

Sermon Title: Dead, But Made Alive
Scripture Text: Eph. 2:1-7 (Ephesians #8)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 6-20-21

Ephesians Chapter 2 is our venue today, as we arrive at the beginning of this chapter.

If you belong to Jesus Christ—if He is your Lord and Savior—then you have a testimony; and the outline of a Christian testimony is pretty simple: Here's what I was; here's what God did for me; and here is what I am now, by His grace.

The Apostle Paul is an example of that; his conversion is recorded in Acts Chapter 9, and then twice—in Acts Chapter 22 and Acts Chapter 26—he recounts his testimony of how he came to faith in Christ. He starts out describing his life as a zealous Pharisee, a persecutor of the Church (1 Cor. 15:9). Then he explains how he was confronted with God's grace—and in his case, in a *very* dramatic kind of way. And then he explains, to both of those judges that he was standing before, that he is on trial for serving Christ.

I have a testimony, too. Mine is: I was an upstanding, nice high school senior. I had no criminal record; I was just sort of squeaky-clean nerdy. I made good grades. I had success in sports—you'll have to take that part by faith, now. I was in student body leadership. I just went along with all the basic considered-acceptable values of the world.

Then I was confronted with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and I accepted what was told to me, and I looked into it, and then I began to grow in commitment to serving Christ; and now, over half a century later, here I am—doing what I do, and wouldn't want to do anything else.

If you're a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, the passage that is before us could be used as an outline of your testimony. Let's put it in context: We've just finished Chapter 1. Paul didn't write "Chapter 1," he didn't write "Chapter 2"—he just wrote a letter to his friends in Ephesus. Something really interesting about the structure of this book: The first two verses are the "Hi, how are ya, I'm Paul, and you're the people I'm writing to." And then, remember: there's this ridiculously long sentence in Greek—202 words—that we know of as Verse 3 through Verse 14. And then we saw last week, Verses 15 through 23 is *another* big, long sentence; it's a sample prayer, if you will.

Well, guess what? Chapter 2, Verses 1 through 7, is *another* sentence that is so complicated in Greek, you can't realistically make it into one sentence in English; but we're going to look at a unit of thought today—and actually, the paragraph I would *like* to deal with, if we could stay all afternoon, would be Chapter 2, Verses 1 through 10, but I'm going to cut it off at Verse 7 today.

In the end of Chapter 1, as Paul prayed for his friends in Ephesus, we saw that he declared that Christ is the head of the Church, that the power of God raised Him from the dead, and the same power has done the same thing for you—so, you could fill your name in a few places, and know that that's how he would be praying for you, if you were an acquaintance of the Apostle Paul; and you could fill your name into a few key places in our passage for this morning, and you would have an accurate testimony—if you have, indeed, made Christ your Lord and Savior.

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So, these same three points will serve as potential for the outline for how you would describe your relationship with Christ: We'll start out with Your Problem, in the first 3 verses; and then, Your Position—meaning, your new position in Christ—goes through Verse 9; and then, Your New Purpose is in Verse 10. We'll major on Verses 8, 9, and 10, Lord willing, next Lord's Day.

Let's start out with Your Problem: Chapter 2, Verse 1—"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins" (NASB-1995; and throughout, unless otherwise noted). Now, that's a strange way to begin a new chapter! That's because, as I said: in Paul's mind, it wasn't a new chapter; he starts with the word "and": "And you were dead"—like Christ was dead, only He wasn't *spiritually* dead the way you are (cf. 1 Tim. 5:6; Jude 12), but "you were dead in your trespasses and sins."

There's an interesting phenomenon about this sentence, that I said is Verses 1 through 7 in Chapter 2: There is no verb until Verse 5; that's the main verb of this sentence, and the verb is: "made alive." Now, like I said, the Greek does it a different way than we do, but literally it would be: "And you, being dead in trespasses and sins," now here's what happened; so the "and" connects to the end of Chapter 1, where it says that the Church, which is Christ's "body"—He is "the fullness of Him who fills all in all," and the Church is "the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (vs. 23). Every member of the Church of Jesus Christ came from the same stock! It all started with *dead people*—spiritually dead people. That's the implication, clearly—that he's talking about *spiritual* death here.

