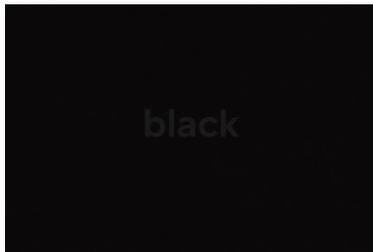


**God's People Part 1: Who We Are
Alive!
Ephesians 2:1-7**

Introduction: Contrast allows us to see things more clearly and accurately. For instance, if I write black letters on a black surface, we won't be able to see what I wrote. There is no contrast and thus no ability to see, consider, or appreciate whatever I wrote.

Now, technically, I could see the word I wrote if I used a slightly different shade of black, but it would still be very difficult. For instance, those with good eyes might be able to make out the word "black" in this image, but it's not easy.



However, if I write something in white (#FFFFFF) on a black (#000000) surface, in theory, I would have the highest possible contrast and, as such, the most obvious and easy-to-see presentation of what I wrote.



In Ephesians 2:1-7, Paul uses contrast to help us truly internalize who we are as God's people and how awesome it is that God has made us His people!

Proposition: Ephesians 2:1-7 teaches us two contrasting realities about Who We Are as God's people.

The first reality is who we were before God saved us!

(1) We were spiritually dead (Total Depravity). (2:1-3)

Note: **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. (2:1-3)

- A. Before I dig into these three verses, it's VERY important to understand why Paul is writing them. Paul says, **"you were"** this way. Why would Paul want them to remember their past, that is, the condition they were in BEFORE Christ saved them?
1. I remember how poor I was as a graduate student, particularly during the last semester of my master's degree in seminary. I still had a scholarship to pay for school, but the Seminary no longer employed me. I was out on my own, building the evangelism ministry I had started under the umbrella of a Christian camp and conference center called The Master's Inn. I worked on the ranch at the camp to pay for my housing, and Liberty extended my scholarship to cover my seminary tuition, but I didn't make any actual cash! The amount of hours it took to finish my seminary education, while doing the manual labor involved with maintaining a 200 acre ranch that had two dozen horses and almost fifty head of cattle, all while running an evangelism ministry that included a drama team, a worship team, audio equipment and technicians, a bus and a bus driver that traveled with me full time as I preached at youth rallies, conferences, church revival meetings and all kinds of other events, including events that I organized and promoted myself, not to mention be out of town preaching in all those events, made it impossible to get another job. To make matters more difficult, despite how "big" the evangelism ministry was becoming, it cost more to operate than it took in, so much more in fact, that if it wasn't for a very generous, successful businessman named Jim Sanders, we couldn't have reached the tens of thousands of people we were blessed to reach with the Gospel. It simply wouldn't have existed without him.
 2. The point I'm making is that despite all the awesome things I was getting to do, one of which ended up being the most-watched event of the year on a major worldwide Christian cable network, I was financially BROKE! I barely had enough money to put gas in my car. Therefore, when I prayed before a meal and thanked God for it, I didn't have to come up with a bunch of words to convince myself I had properly thanked God. I was so sincerely grateful for that meal that when I said, "God, thank you for this food," there was no need to add another word. It came from the deepest corner of my being! Before that, I always thanked God for my food, but I never had any reason to wonder whether that was all I would have to eat that day or the next. However, when I had no money to go to the grocery store and too much pride to tell my parents or anybody else how desperately broke I was, I didn't need any help at all to know that every bite of food I ate was indeed a life-giving gift straight from God. My experience in that part of my life

permanently changed how I thank Him for the food I get to eat! I've NEVER forgotten it.

3. This is precisely what Paul is doing in this part of his letter. Paul is making them look backwards into the condition of their life prior to Christ so that they, and consequently we as well, can properly remember and understand just how desperately spiritually broken we all were before God saved us!
4. It's why Hendriksen and Kistemaker wrote, "**The more men learn to see the dimensions of their utterly lost condition, the more they will also, by God's grace, appreciate their marvelous deliverance.**"¹

B. Specifically, Ephesians 2:1-3 tells us three truths about the spiritual deadness we all lived in prior to God saving us:

1. **To be spiritually dead is to live in rejection of God's authority. (2:1-2a)**
 - a. **1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked,**
 - b. Notice that the word "dead" here is not in the sense of no activity, as in a corpse in a grave, but rather, that the activity of the living that we **once walked** in was of itself dead to God's life. We had as much of God's life as a corpse has life, which is none! A dead body has no heartbeat, and no brain waves, and as such is totally void of life! In the same way, the condition of our living, of our walking, was totally void of God and His life because we walked in rejection of His authority over our lives and everything else!
 - c. To be God is to literally be in charge, but our lives rejected that truth. Instead of living in submission to God, who is in charge, we lived in "**trespasses**" and "**sins**".
 - d. "These two words seem to have been carefully chosen to give a comprehensive account of human evil. A '**trespass**' (*paraptōma*) is a false step, involving either the crossing of a known boundary or a deviation from the right path. A '**sin**' (*hamartia*), however, means rather a missing of the mark, a falling short of a standard. Together the two words cover the positive and negative, or active and passive, aspects of human wrongdoing, that is to say, our sins of commission and of omission. Before God we are both rebels and failures. As a result, we are 'dead' or 'alienated from the life of God' (4:18)."²

¹ Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Ephesians* (Vol. 7, p. 111). Baker Book House.

² Stott, J. R. W. (1979). *God's new society: the message of Ephesians* (pp. 71–72). InterVarsity Press.

