

“The Course Of This World”
Ephesians 2:2

Introduction:

1. Let's First Open Our Bibles:
 - To Ephesians 2 Tonight:
 - Where - In The First 3 Verses:
 - We Find An Explanation:
 - Of What We - As Christians:
 - Have Been Saved From:
 - Through The Glorious Gospel Of Jesus Christ!
 - According To Ephesians 2:1-3:
 - “And you [hath he quickened], who were dead in trespasses and sins; / 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: / 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!”
2. These Verses Describe:
 - Who We Were - And:
 - What We Were Like:
 - Before Christ!
 - In Verse 1:
 - Paul Reminds Us That:
 - Jesus Saved Us From:
 - Our Spiritual Death!
 - As Well As From:
 - Our Trespasses And Sins!
 - And - In Verse 2:
 - Paul Reminds Us That:
 - Jesus Saved Us From:
 - The Relationship We Had:
 - With This Old World!
 - Again - From 2:2:
 - “Wherein In Time Past Ye Walked According To The Course Of This World!”
3. The “World” In This Verse:
 - Is The Same “World” That We've Been Looking At:
 - The Last Couple Of Weeks Already!
 - The “World” That Is:
 - A Member Of The Evil Trinity:
 - That Still Wars Against Our Souls!
 - And Is Intimately Involved With:
 - The Flesh & The Devil:
 - To Draw Us As Far Away From The Lord:
 - As They Can!
4. Now - We've Already Looked At:
 - The Composition:
 - Of This World:
 - As Found In 1 John 2:15-17!
 - The World Is Made Up Of:
 - The Things That Are “In The World!”
 - Which Are - “The Lust Of The Flesh, The Lust Of The Eyes, And The Pride Of Life!”
 - So - The Composition Of The World:
 - Involves Those Things That Appeal To:
 - Our Human Appetites & Affections & Ambitions:
 - In Order To Draw Us Away From:
 - God's Will!
5. Last Week - We Considered:
 - The Consumption:

- Of This World:
 - And How It Is Often Described:
 - In Negative Ways!
 - Even As A *Place*:
 - That Is Full Of:
 - Darkness & Death & Dangers!
 - And - As Christians:
 - We Need To Learn To See The World:
 - For What It Really Is!
 - And - Even Though:
 - It May Seem Innocent & Attractive:
 - In Reality - It is:
 - A Serious & A Deadly Foe!
 - **IE**: It Is Like A “Trojan Horse” - That Takes What God Made For Good - And Makes Use Of It For Evil!
6. Well - Tonight - We Are Going To Look More At:
- The Character & The Spirit:
 - Of This World!
 - As We Find Here In Ephesians 2:2!
 - Because - As Paul Tells Us:
 - Not Only Did Jesus Save Us From:
 - The World!
 - He Also Saved Us From:
 - Walking “According To The Course Of This World!”
 - The Word Translated Here:
 - “Course” - Can Also Be Translated:
 - “Age!”
 - So - Not Only Can The Spiritual “World” Be Described:
 - As A Temporal Place!
 - It Is Also Described In The Bible:
 - As A Time Period:
 - In Which We Live!
 - And - It Is This Time Period:
 - In Which The Powers Of The World:
 - Are Permitted To Do Their Thing!
 - Which - As We Considered Before:
 - Involves The Ongoing Attempt:
 - To Capture Our Appetites!
 - To Captivate Our Affections! And:
 - To Cultivate Our Ambitions:
 - All For Itself!
7. And - As We Will See From Other Passages Tonight:
- The Character Of This World:
 - Is Altogether Different Than:
 - The Character Of Our Savior, Jesus Christ!
 - And Yet - The World:
 - Will Still Try To Convince Us:
 - That It Has Our Best Interest & Our Best Life In Mind!
 - And So - As We See First:
 - From This Verse In Ephesians 2:
 - This World / This Age - Has Its Own:
1. ***Distinctive Course!***
- Again - 2:2:
 - “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world!”
 - The Fallen Age In Which We Live:
 - Is Given In Terms Of:
 - A Road / A Path On Which:

- We Used To Walk & Live!

- This Is The Course:

- That The Vast Majority Of People In This World:

- Continue To Walk Down!

- And - Since Just About Everyone Is Going The Same Direction:

- It Just Seems & Feels Like:

- It's The Right Way!

- **IE:** Have You Ever Been In A Crowd & Felt Its Pressure As You Were Going One Direction - But Everyone Else Was Going The Other Direction? Makes You Think Twice About Where You're Going!

- Well - This Is The Course Of This Age!

- But - What Does Jesus Say About This Course & Path?

- In Matthew 7:13-14 - Jesus Tells Us To:

- "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: / Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it!"

- The Course Of This Age:

- Is The Opposite Of:

- The Course Of Christ!

- And - We Need To Be Careful:

- Not To Walk Down The Same Path Again, Just Because:

- Everyone Else In The World Is Doing So!