Now, to understand what spiritual death is, think of physical death: Physical death is the complete inability to respond to physical stimuli—not even a heartbeat, not even any respiration. *Spiritual* death is the inability to respond to *spiritual* stimuli (1 Cor. 2:14; cf. Rom. 8:7-8); it's a lack of, if you will, *spiritual* life.

Now, let's go a layer deeper; many of you have already heard this: The Biblical concept behind death is separation. *Physical* death is the separation of the person—the soul—from the body; and that's when we say that the "body" then is "dead" (Jas. 2:26), it does not respond. *Spiritual* death is the separation of a person from God (Is. 59:2a). Apart from Christ, a person is really a walking dead person—physically walking, but spiritually dead—"alienated" from God (Col. 1:21), separated from God.

There are a lot of stupid bumper stickers out there, but there's one that actually captures some pretty good theology; there's probably more than one, but I smiled the first time I ever saw this one; you've heard it: "Born once, die twice. Born twice, die once."

Because if you're born once, you are born "dead in your trespasses and sins" (see Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22), and you will die twice (Rev. 20:14; 21:8)—you'll die physically, and you'll be eternally separated from God (2 Thess. 1:9; cf. Matt. 7:23; 25:41). But if you're "born again" (Jn. 3:3)—if you have new life in Christ—you'll die once (Rev. 2:11; 20:6). You'll shed this body; you'll eventually be fitted with a brand new one, perfect for eternal life (1 Cor. 15:42-53; Phil. 3:21).

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So, why are we spiritually dead? Well, what does it say? "You were dead *in your trespasses and sins*." The entire sphere of existence for somebody that doesn't know the Savior is in the realm of "trespasses and sins"—*that's where they live*. (Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23a; cf. Gen. 2:17).

You have to understand that in Biblical terms, we are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are *born* sinners (see Jb. 14:4; 25:4; Ps. 58:3; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22). Remember the confession of King David, when he was confessing the first in a sequence of his sins that were life-changing for him: the adultery with Bathsheba, and then arranging for the death of her husband, and all of that. When he was pouring out his heart to God, he wrote in Psalm 51, Verse 5—"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." Now, that doesn't mean it's sinful to have a baby. But what he's saying is: Like begets like; my mother and my father were sinners; and therefore, they produced a sinner—and guess what? He sinned.

Or, to put it in a New Testament summary: Romans 3:22-23—"For there is no distinction"—what's the context of that, what leads up to that? He's talked about how it doesn't matter what your spiritual background is; Jew or Gentile, whatever you are, "there is no distinction; for *all* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Or, the Ephesians 2:1 version: "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins" (cf. Col. 2:13). Those are two words that both describe the concept of sin. There are about eight or nine New Testament words that describe sin. "Trespass" describes it from the standpoint of deviation from the proper path (Deut. 5:32). If you want a football analogy: you stepped out of bounds, you crossed the line where you weren't supposed to go—stepped over the boundary.

The word translated "sin" here is the basic word for sin, the one that is translated in Romans 3:23 as "all have sinned"; it means "to miss the mark"—the root of it is in archery: anything but a perfect bullseye is a *hamartia*, it's a "sin."

So, he's saying: Whether you just happen to step out of bounds (Heb. 9:7), or whether you intentionally aimed at the wrong target (Prov. 13:13)—or even if you *tried your best* and you fell short of absolute perfection (Matt. 5:48; Gal. 3:10; Jas. 2:10)—you have a sin problem! So, "trespasses and sins" are just two ways of viewing the same thing: Anything that falls short of perfectly glorifying God (1 Pet. 1:16).

So, sin includes everything that you *actively do* that is wrong (Ps. 19:13; cf. Num. 15:31). It includes everything you *fail* to do that you *could* do that would glorify God (Jas. 4:17). And apart from coming to Christ, every person lives their life in the sphere of "trespasses and sins" (Ps. 143:2; Ecc. 7:20; Jer. 13:23; 17:9; Matt. 7:11; 15:19).

And that's true, no matter how good we are in comparison to other people. That's not the standard of sin—whether you're worse than other people. The standard of sin is the perfection of the perfect holiness of God (Ps. 92:15; Hab. 1:13a; Jn. 7:18; 8:29; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 1:21-22; 1 Jn. 1:5). And anything short of that, you fall short.

