

We Have a Problem!

Ephesians 2:1-3

Turn with me if you would to the book of **Ephesians 2:1-3**. I want to continue on in our study of the book of Ephesians. We have up to this point been looking at some of the unseen blessings we have as God people – people of faith in Jesus Christ. In **Ephesians 1:3** we are told:

How we praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we belong to Christ.

You and I sit here this morning with more going for us than we probably are able to understand. God's plan for this universe involve us, a plan to reunite a sinful mankind through the death of Jesus Christ, back to a pure and holy God with whom we don't even deserve a glance our way.

But not only being reunited, but then being given freedom and forgiveness, kindness, wisdom and understanding, being given his Spirit so that we can have a guide living within us that will help us experience and understand the greatness of the God that we serve, who has the power to change death into life and turn any of our circumstances into circumstances of hope.

We have read of these great blessings, but do we see them that way. **Do we view our adoption into the family of God as a blessing or an intrusion?** How does one come to a place where they can truly see the immense blessings of God?

This morning we are going to look at one way and that is to see just how miserable we were before any of these blessings were ours. The best way to see how blessed we are is to see how unbled we were. That is what Paul does for us this morning. Read with me **Ephesians 2:1-3**:

Once you were dead, doomed forever because of your many sins. You used to live just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those, who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passions and desires of our evil nature. We were born with an evil nature, and were under God's anger just like everyone else.

Here we read of the condition of those without God. They were dead, doomed, full of sin, obeying Satan, not obeying God, driven by ungodly urges, in danger of being under God's anger. It doesn't take long for us to see that our culture is driven by image, obsessions, addictions, out of control behavior that sets itself against what we know in our consciences to be wrong. It is clear that our desire for God is no longer as important as the desire and wants that we have in our human nature.

By ourselves, without Christ, the scripture tells us that **we are dead**. By that Paul means that **we are completely powerless, without life, and second, we are falling apart and deteriorating**. On our own we are incapable of helping ourselves, incapable of doing anything of lasting value, and incapable of saving ourselves only rotting away and without any hope but the grave.

Paul goes on to identify two traits of one who is dead and he uses the words “trespass” and “sin”. The New International Version tells us in **Ephesians 2:1**:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.

This brings a little more clarity to our sin. First, the word **trespass** in the original Greek means “**to miss your step**”. If I was to step off this platform and I slipped I would miss the step I intended to hit. It speaks of trying to do one thing but accidentally doing something else. My heart may be right, but my mis-step landed me into doing wrong unintentionally. How many of us have ever done this, we accidentally did the wrong thing? **As human beings, we have a tendency of doing the wrong thing**. I am reminded of the words of Paul in **Romans 7:18**:

I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right, I want to, but I can't.

When I want to do what is right I can't make myself do it, even if I tried. The other part of us that breathes death is our actual sins. (First trespasses, then sins). **Sin is missing the mark but not with the idea of aiming for something and just missing it. But with the idea of willfully aiming at the wrong thing and hitting what we aim for**. Sin is going against the truth even when we know what it says. It's that definition of insanity that says “**Doing the same thing over and over again, knowing what the outcome is going to be, and yet still choosing to do it anyway.**”

We know what the outcome of sin will be – natural consequences, a wedge driven between us and God, the decrease in our intimacy with God, the danger of pride and arrogance creeping into our life making us an enemy instead of a friend with God. But how many of us end up choosing what we know is wrong, what we know is so damaging to us, and what we know will only satisfy self for a brief period of time? We all do. We are born as sinful, self-centered, out of control human beings and that is why there needs to be a rebirth so we can break out of the rut that so many remain in.

By living in our own ability in power, we will not make it very far, but by living in the power of the Holy Spirit, the power that Paul describes as having raised Christ from the dead and is able to breath life into our dead bodies, God is able to do more than we could ever dare ask or hope.

Our problem is not only that we are prone to choose and do the wrong thing, but we are also faced with **three key influences**. Paul talks about ideas and influences of **this**

world. We know that this world does not naturally choose or support a Christian viewpoint. In fact, **the world expects us to conform to them and not the other way around.** And unfortunately, that tension has brought the church to a point of compromise. I am not talking about being legalistic, I am talking about following our Father God in obedience. Obedience has become conditional. God wants us to be the salt and light to the world and not the other way around. Paul said in **Romans 12:2:**

Don't copy (conform to) the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

The main influence in your life is to be your relationship with Jesus Christ and the body of believers whom you call your church home.

