verses describe the reality and substance of that salvation. But if we don't first see where we came from, we'll never understand where we are. Amen.