

Review : Ephesians 2:1-3 Life Without Christ

1. We were dead (spiritually dead) in trespass and sin
2. We were under the devil
3. We were following our selfish desires
4. We were on our way to destruction

Big Deal 1: God's holiness. We will never know why it's a big deal we've violated God's holiness simply because we weren't the ones who got violated.

Illustration : In the Philippines, there was a big uproar because of a statement made by a former Justice minister about many cases of women being raped. He said that in the instance a woman is being raped, "she should just try to enjoy it." What an uproar it caused! Why? It is not the rapist who feels the gravity of being raped, it is the one being raped. Sa babae nga, mahipuan lang is you feel like you were violated already. I know of a pastor who wanted to take a gun and take matters into his own hand when one of his daughters was raped by a person he trusted. That is wrath. And God is also a God of wrath because we violated Someone who is sacred and it's Him.

Illustration 2 : Me and Chicay had a vacation when Zak was still a baby. But it was cut short when Chicay's dad called and said that our house has been robbed. When we went home, the house was in complete disarray. I was shocked not because I was robbed but because I felt violated. I felt that someone "trespassed" "violated" the sacredness, "holiness" of my place. To me, it was a big thing but to the robber it wasn't because he does it all the time.

Note : And because we violated God's holiness and since he is a God of justice and wrath, the proper reaction from Him is to punish the sinner. And what is the punishment, SEPARATION FROM HIM... (that's the meaning of being spiritually dead, more into this later). Do you want someone who raped you to be near you? Do you want someone who robbed your house to sleep in your house?

Big Deal 2: Sinful nature. We don't know how much we are under the devil's control and how the sinful nature has total control over us simply because we don't understand God's holiness.

Challenge : Do you want to know the power of your sinful nature? Do your best to live a holy life for a month! When I say a holy life, you will only think of pure things, you will only try to show love to everyone. You will give generously to one that asks from you. You will not harbour grudges or show anger to anyone. For a month, and you will know how much of a struggle it is. That's because of the sinful nature. We are hopeless.

Secondly : It's not only what we do that makes us sinners. It's also what we fail to do that makes us sinners. And what is that? To achieve the standard God has set for us...and what is that His standard...His holiness.

Conclude : That's why it says in verse 1, without Christ, we "were DEAD in your transgressions (trespass) and sins...."

Characteristic of the Dead :

1. They cannot understand.
2. They cannot respond.

In short, there's no way we can have a relationship with God.

This now goes to

Big Deal 3 : What do you want to happen when someone you love dies? You want them to live again!!! So you can hold them, talk to them, touch them, embrace them, be with them, inshort... just shower your love to that dear one again.

Which now lead us to...

Read Ephesians 2:4-10

⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Pray

v. 4 *⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,*

Etymology : great love – polys agape - super, abounding unconditional love.

Mercy – eleos - kindness to the miserable, afflicted.

Connect: Because God super loves us and He wants to show kindness to our hopeless situation, He did this for us...

I. WE ARE ALIVE WITH CHRIST

⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

1. We can now communicate with God.

⁵made us alive with Christ

Question: What is the essence of communication? We understand. We respond.

Question : What is the indication that there's a problem with a relationship? Lack of communication.

Question : What caused the problem in our relationship with God? Sin
Psalm 66:18 "If I have cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."

Question : What happens when there is good communication in a relationship? We will know each other better. We will understand each other better.

Note : But God already knows us...the benefit is, we will know Him.

Our Life's Goal : It is to know Him.

Jeremiah 9: 23 This is what the LORD says:

*"Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom
or the strong man boast of his strength
or the rich man boast of his riches,*

24 but let him who boasts boast about this:

*that he understands and knows me,
that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness,
justice and righteousness on earth,
for in these I delight,"
declares the LORD.*

The Problem : Man either doesn't know his goal or has misplaced his goal.

Illustration : The game of chess. What is the goal or purpose in the game of chess? To get the king. If you don't know that, chess is just a bunch of squares and is not exciting at all. But there's also another problem, when I was trying to play chess, I learned that the most powerful piece in chess is the queen. So instead of making my goal to get the king, I tried to get the queen. In the end, I got the queen but the problem is lost the game because I didn't get the king.

And the world is living like that.

But if you know that your goal is to know Him or understand Him, even suffering has a meaning.

Sample : How would you know that God is more than enough if HE doesn't allow times of sickness or weakness? How would you know that God is the provider if HE doesn't allow times of need? How would you know that God is loving and merciful if HE didn't give you the freewill to choose to disobey Him or not?

2. We now have a companion in Christ.

⁵made us alive with Christ

Illustration : When Chicay and I got engaged, when we were about to say goodbye and go to our respective homes, it was so hard to separate with her. We often say, "I hope we get married soon... I hope we can finally live together in one house."

To be with the one you love and one who loves you is a source of great happiness, great joy and great peace.

But to be with Christ is also a source of great security.

Illustration : Last night, my daughter said she wants to sleep in the living room by herself. I asked her why? She told me, "Because I want to conquer my fears..." I reminded her again, "Why would you be afraid when Jesus is with you?"

⁵made us alive with Christ when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Explanation : To be made alive in Christ is out of God's grace (kagandahang loob)
Why?

- 1. The reason we were dead is because of our sin. So we need His grace.**
Romans 5:8 But God demonstrated His own love for us through this : while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.
- 2. Now that we became dead because of sin, the next problem is the dead cannot raise himself to life again. So we need His grace.**

⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

II. WE ARE LIVING WITH CHRIST.

⁶And God raised us up with Christ

Note : God did not only save us, he secured us. How did He secure us? By lifting us up.

