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OUR LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST
Ephesians 2:1-3

Ephesians 2: ¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath

Pray

INTRODUCTION

Can you believe it? One month from now, we will be celebrating Christmas again. I love Christmas because as Christians it gives us the opportunity to focus on Christ and why God became man.

But today, by God's grace, we will focus on the times when we didn't know who Christ is. What was our situation before we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour?

Benefits of Remembering our past life when we didn't have Christ :

It makes us GRATEFUL and that we are GRACEFUL

Grateful of who we are and what we have and it is all by God's grace.

Story :

The concert impresario, Sol Hurok, liked to say that Marian Anderson hadn't simply grown great, she'd grown great simply. He says: "A few years ago a reporter interviewed Marian and asked her to name the greatest moment in her life. I was in her dressing room at the time and was curious to hear the answer. I knew she had many big moments to choose from. There was the night Toscanini told her that hers was the finest voice of the century. There was the private concert she gave at the White House for the Roosevelts and the King and Queen of England. She had received the \$10,000 Bok Award as the person who had done the most for her home town, Philadelphia. To top it all, there was that Easter Sunday in Washington when she stood beneath the Lincoln statue and sang for a crowd of 75,000, which included Cabinet members, Supreme Court Justices, and most members of Congress. She also won many awards and was even an U.N. ambassador. Which of those big moments did she choose? "None of them," said Hurok. "Miss Anderson told the reporter that the greatest moment of her life was the day she went home and told her mother she wouldn't have to take in washing anymore."

LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST

I. SPIRITUALLY DEAD

¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

*¹As for you... – in referral to Paul’s enumeration in chapter 1
...you were dead in your transgressions and sins,*

Etymology :

- Transgressions (trespass in KJV) – paraptoma – to deviate – e.g. no trespassing
- Sins – hamartia – to miss the mark

Important : A lot of people think they can go to heaven because they are “good” or “better” than others. The problem is they are using their own standard to measure their “goodness” or what we call “righteousness” (a right standing before God). They measure themselves against others or their own conceived notion of what is right or good.

But the essence of “transgressions” and “sin” in the Bible is that we should measure our own “goodness” with the standard God has given. And the standard is God Himself. In short, we must be perfect. That’s why Romans 3:12 states, *“There is no one good, not even one...”* and on verse 23 it states the reason, *“...for all have sinned and fallen short (there’s that missing the mark) of the glory of God.”*

Example : In short, in order to make 2 points in basketball we have to make sure the ball goes into the ring. It’s easy, if the height of the ring is the usual 10ft – that’s the standard. But the standard height of God’s goal is more than a million feet. So no matter how hard we try, we will never get that ball into God’s ring. It’s just too high. That why we *fall short of the glory of God.*

Explanation : Now in order to understand, we “were dead” (it means spiritually dead without Christ, we have to comprehend the value of God’s holiness by knowing the...

Illustration : The movie Sixth Sense popularized the phrase, “I see dead people”. It’s about this little boy who sees dead people and the main character of the story is talking to this boy and the reason why he is able to talk to this boy is because he is dead and yet doesn’t realize that.

There’s a lot of people right now around us who don’t realize that they are dead.

What are the characteristics of dead people?

- **Dead people can’t understand** – (hindi makakita, hindi makarinig, in short dead, sigawan mo yan, pagalitan mo yan, hindi pa rin makakaintindi because they’re dead)

Illustration : Ravi Zacharias told a personal story that he bought his wife this beautiful necklace from an exotic country where the jewels were rare and it was made by this famous jeweller in that place. He rode the plane going home and made sure the necklace was with him and when he got home gave the necklace to his wife. They both appreciated the intricacies and the beauty of the necklace.

But the following morning, while he was having breakfast, he heard a crunching sound and he saw their dog, chewing and munching on that rare necklace. He immediately went to the dog and got the necklace from it and cried because it was mangled. What can he do? He can't explain the situation to the dog, because the dog doesn't understand the rareness, the exquisiteness, the value and the cost of that necklace.

That necklace is just like God's holiness, we have trampled on it, chewed on it, (binaboy) natin simply because we don't see its value. We don't understand its value.

- **Dead people can't respond**

Illustration : John McArthur told of a story that a little boy called a minister and asked, "Are you the minister?" and that minister said "yes" and the little boy said, "Come to our house please." So the minister followed the boy and when they opened the door, he saw the mother of the boy sobbing and wailing because she was holding her dead baby in her arms. The mother was embracing and kissing the baby but there was just no response from the baby.

Just like us, since we are spiritually dead, God loves us so much and He wants us to respond to Him but the problem is we can't, simply because we are dead.

Romans 3:11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

We are spiritually dead, that's why we can't understand and respond to the Gospel. We don't understand the Gospel and can't receive it... **the Bible even describes our situation aside from being dead..., we are blind.** It means, no matter how someone describes to you the color blue, you will never really understand it. **This is the reason some people can't understand the Gospel, or don't believe in God and His Word, because they are dead or blind.** Plus we have an enemy that does this to us.

2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Which now brings us to...

II. SIDE WITH THE DEVIL

2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

Remember : In the spiritual realm, there are only two sides, it's either a person is with Christ or he is with the devil.

Matthew 12:30 *"He who is not with me is against me..."* (the context of this verse is that Christ was accused that the reason he can expel demons is that he is with the prince of demons, Belzebub)

How do you know you are on the side of the devil?

a. **Worldliness**

"when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air..."

Remember, all our actions are based on what we believe. And all of our beliefs are based on an idea....that's why Ephesians 2:2 says without Christ, a person follows *"the way (the philosophies)...of the ruler of the kingdom of the air (aer)." That's why it's very important to be mindful of what you believe in.*

Explanation : What is worldliness?

