

"The Glorious Life of Christ"

Ephesians 2:1-3

April 13, 2008
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"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Eph 2:1-3)

Introduction: "hath he quickened" comes from verse 5. Verses 1-3 describe the state of the ungodly before they are given life in Jesus Christ. The things that are mentioned in these verses are a specific example of what Paul had just been speaking of at the end of chapter 1. Let us review what he had said.

Review: Paul had prayed that "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places...."

At this time I would remind you of the words of Christ in Luke 11: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." (Lu 11:21-22)

This great second chapter of Ephesians describes the great victory of Christ, by His mighty power—the greatness of his power to us who believe.

The strong man that Jesus refers to is the prince of the power of the air, described in Ephesians 2 who holds his subjects in bondage.

I. The bondage is a spiritual bondage, in the inner man, in the souls, not in the body. Satan keeps his palace and those enslaved are enslaved with chains much stronger than those made of the hardest steel or hardest material imaginable. These are chains that bind the mind and the heart.

A. This bondage is to one called the prince of the power of the air, as spirit who now works in the children of disobedience.

1. This prince is the devil himself: as we read that minister must “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” (2Ti 2:25-26)

2. Jesus said that sin is the most fundamental bondage: “34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” (Joh 8:34-36)

B. Satan works in the unbelievers who are called “children of disobedience.” The natural man is at enmity with the law of God, and cannot be subject to it, because the power of the devil is stronger than he, and he cannot do otherwise. “Children of disobedience” means that they are children of disobedience: that their inner condition is the result of the disobedience of our first parent, Adam.

1. Romans 5 tells us that “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, because all have sinned.” We are rightly called children of disobedience because of the disobedience of our first parent, Adam. We are born under the curse of Adam’s sin, and are thus called the children of disobedience.

2. Because we are born under the curse of God, because of the disobedience of Adam, we are born in bondage to sin and misery, under the power of the devil and we cannot deliver ourselves. As we read in Scripture:

a) “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;” (Heb 2:14)

b) Paul said that his gospel was “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” (Ac 26:18)

C. Their condition in the bondage is described as death, “dead in trespasses and in sins.” Because unbelievers are alienated from the life of God [4:18], it is right and proper that they be called dead, for they can think nothing or do nothing that is pleasing to God.

1. Their thought is filled with lies and self-deception; their works are transgression against God, their worship is corrupt and idolatrous, their rule is either tyranny or abandonment of true responsibility.

2. The worst of their condition is this: they are completely unaware that this is

their condition. Paul said, "I was alive without the law, but when the law came, sin revived and I died." He is speaking of his self-awareness. He thought he was alive until the Scripture convinced him that he was actually dead toward God, toward love, toward righteousness.

3. Another description of their miserable condition of sin and misery is this: "walking according to the course of the world." Scripture describes them as only knowing what they know naturally. "But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." (Jude 1:10) They do not know the voice of the shepherd, showing that they are not His sheep, as He said.

4. This death also denotes their complete hopelessness and helplessness. There is nothing that they can do, for he who keeps the house is stronger than they are and they cannot deliver themselves.

D. This "walking according to the course of the world" is further described by the other phrases in this passage:

1. Trespasses and sins. Tresspass means a fault, a falling off, an offence against God. "Sin" has the idea of wrongness, like taking a wrong pass, making a terrible mistake, an offense against God. It is said to be coming short of the glory of God, or a transgression of the law of God.

2. Lusts of the flesh. The unlawful desires of the body are indicated. People would rather live in their lusts than live lives that are pleasing to God. The body becomes the instrument of sin. But the lusts of the flesh are twofold: desires of the body, and the desires of the mind.

a) They include both the lawless desires of the body, lusts that will not be curbed, not be controlled. How many people have fallen to shame and misery because they could not control the desires of the body. But there is a slavery worse than that:

b) The lusts of our flesh also include the desires of the mind. Spiritual desires are even more enslaving than the desires of the body. Why would people offer their babies in the fire to Moloch; why would they sacrifice everything for impossible dreams? Apart from God and apart from truth and righteousness. Whole nations and peoples are filled with madness and rush to destruction because of lies that enslave them.

c) It is a bondage from which they cannot deliver themselves.

3. Children of wrath by nature: the disobedience brings the wrath of God. As we read in Scripture:

a) “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.” (2Th 1:6-10)

b) Their very sinful and disobedient natures make them worthy of the wrath of God. In the day of wrath God will show them no mercy and will delight in their judgment, for they are immanently worthy of the wrath of God. c) This judgment is described in Proverbs

“Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; 25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; 27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. 28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: 29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: 30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. 31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. 32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.” (Pr 1:24-32)

II. Be assured that you and I were born in this same condition. Paul is praying that the eyes of our understanding would be opened so that we could understand the wonderful things that we have in Christ.

A. One of these is to understand the awful destruction from which we have been saved. There was an awful horror that awaited us in eternity if we were not delivered from the bondage of the devil and brought to peace with God through our Lord Jesus.

B. The other thing, would be the marvelous grace that we have in Jesus Christ, who by His mighty power has overcome the power of the strong man, the devil and all his kingdom, in order to deliver from his power all those who are held in bondage into the glorious liberty and life of the Lord Jesus.

C. The mighty power that raised Christ from the dead, the power of the Holy Spirit, is given to deliver us from the terrible bondage of our sin and trespasses, so that the work of faith, hope, and love might be done in us, the works of life and peace.

D. We will expand this in the verses that follow in the sermon next week. Thank God for our Lord Jesus, who is stronger than all the power of the devil, of sin and death and hell, for he plucked the power of death, by destroying the power of sin, by taking our guilt upon himself and fully satisfying the justice of God, so that God might be just, and the justifier of all those who believe.

May God Bless you.

Amen and Amen.