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Let's say that we decided we wanted to go from Idaho over to Oregon, so we loaded up a bus; we all drive over to Hell's Canyon; we line up on the Idaho side of the canyon, Snake River down below; and we all back up—you can back up as far as you want to, take as big of a run as you want—and we're all going to *leap across the other side to Oregon!* How many of us are going to make it? Well, I would sort of gimp up to the edge, and then tumble over and roll down. Some of you could *leap*, and go 10 feet, 15 feet, 20 feet. If you were a *world-class long-jumper*, by the time you had that far to fall, you could maybe get *10 yards* from your takeoff point! But you wouldn't land in Oregon! So, it's not a matter of how much better or worse than anybody else that we are; it's that we have this problem, and *we can't fix it!* (Prov. 20:9)

Now, that's *not to say* that unsaved people can't do any good *at all*. They can do civic good. I just saw a commercial yesterday for the things that they do at St. Jude's Children's Hospital; they were saying they had taken the survival rate for childhood cancer from 20 percent to 80 percent. Well, *that's a good thing!* So people can do "good things." They can do *relatively* good moral things. They can do acts of mercy. But it's all in the realm of "falling short of the glory of God," and that's the problem that we have.

So, Verse 2 takes it further: "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked"—so this is the testimony of someone who has been transformed by Christ—"in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."

The key word there—we've already seen it in Ephesians—is the word "walk." It's a common New Testament metaphor for how you live, how you "walk" through this world, how you make your way through this world. Your "walk" is sort of your lifestyle (e.g., Rom. 6:4; 8:4; 1 Cor. 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 5:16, 25; 6:16; Phil. 3:17-19; Col. 1:10; 2:6; 1 Thess. 4:1; 1 Jn. 1:6-7; 2:6, 11; 3 Jn. 4). You know the motto: "If you can't walk the walk, don't talk the talk"—meaning: If you can't live up to something, don't claim that you do. It's how you perform; it's how you live.

"The course of this world" is an interesting phrase; it's literally "*age* of this world." The word that would be translated "age" here views the world from the standpoint of whatever the people alive at any given time—in other words, in any given "age"—whatever *they think* is good, whatever is "in." What I was doing when I was that nerdy high school kid—that's not the same as what a seventeen year old would have been doing in the Seventh Century; but we would both be living according to "the spirit of the age." The word "world" here is that Greek word *kosmos*; it describes the world in terms of the "system" of the world, the way that it is arranged; and this is one of the verses that mention that that is under the control of "the evil one" (1 Jn. 5:19; cf. Jn. 12:31; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4).

So, walking "according to the course of this world" means: living according to the spirit of your age. We walked according to whatever the world said was the current flow of opinion, what ought to be the standards. That was our state before we were Christians.

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I couldn't resist reading this to you, because it's so descriptive. Anglican archbishop and lexicographer Richard Trench—back when being an Anglican was a good thing—did a lot of work on the Greek New Testament; he wrote a lot on words. He describes the phrase "course of this world" in these words: "All that is a floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, and aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define; being the moral or immoral atmosphere which, at every point of our lives, we inhale—again inevitably to exhale. All this is included in 'the age,' which is the subtle, informing spirit of the world, or the world of men who are living alienated and apart from God." Isn't that descriptive? It's the milieu in which we live. That is "the course of this world."

There's another passage that uses the same words for "age" and "world" as our passage. It's kind of interesting to take a peek at it: It's First Corinthians 3:18-20. There, Paul writes: "Let no man deceive himself." So, don't be deceived; you *are* part of the world. "If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age"—there's the word "age"—"he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this"—and there's the word "world"—"the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, 'He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness'; and again, 'The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless.'" (cf. Lk. 16:15)

So the world says, "Here are all the things that are important! And you have to *know* all of these things, and you have to be 'world-wise!'" And what does God say? "You were dead in your trespasses and sins, and you need a Savior!" And the world says, "Well, that's just *foolish*, to simplify everything to that!" But it's *not*. Don't deceive yourself into thinking that you can figure out the truth about God and our own spiritual condition on your own (1 Cor. 1:21; cf. Deut. 29:29). And by the way: Those three verses that I just read to you—our friend Phil Johnson came to Christ reading this passage, after years of faithfully attending a Methodist church. He was a college student when he came to the Lord, or maybe even high school.

