

But God ...

- *Ephesians 2:1-7*

- Folks this morning I just want to say that I am glad I serve a powerful God, a God Who is in charge and a God who Knows my needs, aren't you?
- As we face the uncertainty of a New Year, I find hope & confidence in knowing that God not only loves me & cares for me, but that He will walk with me through whatever may come my way.
 - He knows the situations we will face.
 - He knows the problems that will arise.
 - He knows the good times and the blessings that are certain to follow us.
 - He knows that there will be days where we will need to lean on Him and then there will be other days where He will be all that we need.
 - Brother this morning I am glad that my trust and my confidence is not in one
 - who MIGHT be able help me out,
 - not in one that MAY find time for me,
 - not in one who HOPEFULLY will hear my prayers,
 - not in one who has LIMITED power to deliver me,
 - But I serve a God Who will ALWAYS be there to guide my every step,
 - He will ALWAYS take time for one of His children,
 - He is a God Who hears EVERY prayer that is uttered from our lips,
 - A God Who not just has some power but holds ALL POWER to deliver me both now and for eternity.
- But I am going to tell you something else great about my God. He is a God that not only knows my future, but one of the things that makes Him so great is that, praise God, He knows my past & yet He still loves me; and because of that fact, I love Him even more.
- Paul opens up chapter 2 and as we close out 2015 and Lord willing enter into a New Year, I want us to be reminded of why we needed a Savior & the amazing grace that God showed toward us as sinners.

I. What I Was (v. 1)

- The first thing Paul mentions is our spiritual life without Christ and he sums it up in one word . . . DEAD! That's what we are without Christ in our life, we are dead.
 - I am not talking about being sick in our sins or needing to be revived out of our sins, we were DEAD!
 - What we are talking about here is there's no spiritual temperature, we are cold to the things of God.
 - We have no reason or understanding of God and the things that He chooses to do.
 - We can do nothing to please God, we have no appetite for the Word of God and we cannot hear the calling of God on our life. We are just DEAD!
 - The reason we don't appreciate or we take for granted the love of God is b/c we forget the state that God saved us from. Instead of looking at God, we look to others to justify our behavior & our sins.
 - Well that person is not as bad as this person.
 - I may be hanging around this person but it could be worse.
 - Surely God will look over me, I haven't done the things that others have done.
 - And what we need to do is stop reasoning for just a second and realize that we are all sinners & we are DEAD spiritually without Christ!

- If a person dies of natural causes or in committing a horrible crime, it doesn't change the status of their condition, one person is not more dead than the other, **THEY ARE BOTH STILL DEAD!**
- Neither is one sinner "not as bad" as another. We are all **DEAD** without Christ.
- **He goes a little deeper to explain the reasons we are dead here in verse 1.**

a. Dead In Trespasses

- Trespass: to unlawfully pass a boundary; to wrong or offend
- i. Before a person can be saved, they must understand this fact that they have committed wrong or an offense against a Holy God. We have offended a Holy God b/c of our sin.
 1. We all have "crossed the line" in not living up to the standard that God intended.
 - a. Go all the way back to the Garden of Eden, Adam & Eve have the entire Garden to eat from with the exception of one tree.
 - b. Because of the sin of Adam & Eve, all have been born sinful.
 2. We have all fallen short the Bible tells us in Romans 3:23.

b. Dead In Sins (vv. 2-3)

