

Ephesians

Dead in Sin, Alive with Christ

Ephesians 2:1-9

March 9th, 2025

I. Introduction: The Christian's Biography

We all have our own personal stories of who we are, but we also have the story of our people—who we as a people are. This collective story is not separate from our own personal story, but it is distinct from it. The story of America, for instance, is distinct from the story of an American. Your personal story is like a chapter in the biography of America. But America's story is your story, even if you don't feature on every page. The same is true for the Church. The story of the Christian is distinct from the story of the Church, but it is not separate from it. Your story is a few pages in the biography of the Church. But, again, the Church's story is your story, even if you don't feature on every page. What this means is that you cannot understand yourself and your life—your biography—without reading it in the context of the story of God and His people.

You do not understand yourself and your life if you do not understand that you, a Christian, were once dead in _____ and raised to new life in _____. All who are baptized into Christ are baptized into this story. We are all baptized into His death, and we are made into a new people—the Church. This is the very foundation of who we are—this is the book that we feature in.

II. Dead in Trespasses and Sins (vv. 1-3)

Paul sums up our past life in these words: we were dead in trespasses and sins, in which we once walked (v. 1). And this deadness completely filled our society, as it still does many parts of our current world. It is a total deadness, or a total _____, meaning that corruption pervaded every part of us and every part of human society.

First— _____ Corruption (v. 2a). We once walked according to the course of this world. Before Christ intervened, we all played by the corrupt rules of a corrupt system created by corrupt men. We all walked according to the ways of the world, which were and are ways of death. Systemic corruption looks like any basic way of thinking and acting that accords with a world in rebellion against God.

Secondly— _____ Corruption (v. 2b). We once walked according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. The world is corrupt, and it is the making of corrupt men. But they did not and do not create it on their own. They have help. The devil lends his hand (Rev. 13:2). As Paul will say later, we do not war against flesh and blood, but we war against forces of evil, spiritual powers beyond human strength: “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).

Thirdly— _____ Corruption (v. 3). We, too, like the rest of the world, once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Our corruption, in other words, was not just *out there*. It wasn't simply that we were with our fathers in Egypt, under the power of darkness, going with the flow of the world. But we ourselves were part of the problem. We ourselves were slaves from the heart. We delighted in evil. We delighted in

carrying out the deeds of the flesh and of the mind. Powers stronger than us had us under their sway. But we were likewise complicit. We willingly went along with our oppressors and rejoiced in our rebellion, even as those in the world around us willingly obey the dictates of sin.

Like the rest of mankind outside of Christ, this is our story whether born and bred in the Church, or a fresh convert in his fifties. We were like the rest of humanity outside of Christ, out of fellowship with God; we were by nature objects of His wrath and displeasure (v. 3b). We were not cut from another cloth. We were not of a different, holier race. We were not smarter or better or in any way more righteous. We were not made with more potential than those outside of Christ. Again, we were children of wrath. And our reward for all that we were would have been just destruction from the Almighty.

III. Alive With _____ (vv. 4-9)

We were dead in our trespasses and sins, but our God in the richness of His mercy and the great love with which He loved us, He saved us. He made us alive with Christ. He exalted us with Him over all things. He did this “so that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (v. 7). From our death-ridden past God’s mercy shines, and His life-giving grace is magnified.

IV. Humility & Hope (v. 9)

First. The love and grace of our God utterly reshapes us by leaving no room for _____. We made by this a humble people.

We were dead in our sins, without God and without hope in this world, and yet we live by God’s sheer grace. We were dead, like Lazarus in the tomb. God found us in our sin. And He spoke the Word and we, like Lazarus came out. It is all from Him, and so, there is left no room for boasting.

The Gospel humbles us to the ground. It humbles everybody. It declares that all are in need of salvation from God, through Christ, by the powerful working of His Almighty power in our midst. Unbelievers are arrogant because they do not understand. They are darkened and dead and cannot understand their situation. But Christians have no excuse. All who have received the Gospel and believe the testimony of God concerning us acknowledge our need for Jesus.

Second. God’s grace and love reshape us into a supremely joyful and _____ people. This is connected with Christian humility. Because there is no room to boast, there is hope for even the most obstinate sinner. There is hope for the world. There is hope for all of us. And this is a joyful and freeing reality.

If salvation hung upon our own strength and willingness, and not on God’s grace, we would have to give up praying, for why should we pray for our friends or our family or our children? What use is asking God to do what He can’t or won’t do? But if salvation is by grace alone, there is hope—hope for our own souls, hope for family members, hope for friends, hope for neighbors and this world.

V. Come & Welcome to Jesus Christ