The rest of Verse 2 tells you what it is that controls this world system, this spirit of the age "in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience." "Prince" means "the first one in order." "Power" is describing Satan's power over demons (Rev. 12:9). "Air" is the word that is often used for the air we breathe, the atmosphere; but here, it's used as a synonym for the unseen spirit world around us: the world of angels and demons (Eph. 6:12).

And it says Satan is "the spirit who is now working" in this. "Working" is that word we've already seen in Ephesians a couple of times: It comes into English as the word "energizing." The fallen world of sinners—whatever age, whatever culture, whatever context—it is all energized by Satan (1 Jn. 5:19), and hence...all the corruption, all the *rebellion*, all the sin and all of its consequences (see 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:26). And that is "the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (cf. Jn. 8:44)—all people who are disobedient to the Gospel (2 Thess. 1:8), those who do not believe (cf. Matt. 13:19). So, disobedience is a synonym, if you will, for not believing (Jn. 3:18; Heb. 3:12).

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Now, look further: Verse 3—"Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." Notice the word "formerly"; this is the testimony of that guy who got saved in Acts 9, and gave his testimony in Chapter 22 and in Chapter 26. We *all* walked—*lived*—in this realm (cf. Titus 3:3).

When we see the phrase "lusts of our flesh," we always think of pornography and immorality; but that isn't *all* that it means. It just means: the desires that come from our own fleshliness (Gal. 5:17; cf. Jas. 1:14; 4:1), which is our own fallenness, our connection to this corrupted world system (1 Jn. 2:17). It's just as much from the flesh as it is of the mind, because it is our *nature* as "children of wrath," just like "the rest" around us.

So, when he says we "formerly" walked this way, that has the implication that when a person is "made alive" in Christ (vs. 5), the life *changes*. The famous words of Second Corinthians 5:17—"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

When I first heard the Gospel, when I first turned to Christ, I woke up the next morning and, lo and behold, I still wasn't six-foot-two. I was "a new creature," but you know what? When you come to Christ, you *are* made new—it's *transforming*—but, you're still going to look the same, you still *sound* the same, you still have the same mannerisms, you still have to eat and sleep and go to work, you still have to pay the bills and obey the laws; but your *attitude* changes—it's an *inward* transformation (Ezek. 36:27; Phil. 2:13); your *priorities* are changed, and more focused (2 Cor. 5:9); your conscience becomes better and better aligned with God's Word, and you begin to *delight* in those things that delight Him (Deut. 30:6; Ps. 119:97; Rom. 7:22; Heb. 13:20-21).

Before we come to Christ, we are "by nature children of wrath"—we are walking toward a destiny that includes the outpouring of "the wrath of God" (Rom. 1:18; cf. Ps. 21:9); we are still in our "trespasses and sins." God's "wrath" is that settled attitude that He has toward sin (Ps. 7:11; 38:1; Heb. 10:27). And eventually, after all of that wrath has accumulated (Rom. 2:5), it's all going to be poured out. See all the ugly things in the middle of the Book of Revelation, if you want a glimpse of what that is (cf. Rev. 19:15).

Remember at the end of John Chapter 3, Jesus said this: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life"—that's the "new creature" (cf. Jn. 5:24)—"but he who does not obey the Son *will not* see life"—he'll remain "dead in trespasses and sins"—"but the wrath of God abides on him" (vs. 36). So think of it like the Sword of Damocles hanging over you.

Or, I heard a description years ago: Think of this giant vat that stores up the wrath of God, and every sin causes one more drop of His molten wrath to be poured into this great big vat; and it hangs just slightly off center, so with each drop it tips just a little bit more; and one day, it will reach the tipping point, and it will all be poured out (Ecc. 12:14; cf. Prov. 11:23b; Is. 13:11; 59:18; Ezek. 8:18; Zeph. 1:18; Matt. 12:36; Rev. 20:10-15). That's what it means that "wrath...abides on" that person.

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So, our Problem is: We are "alienated" from God (Col, 1:21), and we are powerless to get ourselves out of that mess, because the standard is the glory of God, perfection. That was your state before you came to Christ...or, that *is* your state, if you're not "in Christ" today, if you haven't yielded your life to Him.