He didn't say, "Okay, I've saved you, but now you're on your own. I've done my part."...

Illustration : If you see somebody in the quicksand and you have a rope, what would you do? You would throw him the rope, make sure he wouldn't sink further and then pull him out of the quicksand so he wouldn't need to sink again. What a foolish thing to think that God will just hand us a rope, just to save us but will not make sure that we are not secure. That's why verse 4 says, *"But because of his great love...rich in mercy"*

1. We are secure because of our spiritual position.

⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

Application : We are now spiritually seated with Him...I'll repeat it again, we are now seated with Him. You are sitting there right now but if you are a Christian, the truth is you are seated with Him in the heavenly realms. If that doesn't give you a sense of security, I don't know what to say anymore.

Sample : If Microsoft would announce that they would have lay-offs, the employees would be afraid that they would lose their "position". The only two people who are not afraid to lose their positions are the owner of the company and the co-owner (Bill Gates and Paul Allen) of the company. When we are seated with Christ, we are co-heirs with Christ.

2. We are secure because of our spiritual place

⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus

Illustration : One of my officemates who has Korean parents but was born and raised here who speaks fluent English and fluent Korean went to Korea to teach English. He was there during the time of the Asian Crisis. Most of the girls he would meet would ask him, "Marry me...take me with you to Canada."

Please read Philippians 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven....

Then read...

v.7 *in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

Illustration : Before we were citizens of the Philippines and now that we're here in Canada, we enjoy all the benefits of being a citizen in Canada...especially the OHIP which was really beneficial for us.

The moment we stepped here, we started to enjoy the "riches" of Canada expressed by the "kindness" of the country of Canada.

But as we read, we are seated *in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus* which means we are citizens of heaven and ever since we became permanent residents of heaven because of Christ, we are enjoying the incomparable riches of his grace not only today but in the ages to come.

Then read

.⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

Read again :

v.5 ...made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in transgression – *it is by grace you have been saved.*

To live with Christ and to be lifted with Christ in heaven...

1. *It is by grace*

We get it...

2. *through faith*

How does this work? – *and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

How can you have the gift that is being given to you? By receiving it by faith.

Note on Faith: We practise it every day. When you sat down on your chair, did you check if it was sturdy... you just sat down, right? When you drank water earlier, did you check the pipes it passed through... even if it's bottled water, how can you be sure that it's clean? Is it just because the manufacturer says the bottled water is clean?

If we can exercise it in our everyday life then why can't we believe what God says.

⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

We can't say dahil nag-attend tayo ng Bible study, nagpakabuti ako, we can be saved...no...no...no one can boast.

Story : There was a man who heard that there was a popular evangelistic preacher that was in their city. As we know, when an evangelistic crusade is held, a big tent is set up and people come in to hear about God's plan of salvation of us. But the man was late. He already saw the workers folding the tent. Knowing that he was already late and knowing that he needed to be saved because he knew he led a sinful life, he cried to the worker, "What do I need to do to be saved?" The worker told him, "You're too late." But

the man told him, "What do I need to do to be saved?" The worker told him again, "You're too late." But the man kept on crying and asked louder, "What do I need to do to be saved?" The worker answered, "You're too late. Because you don't have to do anything to be saved. It was done 2000 years ago by Jesus Christ."

The Bible says, "*Prepare to meet Thy God.*" Amos 4:12

Are you prepared to meet Jesus? Have you received His gift of eternal life which He has given us 2000 years ago?

Note : The world is concerned to live a longer life but the Christian is secure because he doesn't need to live longer because he knows he will live forever.

III. WE LIVE FOR CHRIST

¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

1. A Christian is made by God.

For we are God's workmanship

Etymology : workmanship – poema – masterpiece

2. A Christian is made by God to do good works

, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,

In Christ – it is Christ doing His good works through us

Explain : When you are serving or doing good works or forgiving or loving even your enemies, it is the power of Christ that does it because you are IN Christ.

Illustration : I love power steering. We move the steering wheel to the left and to the right specially during parking but it's the many gears that work inside that does all the work that makes it easy. The problem with us is we try to move the car by pushing it instead of turning the key and just letting the engine work.

3. A Christian just has to follow God's lead

which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Explain : The only requirement in doing good works is obedience. Because it has already been prepared in advance.

Look at Moses, look at Paul and of course look at Jesus

CONCLUSION :

1. 5X that it was mentioned with Christ or in Christ

To be saved is to the work of God in Christ. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Recently : Francis Magalona's death at 44 years old after only 7 months of being diagnosed with leukemia has again jolted me. That everyone of us dies. In one of the blogs, there's this eulogy with a cliché that goes, "Thank you for teaching us how to live." Beloved of Christ, let it be known that I want to teach you how to die because as

statistics shows 1 out of 1 still die. And how must we die a physical death, you have to prepare for it by receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, that He died for our sins and that because of Him we have eternal life. Because as Jesus says,

John 11:25 "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Story : And let me tell you a beautiful story. A little girl was diagnosed with leukemia and the father was at her bedside trying to comfort her. The little girl asked, "Papa, what happens when I die?" The father was lost for words but was given the courage and the wisdom to answer with this reply, "Do you remember, that everytime you fall asleep in the sofa, when you closed your eyes, you were still in the living room and then when you open your eyes, you are already in your beautiful room upstairs? That's what happens when we die, we just close our eyes and then when we wake up we are already with our beautiful home in Heaven."

Yes, when you are with Christ and in Christ, when we die, our Father in heaven carries you to our heavenly home so when you open your eyes, you are already there...no more pain, no more tears, no more sickness...no more suffering.

Amen.

S.G.D.