The second influence is **Satan** himself. There is a force at work in this world that creates opportunities for disobedience. He is one who infiltrates our culture and pollutes it with anti-Christ thoughts and desires. **He is a disobedient spirit, who is constantly challenging every law and force that God has established.** Think about it, how does mankind come up with so many extreme ideas and concepts that attack God's will and standards?

The Third influence brings it back to personal and that is the "**passions and desires of our evil nature.**" The term "passions" here in this text isn't necessarily a negative word, because it simply means those things that we are prone to want. As human being we become hungry, thirsty, we desire sex, attention, purchasing things, and being entertained. All these things aren't necessarily bad. Even Jesus used the very word passion in **Luke 22:15** when he told the disciples in the upper room:

"I have eagerly desired (with passion and desire) to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer."

The problem that Paul is pointing out for us is when our desires and passions completely consume and control us. We can't stop thinking about it, we can't make decisions without it, we can't live without it. **It is when our need for these passions and desires outweigh our need for God, and they become our source of sustenance and we become a slave to them.**

The reason we trespass (Misstep) or that we sin (purposefully miss the mark) is that we are in a battle. We live in a world that goes against the grain of God's plan, we are attacked on all sides by ideas birth of demonic origin, and we tend to take any normal desire or passion and we overindulge and make them our source instead of resting in God's desires and passions for us. Because of all of this look at verse 3 and see what Paul says we are, "Children of wrath, those under God's anger." **We deserve the wrath and anger of God.**

When one talks about the wrath of God we picture in our minds a lightening bolt coming down out of the sky leaving ashes of those being punished, but if you read through Paul teachings in the book of Romans we find that Paul's idea of **God's wrath is what we would call "inevitable consequences."** That all wrong actions lead to consequences. If we make poor choices or ignore warnings we risk experiencing consequences.

Like a teenage girl who ends up being pregnant, having to raise a child at such a young age, struggling to make a living and take care of her child, having to grow up faster than anticipated. Like an alcoholic or addict who becomes dependent upon a drug, not able to function with clarity of mind, damaging their body, hurting relationships around them, being controlled by a force greater than themselves. I am sure we can all come up with other examples. Sin always has repercussions and unfortunately our sin never only effect us but others as well.

We end up making poor choices and then cry out to God about how unfair he is when the reality is that we deserve it. Paul tells us that we were born with an evil nature. We were born into this condition and it doesn't matter how hard we try to correct it ourselves we will never succeed. We are part of a fallen humanity. We have a problem! We face an up hill battle. But look at the next two words in **Ephesians 2:4, "But God,..."** God comes and turns all this around. **In order to see just how blessed you are, you need to see how who you were before Jesus called you to his own.**

God stepped in and makes the difference. The next time you find yourself falling or heading into sin remember **"But God has made it possible for me to choose differently"** The next time you find yourself being tempted by the spirit of disobedience, Satan himself, remember **"But God has made a way out."** The next time the world become overwhelming in its influence and the need to conform tugs at you remember **"But God is greater than this world and he wants me to be transformed by his resurrecting spirit that can bring life where there is death."**

The problem is that we forget just how blessed we are and we end up compromising our riches in Christ. As Christians, there are still many who go back to their old way of life, there are those who put God aside in an effort to ignore him, there are those who have traded God's authority in their life for their own desires, their own wants and their own passions. And in the church today there are still those who continue to make excuses for their disobedience in order that they may remain in it.

If that is you, you haven't embraced the riches that are yours in the heavenly realm. You have remained the central theme in your life and you have yet to adopt God as your father. It is time for you to give yourself up and live a life of praise to the one who makes all things new. Its time for you to hand over control and power to the one who can help you out of your rut. ***Christians are the most blessed people, they are rich in the spiritual realm, but until they grasp their inheritance in Christ, they will never see it that way. We have a problem and it is only by recognizing our condition and what God is able to do about it, that we will see and live as those who are eternally indebted to Jesus Christ. Realize who you are in contrast to who God is.***