That's your Problem, but here's the good news: What about Your Position, the *new* position of someone who is "in Christ"? Look at Verses 4 and 5. Some people have argued that the first two words here may be the most significant two words in the New Testament. I don't know if you can say that unequivocally, but boy, are they important! "But God..." "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)."

So here we are now, in the middle of this next giant sentence—this one is 123 Greek words long—and we have finally gotten to the verb, and notice how it flows in the context. "And you"—that's "and," connecting to Chapter 1, talking about the "fullness of Him who fills all in all" in Christ—you were there—"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins... But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ."

There are some great words there: "Rich" means "wealthy," or, "abundantly supplied." God is "rich in mercy." "Mercy" is His love when it is directed toward reaching out to extend kindness. "Love" is that great New Testament word *agapē*, that means "love, *despite* the unloveliness of its object," love which acts in the *best interest* of the one that it is focused on, *even* if you can't get *anything* in return (1 Cor. 13:4-6).

"God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us...*made us alive.*" That's *cool!* If you had memorized this verse back when you were reading the King James Version, before the easier-to-read translations came out, it says He "hath quickened us." "Quickened" is the Old English word for "made alive." "Quick" means "alive," the opposite of "dead." So I was taught: You're either "quick," or you're "dead"—and that kind of works in a lot of connotations.

He "made us alive." "And you were dead...But God...made us alive." We who believe *have the problem solved*—not because we can leap across the canyon, "but God...made us alive." He "sent His Son" to die in our place (1 Jn. 4:10; cf. Is. 53:5-6; Rom. 8:32). Jesus went to that Cross and endured "the wrath of God" that I deserve (Rom. 5:9; cf. Is. 53:8)—and He didn't deserve it at all (1 Pet. 3:18; cf. Heb. 7:26). And now, He gives to me His righteousness so that now, God looks on me as if I lived the perfect life of Christ (2 Cor. 5:21; cf. Phil. 3:9). *Wow!* And that is *the only way* you can be "made alive."

And then he sticks in that little parenthesis—"by grace you have been saved." That's one of those perfect tenses: "You have been saved" means that the work is completely finished—the project is completely finished—and now you stand in the continuous state of being "saved" (cf. Heb. 10:14). That's why John Newton wrote: "I once was lost, but now am found. I was blind, but now I see."

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"By grace you have been saved." You can't add to your salvation, any more than you could *achieve* your salvation (Gal. 3:3). And it can't be lost—God perfectly, completely, permanently accomplishes it through Christ (Jn. 6:39; 10:28-29; Phil. 1:6; Jude 24; cf. Ps. 37:24; Jer. 32:40).

So, in Verse 5 it says He "made us alive"; Verse 6—"and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Well that takes you again back to Chapter 1: You have been "blessed...with every spiritual blessing *in the heavenly places in Christ*." The power of God exalted Him (Eph. 1:20), and now it has "seated us with Him"—remember, we are "fellow heirs with" Him (Rom. 8:17); we are going to "inherit the kingdom" *with* Him (Matt. 25:34; cf. Lk. 22:29; Jas. 2:5); we are going to be *with Him* there (Matt. 26:29; Jn. 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:17).

So, it says we are "seated with Christ." The next verse tells us *why* God did this for us. Verse 7—"So that in the ages to come"—that's all the time after you were "made alive"—"He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

This is one of those verses that has provoked one of my favorite descriptions of us; I love the phrase: "Trophy of His Grace." He's going to show it for "the ages to come." Show it to who? How about the whole world of angels? (see Eph. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:12; cf. Jb. 38:7) It's as if He has put our photos on the mantle of Heaven—and no, I don't know if there's a mantle in Heaven—but He has done it in order to be able to proclaim forever: "See what *I* accomplished! Did you see that Harris kid? Did you see what a *mess he was*? And look—I made him alive! I made him 'a new creature!'" (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14)

I'm going to bring us back here, Lord willing, next Sunday; we'll feast our souls on the well-known three verses that come after this. For now, I just want to give you a little taste of them, to wrap this up and to whet your appetite for more. Verses 8 and 9 are actually a summary; they are *very often* quoted—*never* with a reference to the context, even though they begin with the word "for." But now, you're going to see how it connects. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

We're going to take that sentence apart next time, but the grammar is clear that "grace" is the instrument by which salvation is accomplished (Acts 15:11; 2 Tim. 1:9). "In your trespasses and sins," you're "dead"—until God, in His grace, "quickens" you (cf. Ezek. 36:26; Jn. 3:5). Another way to say that: "You have been saved" (cf. Titus 3:5)—same perfect tense: totally saved, continuing in that condition.

