

What We All Were Ephesians 2:1-3

Introduction

NJFK—Cut flower; chains

We've been exploring the immeasurable benefits we have in Christ: identity, blessings, redemption, inheritance, knowledge, wisdom, hope, power—all through Christ, who is over all.

What makes these extraordinary gifts so amazing is what our natural human condition was before Christ changed everything. That's where Paul takes us now in the first three verses of Ephesians 2.

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

You
We all
Like the rest of mankind

1. Dead (1)

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

Trespasses—false step, blunder, deviating from the right path, crossing a known boundary line; sin as violation, rebellion

Sins—to miss the mark; sin as failure

Sin not only brings death; it expresses the condition of death. Rebellion and failure is the way people dead to God live.

Careful not to press this state of death beyond what the text teaches.

Physical death—the body without the spirit

Spiritual death—the spirit without God

Like a cut flower

Romans 1 teaches us that this does not mean human beings are entirely insensitive to God. They know from creation that He is powerful. They know from their conscience that He is judge.

Ecclesiastes—eternity in his heart

All humans are made in God's image, even though that image is marred by sin.

Common grace—can be moral, kind, model citizens

But they are alienated from the life of God, darkened in their understanding (4:18)

Having no hope and without God (2:12)

MLJ: "Life for the non-Christian is a living death."

Falls short of the high purpose for which we were created—to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

2. Dominated (2)

in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—

Walked—walk about; normal day-to-day living

Course of this world—age of this world system arranged apart from/hostile to God

Zeitgeist—spirit of the times
Prevailing culture

Psalm 1—blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of the sinner, sit in the seat of the scoffer

Behind these world trends is an evil personality—the prince of the authority of the air—the atmosphere enveloping the entire globe (remember "heavenlies"—the spirit realm)

Ephesians 6:12

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

1 John 5:19

We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

1 Corinthians 4—blinds the minds of the lost to the light of the gospel

Revelation 12:4—deceives the whole world

At work—energizes; in the same way the Holy Spirit is at work in the heart and life of believers

In the sons of disobedience—it is their nature to disobey
“I will rule my own life. No God will tell me what to do. I am ‘free!’”

3. Driven (3a)

among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind

Passions—lusts; desires

Flesh—the God-hating part of human nature; in my flesh dwells no good thing (Romans 7); it is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be (Romans 8)

Desires—wishes of the body AND the mind (understanding, intelligence, disposition)

Tend to think just of the appetites of the body for pleasure contrary to God's will
Our minds are dominated by the flesh too—hatred, envy, greed, jealousy, pride, bitterness, malice, anger
Both mind and body conspire in their rebellion against God

The greater the ability of the body or of the mind, the more readily we express our sin nature—you cannot train yourself out of corruption; you need deliverance

More money, more education, better health—none of this will do what needs to be done

4. Doomed (3b)

and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Children of wrath—what we are by nature destines us for God's wrath

Not arbitrary. Not just a bad temper.

Wrath is His settled opposition to sin; He is hostile to it; He refuses to compromise with it; He will not condone it for any reason, but instead condemns it.

Total depravity—not that every person is as evil as he possibly can be; but that every part of who he is has been infected by sin

No superficial remedy will do.

Conclusion

1. Dead (1)
2. Dominated (2)
3. Driven (3)
4. Doomed (3)

Ephesians 2:4 But God

5. Delivered!