2 Corinthians 10:2 I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. 3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

In short, as we read in 2 Cor 10:2-6, the devil just comes out with all sorts of
"...arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God..."

Quote : Being worldly is contradictory with God's Word

Worldliness is any action or any idea that is not in tune with the Word of God (the Bible) is coming from the ruler of the kingdom of the air. **It means we are following the philosophies of this world instead of God's Word.**

What are some of the worldly philosophies?

Humanism - the center of things is man – it gives prime importance on man, his own needs and wants without thinking of the divine

Materialism - prime importance on material things

Relativism – the idea of truth is relative – it depends on each person

If you agree with the world's philosophies, you are agreeing with the devil and look at what James says about that...

James 4: 4 You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God.

b. Disobedience

... the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

Definition of disobedience according to the Bible : It is any thought that we think and action that we do that is not according to God's word. SO, even if it looks morally good, but it is not according to God's word...that's disobedience.

VERY IMPORTANT : The dangerous thing, people don't see it because they don't know it. Why? Because it is the "*spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient*"
People can't see "*the ruler of the kingdom of the air*"

And that's what satan likes, people not believing in the reality of him and devils, so he can operate more efficiently.

Application : That's why for example, may kinaiinisan ako at naku gusto kong gumanti, papaalalahanan ako ni Chicay, "Hindi galing sa Dios iyan." That idea of revenge and tuloy-tuloy na pagkainis comes from the ruler of the kingdom of the air.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 ¹⁰If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, ¹¹in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

Now what is wrong when are on the side of the devil?

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Biblical Illustration : Remember how he deceived Adam and Eve?

III. SELFISH DESIRES

³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.

Living without Christ is characterized by

- Lustfulness

³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature (lust of the flesh in the KJV version)

Etymology : cravings (lust) – epithymia – craving for something that is forbidden

Ice break : Minsan, nagjobjoke kaming mag-asawa at kapag nilalambing ko siya ang sasabihin niya, "B, masama yan, pinagnanasahan mo ang asawa mo, di ba lust yan?" But the meaning of lust is "craving for something that is forbidden" And my wife is not forbidden to me. Kaya, go ahead husband and wife, you can "crave" for each other.

Sinful nature (flesh) – sarx – flesh, meat...laman...

So it means, to lust is part of us... just as long as you are in the flesh...you will have those lusts

Explanation : Lust doesn't only apply to wanting another man's wife or another woman if you already have a wife. Lust also applies to craving to what your neighbour has...that's why one of the ten commandments (9th and 10th)

Deuteronomy 5: 21 You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Craving to what your neighbour has, that's when envy...jealousy... pride starts.

- **Selfishness**

and following its desires and thoughts. (fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind KJV)

Etymology : desires – thelema - what one wishes or has determined shall be done

Meaning : Selfishness means doing something that one wants without regard to others thoughts, feelings or needs or without regard to what God wants. In short, "Basta gagawin ko ang gusto kong gawin. Wala akong pakialam."

And because of all of this, we are...

IV. SET FOR DESTRUCTION

v. 3b Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. (and were by nature the children of wrath KJV version)

- **We can't do anything about it,**

Like the rest, we were by nature...

Etymology : nature – physis – the order of things

Story : There was a scorpion who wanted to cross the river but he knows he will drown if he does. But a frog came by the river's edge and the scorpion asked the frog if he can ride on his back so he can cross the river. The frog agreed on one condition, knowing that scorpions sting when they are startled, he asked the scorpion not to do that while they were in the middle of the river when they are startled by the waves or else both of them would perish. The scorpion agreed. But while in the middle of the river, a wave startled the scorpion and then stung the frog.

The frog feeling the pain of the sting and the poison slowly killing his body, asked the scorpion, "Why did you sting me? I thought we had an agreement." The scorpion answered, "I'm sorry, but I'm a scorpion, that's my nature, I sting when startled." And both of them perished.

- **Because we were born with it.**

Objects (children) of wrath

Explanation : We've inherited the sinful nature. A person without Christ is a child of wrath. So in order to escape this wrath, he must change his nature, he must have a new nature, he must become a child of God and that's the meaning of being born again.

John 1: ¹²Yet to all who received him(Christ), to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³children born not of natural descent, ^[a] nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Note : If a person is without Christ, he then becomes a target of God's wrath... God's punishment. Never ever, equate the wrath of God with the kind of wrath man exhibits. The wrath of man is borne out of his evil nature. **But the wrath (punishment) of God is borne out of His goodness.**

Will you call a judge "good", if he doesn't punish law breakers and offenders? Will you call a ruler "good", if he doesn't want to restore order in an unruly country? That's what God's wrath is all about. If a person is without Christ, someday he will experience the punishment of God. God will restore order in His universe by taking out the rebellious from His sight. Those people who were offered reconciliation by God through Christ but has refused it will experience the blazing guns of God's wrath.

SUMMARY :

Without Christ,

We are spiritually dead, we are on the side of the devil, we follow our selfish desires and because of that we are set for destruction.

CONCLUSION :

(Show video) Man saves sleeping family from fire.

It's only by God's grace that they were saved from the fire.

But what's scarier than this is not only dying in the fire but dying and going into eternal fire. This is the reason why in verse 4, it says...

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Now that we've looked into who and what we really are without Christ, we can appreciate what we have in Christ even more. We can appreciate what Christmas is all about – it's about God becoming man in order to die on the cross for us to take the punishment for our sin.

Next week, Lord willing, we will talk about life with Christ.

S.G.D.