- i. In other words, we fell short of God's mark when we allowed sin into our lives.
- ii. Paul goes on in verse 2 to talk about our walk throughout life, the things that we use to live for and our worldly desires by listing the 3 enemies that every person faces:
 1. World (Enticements)
 - a. As an individual, you have a free will to either follow the conforming of this world or we choose to be conformed after Christ.
 - i. Lust of the Flesh
 - ii. Lust of the Eyes
 - iii. Pride of Life
 - b. Listen, if you choose to follow after this world, it doesn't take much on your part b/c we are already sinful. This world is out to deceive you and to get you to think that this world is all about you . . . but it's not! We were created to bring glory and honor to a Holy God, not to ourselves.
 - i. It's affecting our young generation.
 - ii. It's affecting our middle-aged generation.
 - iii. One of the reasons churches aren't full today is because people are glorying in themselves rather than glorying in God.
 2. Flesh (Vulnerability)
 - a. We were all born with a sinful nature.
 - i. Since Adam & Eve, every man, woman, boy & girl has come into this world with a sin nature, with the exception of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - ii. We are living in a time where we attempt to blame everyone & everything for the wrong that we do.
 1. We blame our childhood,
 2. We blame our marriage,
 3. We blame our families,
 4. We blame our jobs,
 5. We blame the weather,

iii. But church, you & I act like sinners b/c we are sinners. We sin b/c we choose to sin. We follow this world & the sinfulness of the world b/c the Bible says, "men love darkness rather than light."

iv. We are not a sinner b/c we sin; we sin b/c we are sinners.

3. Devil (Energizes Both)

- a. Satan is a powerful foe, and though he is not as powerful as God, he still possesses a lot of power, especially over those who do not follow after God.
- b. As far as the Bible records, Satan has been about deceiving and destroying lives and causing destruction.
- c. Now he masks this in a great way by deceiving people into thinking they are having a good time and they have their whole life ahead of them.

iii. This is a dark side of our life that Paul shows, but I think it is important to see where God brought us from.

iv. But now that is all over with. If you have accepted Christ, that is in the past.

II. What I Am (vv. 4-6)

○ "But God..." (a blessed interruption)

- This is one of those phrases in scripture that I have learned to pay attention to because it always means that God is stepping in and about to do something special, something miraculous, and this time is no different.

a. A Forgiven Sinner

○ The Bible tells us that God extended 2 marvelous things toward us at the time of our salvation:

i. His Rich Mercy

1. God's compassion for us was extended through His mercy.
2. God knew what we deserved.
 - a. We deserved death.
 - b. We deserved hell.
 - c. We deserved judgment.
 - d. We deserved to pay for our sins.
3. His mercy refuses to give us what we DO deserve, and His grace gives to us what we DON'T deserve!

ii. His Great Love

1. Love is one of the great attributes of God, but to sinners His love is shown through grace and His mercy.
2. It was His love for us that took Him to the cross, but it was through His grace and mercy that you and I are able to be saved.
3. "For GOD so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son"

b. An Heir To The Throne

- i. What does it mean for you and I to be seated with Christ?
 1. We are no longer children of this world; we are now Children of the King.
 2. We are no longer under the power of Satan. Yes we will be tempted, but we don't have to fall because we are seated with Christ.
 3. We have the power of Christ on our lives and in our lives to live a Christian life.

III. What I Will Be (vs. 7)

a. Blessed by God Both Now And For Eternity

- i. If we will accept Him as our Lord and Savior, we can receive His blessings and protection on our life.
- ii. When we accept Christ as our personal Savior, the Bible says that we are “joint-heirs with Christ”.
 - 1. We have the right to talk with Him.
 - 2. We have the right to bring our needs to our Heavenly Father.
 - a. We don’t have to go through a priest or pastor.
 - b. We don’t have to do enough good deeds to be able to talk with Him.
 - c. Because we are His children, we are privileged to go to our Heavenly Father and petition our needs, our requests and our praises unto Him.

b. Rich In The Blessings Of God.

- i. We will be able to receive His great riches that He has provided for us on Earth.
 - 1. Protection
 - 2. Guidance
 - 3. Help
 - 4. Fuller Life
 - 5. Joy
 - 6. Peace
- ii. We will be able to receive His great riches that He has provided for us in Heaven.
 - 1. Everlasting life.
 - 2. Eternity in Heaven.
 - 3. Our crowns and our rewards.
 - 4. New bodies, we will be like Him.

c. One Day, We Will Be With Him.

- i. Of all the things we have to look forward to in Heaven, I am sure it will all take second place to the fact of being with our Lord and Savior for eternity!