- But - Then - We Can Also See:

- That This World / Age - Has Its Own:

2. *Distinctive Cares:*

- As Well! Distinctive Cares:

- Which Jesus Also Tells Us About:

- In Matthew 13 - So - Let's Head There Together Next - Matthew 13 - Where Jesus:

- Is Explaining To His Disciples The Meaning Of His Parable Of The Sower & The Seed!

- And - In 13:22 - Jesus Tells Us About:

- "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful!"

- The "Care Of This World" Here:

- Refers To Those Things That Cause Worry & Anxiety & Concern In This Fallen Age In Which We Live!

- These Are The Cares:

- That - For The Most Part - Are What:

- Motivates People To Live They Way They Do!

- Of Course - In This Age:

- We Need Shelter!

- We Need Clothing!

- We Need Food!

- We Need Love!

- **IE:** And Yet - All Too Often - We Seek After Even More Than We Need! Either To Overcompensate - Or

- To Impress Others - Or Just To Please Ourselves!

- But - This Is The Cares Of This Age!

- And - The "Care" For These Things:

- Is What "Chokes" Out What We Really Need:

- Which Is God Himself!

- What Is The Alternative?

- Jesus Gives Us The Alternative In Luke 12:22-32!

- Let's Turn There - And Listen To:

- Jesus' Words!

- And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. / 23 The life is more than meat, and the body [is more] than raiment. / 24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? / 25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? / 26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take

ye thought for the rest? / 27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. / 28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more [will he clothe] you, O ye of little faith? / 29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. / 30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. / 31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. / 32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!"

- The Cares Of This Age:

- Is The Opposite Of What:

- We Should Really Care About!

- And - We Need To Be Careful:

- About The Pressures:

- From Both Without & Within:

- That All Too Often Cause Us To Worry About What:

- God Has Already Promised To Provide For His Children!

- But We Can See Further:

- That This World / Age - Also Has Its Own:

3. ***Distinctive Comprehension:***

- And Even - Wisdom - About Things!

- If We Head Over To 1 Corinthians:

- In Chapter 1 - Verses 18-20 - The Apostle Paul:

- Tells Us - "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. / For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. / Where [is] the wise? where [is] the scribe? where [is] the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

- So - There Was & Is A:

- "Wisdom Of This World / Age!"

- There Was & Is A Way:

- That People Think Things Are & Should Be Done In This World!

- Though - That Knowledge & Wisdom Often Changes!

- But - Paul's Point Here Is That:

- No Matter How Much Intelligence:

- Man Might Have:

- In This Age!

- It Is Nothing Compared To:

- The Wisdom Of God!

- After all - 1:19:

- "It Is Written, I Will Destroy The Wisdom Of The Wise!"

- And - No Matter How Much Insight:

- Man Might Have:

- In This Age!

- It Is Still Nothing Compared To:

- The Wisdom & Understanding Of God!

- From 1:20 - Paul Asks:

- "Where Is The Wise?"

- And Even - No Matter How Much Instruction & Interaction:

- Goes On In This Age:

- The Knowledge Of Man Will Never Measure Up To:

- The Omniscience & Wisdom Of God!

- Also From 1:20 - Paul Asks:

- "Where Is The Scribe? Where Is The Disputer Of This World?"

- The Comprehension Of This Age:

- Is Just So Limited:

- In Scope & In Time:

- And Is Proven To Be Nothing:

- Compared To The Wisdom Of God As Its Revealed In The Gospel & The

Cross!

- And Yet - How Often Does The World:
 - Try To Convince Us That:
 - Its Knowledge & Wisdom Is Greater:
 - Than The Knowledge & Wisdom Of God - And Even:
 - What He Has Revealed To Us Through His Written Word?
- We Need To Be Careful:
 - To Not Just Give Credence To Everything:
 - That The World In This Age:
 - Says Is So!
 - We Need To Look At:
 - The World's Wisdom - In Light Of:
 - God's Wisdom - Which Makes The World's Nothing But:
 - Foolishness!
- And - This Is All Because:
 - This World / Age - Has Its Own:

4. *Distinctive Culture:*

- As Well - A Culture That Is Summed Up By Paul:
 - In Galatians - Where - At The Very Beginning:
 - Of His Letter - He Offers His Prayer For Them:
 - In 1:3-5 - "Grace [be] to you and peace from God the Father, and [from] our Lord Jesus Christ, / Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: / To whom [be] glory for ever and ever. Amen!"
 - In 1:2 - Paul Calls The Present:
 - World - Or - Age:
 - In Which We Live:
 - As Evil!
 - And - This Is The:
 - The Spirit & Culture Of The Age:
 - As A Whole!
 - It Is Evil - It Is Bad!
 - The Culture Of This World:
 - Which Is Generated By:
 - The People In This World:
 - Is Not Getting:
 - Progressively Better & Better!
 - Its Getting:
 - Progressively Worse & Worse!
 - Which Is Why Paul Also Told Timothy:
 - In 2 Timothy 3:13:
 - That - "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived!"
 - The Culture Of This World:
 - Is Neither Benign - Nor:
 - Is It Innocent!
 - It Is Corrupt!
 - And That Is Why:
 - We Need To Be Careful:
 - When We Face Issues Of Culture:
 - Because - They Can Seem So Commonplace & Ordinary!
 - And Yet - The Overall Flow:
 - Of Culture Is Not:
 - Toward The Lord - But:
 - Away From The Lord!
 - And - We Need To Learn To Use:
 - The Objective Standard Of God's Word:

- To Assess The Culture - Because:
 - What May Be Considered Normal By The World:
 - May Be Rooted In Opposition To What Is True & Right!
- And - This Should Be No Surprise To Us!
 - Because - All Of This Is Led By:
 - The World's:

5. ***Distinctive Captain:***

- Its Own Leader!
 - Which Paul Reminds Us About In:
 - 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 - Where He Writes:
 - "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: / In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them!"
 - In 4:4 - Paul Reminds Us That:
 - This World / Age Has:
 - Its Own "God!" - Its Own:
 - Deity & Ruler!
 - Back In Ephesians 2:2 - Paul Described Him As:
 - "The Prince Of The Power Of The Air!"
 - And - Paul Even Tells Us That:
 - This God & Prince & Captain:
 - Has His Own Government:
 - In Ephesians 6:12 - Even - "The Rulers Of The Darkness Of This Age!"
 - And So - The Direction:
 - Of This Fallen Age:
 - Is Under The Leadership & Spell Of:
 - The Devil Himself!
 - And - All He Wants To Do:
 - Is Deceive Those Who Are In This World:
 - To Follow After His Course, His Cares, And His Comprehension!
 - His Ways, His Worries, And His Wisdom!
 - And Yet - The Direction:
 - That The "God Of This Age" Is Taking:
 - The People Of This Age:
 - The Direct Opposite Of:
 - God's Path & Purpose!
 - And - We Need To Remember This:
 - When It Comes To:
 - The Culture & Cultures:
 - That Are Found In This World!
 - Also In 2 Corinthians:
 - In 11:14 - Paul Tells Us That:
 - "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light!"
 - Which Means That:
 - He Makes The Spirit Of This Age Appealing To Us!

Conclusion:

1. This Was The Problem:
 - That A Man Named Demas Faced:
 - As Paul Records For Us In:
 - 2 Timothy 4:10 - Where He Told Timothy:
 - How - "Demas Hath Forsaken Me, Having Loved This Present World / Age!"
 - So - The Course & Cares & Comprehension & Culture:
 - Of This Age:
 - Became More Important To Him:
 - Than Following After:
 - Christ!

- And Yet - It Is So Easy For Us:
 - To Fall Prey To This Same Kind Of Spirit!
 - Because - It All Seems:
 - So Ordinary & So Normal!
 - Everyone Else Is Doing It:
 - So - Maybe Its OK For Us To As Well!
2. And Yet - What Are We:
- To Do When Faced With The “Age Of This World?”
 - In Romans 12:2 - Paul Tells Us:
 - “And Be Not Conformed To This World!”
 - To This Age!
 - This Means That:
 - There Needs To Be:
 - A Kind Of Resistance:
 - To This World!
 - Because - The Spirit Of This Age:
 - Is Very Good At:
 - Consuming Our Minds & Hearts & Time!
 - To Take Away Our Commitment To Christ!
 - But - Paul Says:
 - As Part Of Our Commitment:
 - Do Not Let The Pressures & Pleasures Of This World:
 - Squeeze You Into Its Mold - And:
 - Conform You Into His Shape!
 - **IE:** What Is The World Doing Today To Express Its Independence From God & Its Insolence To God:
 - At This Present Time? Think About Its Amusements & Apparel & Associations!
 - Even If Not Sinful In & Of Themselves:
 - If You Are Absorbed By These Things - To The Neglect Of Your Responsibilities To God:
 - You Are Being Conformed To This World!
3. But - There Also Needs To Be In Us:
- A Certain Kind Of Defiance:
 - When It Comes To This World!
 - And A Certain Kind Of Difference!
 - That We Find In:
 - Titus 2:11-12!
 - Where - Paul Tells Us:
 - “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, / Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world!”
 - This Is How We Are To Live:
 - In This Present, Evil Age!
 - Soberly! Righteously!
 - And - Godly!
 - And - When We Live Like This:
 - The World Will:
 - Take Notice!
 - Because - It Is Entirely Different Than:
 - The Course & Cares & Comprehension & Culture:
 - Of This Age!

Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
 4245 North 200 West
 Greenfield, Indiana 46140
 317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com