"By grace you have been saved *through faith*"—"faith" is the means by which *you* avail yourself of the salvation which God offers in pure grace. He doesn't say: "Once you've done all you can, and tried your hardest, I'll meet you there and take you the rest of the way." He says, "No. You were *dead*! What you needed was *resurrection*! I raised Jesus from the dead. Spiritually, I raise *you* from the dead. You will be with Me eventually, forever and ever."

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For us to be "made alive" in Christ, there is *nothing* we can contribute! It is *all* by God's grace! We might all be able to jump various distances toward the goal, *but none of us can clear the canyon!* We're going to have to be "rescued" from the certain death—and God did that (Col. 1:13).

And it is "not of yourselves," it is "not as a result of works"—therefore, "no one may boast" (cf. Rom. 3:27; 1 Cor. 1:29). We can boast *in Christ* (2 Cor. 10:17; Gal. 6:14), because *He* did it. Even our exercising faith is "by grace" (cf. Acts 3:16; 18:27), and it is *a gift* (2 Pet. 1:1; cf. Jer. 24:7; Jn. 6:44, 65; Acts 16:14; Phil. 1:29).

We had a Problem—a big one, a bad one: "dead," "dead in sin." But now, by faith, our Position is "in Christ," where we have been "made alive." And *that* means that we have a whole new Purpose. We have a *higher* set of priorities than that which the spirit of our age deems to be important. We still have to *live* in this world; we still have to get along, we still have to get by—but we have a greater purpose (Jn. 4:34; 1 Pet. 4:2).

Before we look at that next Lord's Day, how can we apply these seven verses? Well, what can you do to be saved? If I were to rap on your coffin and say, "What's your plan to get out of there?"—for one thing, you wouldn't answer me, *because you can't do anything about it!* So, what can you do about your *spiritual* death? *Nothing!* It's *too late* to do anything! But the good news: *It's all been done!* (Rev. 5:9)

The Problem is: "You were dead." The solution is: God did the work to save you (Rom. 8:32; 1 Pet. 3:18). You just need to receive the "free gift" (Rom. 6:23b). And as soon as you receive Christ, you have that new Position—you are "made alive"! (cf. Rom. 6:4, 13) You might even say: "By grace you have been saved"—totally forgiven, *forever* saved (Rom. 8:1; Heb. 5:9).

That's the testimony! Is it *your* testimony? Do *you* say, "I stand in Christ"? And you see that if He *has* made you alive, you're "a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17)—new priorities, everything is changed (Ps. 40:8; Jer. 31:33). We have to read Verse 10; we'll take it apart next time: "For we are His workmanship..." We're not *better* than other people—not in the realm of the solution to "trespasses and sins." "We are *His* workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

"You were dead." God "made" you "alive" in Christ. You are now walking in *His* "good works." If that doesn't describe you, take this as an invitation: I invite you to *make it* describe you, by giving your heart to Jesus Christ, if you've never done it before.

Remember the testimony that Dirk talked about: The author of the words of the song that we sang, the young pastor reading Scripture to the old pastor and realizing: "I've never denied myself and taken up my cross!" (Matt. 16:24)

It doesn't matter where you hang out; it's *who you're trusting* to take care of your unfixable problem.

Sermon Title: Dead, But Made Alive
Scripture Text: Eph. 2:1-7 (Ephesians #8)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 6-20-21

Let's pray:

Our Father, thank You for this true and honest assessment of our great spiritual need: "dead in our trespasses and sins." Thank You for the Savior. Thank You for Him taking upon Himself our sins—Your wrath aimed at our sins—and granting us eternal life. Father, please don't let a person leave this place today without making sure that they can say: "By grace I have been saved through faith. I trust You to do what I could never do." Father, we ask You to please have Your way with us. Use us for Your glory, in whatever way You would. We want to walk in those "good works" which You have "prepared beforehand"—not that those things can bring us into a relationship with You, but because those things can give You glory. Have Your way with us, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.