- e. “The word “trespasses” is the translation of *paraptōma* (παραπτώμα) from *parapiptō* (παραπιπτώ), “to fall beside a person or thing, to slip aside, hence, to deviate from the right path, to turn aside, to wander.” Thus, in the word *paraptōma* (παραπτώμα), sin is looked upon as a lapse or deviation from truth or uprightness, a trespass, a misdeed. “Sins” is the rendering of *hamartia* (ἁμαρτία) from *hamartanō* (ἁμαρτανῶ), “to miss the mark.” It was used in the Greek classics of a spearman missing the target at which he aimed the spear. It was used in the ethical terminology of the Greeks to mean “to fail of one’s purpose, to go wrong.” In the N.T., it speaks of sin as the act of a person failing to obey the Word of God, failing to measure up in his life to the will of God. Its use is excellently illustrated in Romans 3:23, “All have sinned (missed the mark), and at present come short of the glory of God.” **The mark or target is the glory of God.** Man was created to glorify God. His attempt, where the attempt is made, to live a life pleasing to God, falls short of the target, like a spear thrown by an athlete, falls short of the target at which it is thrown.”³
- f. “Now the fact that these people are here described as having been *dead* does not mean that in their hearts and lives the process of moral and spiritual corruption had run its full course. Ursinus, in his explanation of the Heidelberg Catechism, John Calvin, and many, many others, have pointed out that even the unregenerate can perform *natural* good: eating, drinking, taking exercise, etc., and *civic* or *moral* good. Some worldly men have “uniformly conducted themselves in a most virtuous manner through the whole course of their lives.” So wrote John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (translated by John Allen, Philadelphia, 1928), Vol. I, p. 263. To deny this would be to close our eyes to facts that confront us every day of our lives. Also such a denial would amount to a rejection of the plain teaching of Scripture. King Joash “did what was right in the eyes of Jehovah all the days of Jehoiada the priest” (2 Chron. 24:2). But note how his life ended (2 Chron. 24:20–22). Jesus said, “If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same thing” (Luke 6:33). Truly at times “the barbarians” show us “no common kindness” (Acts 28:2; cf. Rom. 2:14). In an emergency the crowd that is willing to donate blood is frequently so numerous that at the proper time an announcement has to be issued, “No more blood needed.” When a case of pitiable poverty makes the headlines, and is covered by an emotional write-up, accompanied by sensational pictures, men’s feelings are stirred to such an extent that food, clothing, money, toys, etc., come

³ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 4, pp. 59–60). Eerdmans.

pouring in to help those in distress. And by no means all the givers are believers!”⁴

The second truth Ephesians 2:1-3 teaches us about spiritual deadness is that:

- 2. To be spiritually dead is to live with the mindset of Satan—disobedience. (2:2)**
 - a. 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**
 - b.** Since the Garden of Eden, mankind has been cursed by God to live under the reign of sin and Satan willfully, that is, to live a life aligned with Satan and his values rather than God and God’s values. Just like in chapter one, the word “spirit” is not referring to an entity but a perspective, disposition, or mindset. The mindset that is now at work in mankind is the mindset of disobedience, which became the mindset of Adam when he surrendered to the mindset of Satan!
 - c.** Now, understand that not everything Satan would tempt us to do is, on the surface, some terrible thing. Think about it. Although the consequence of sin is death, on the surface, all Satan tempted Eve to do, and consequently, Adam, who was standing there watching everything, was to eat some edible fruit! Without context, it would seem like there was nothing wrong with eating the fruit they ate. However, in context, we find out that God told them not to do it. And herein lies the “spirit” of Satan that is at work in us. The spirit, or mindset, of Satan is our own “spirit” or mindset that rationalizes disobedience. It is not an external spirit at work in us as it was with Adam and Eve, but rather, since Adam and Eve fell, it is our own spirit that naturally aligns with Satan’s! We are sons of disobedience, not just as in the descendants of one who was cast out by God (Adam) but also as ones who have that very spirit of disobedience at work within ourselves as an inseparable part of who we are! The entire mindset of mankind is not one of striving to obey God, but rather one of trying to rationalize disobeying God; that is, constantly trying to justify everything God said not to do while at the same time trying to justify not doing what God said to do.
 - d.** “The Greek phrase is ‘according the age of this world’. It brings together the two concepts of ‘this age’ of evil and darkness (in contrast to ‘the age to come’ which Jesus introduced) and of ‘this world’, society organized

⁴ Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). *Exposition of Ephesians* (Vol. 7, pp. 111–112). Baker Book House.

without reference to God or—as we might say—‘secularism’ (in contrast to God’s kingdom, which is his new society under his rule). So both words ‘age’ and ‘world’ express a whole social value-system which is alien to God. It permeates, indeed dominates, non-Christian society and holds people in captivity. . . . It is a cultural bondage. We were all the same until Jesus liberated us. We ‘drifted along the stream of this world’s ideas of living’ (JBP).”⁵

- e. “... His act of ordering his behavior in the sphere of trespasses and sins is dominated or controlled by “the course of this world.” “Course” is *aiōn* (αἰών), which Trench defines as “All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale,—all this is included in the *aiōn* (αἰών), which is, as Bengel has expressed it, ‘the subtle informing spirit of the *kosmos* (κοσμος), or world of men who are living alienated and apart from God’ ” (Trench). The Germans have a word for it, *zeitgeist*, “the spirit of the age.” “World” is in the head, his demons are his emissaries, and all the unsaved *kosmos* (κοσμος), which here refers to the system of evil of which Satan are his slaves, together with the purposes, pursuits, pleasures, and places where God is not wanted. To distinguish the words, one could say that *kosmos* (κοσμος) gives the over-all picture of mankind alienated from God during all history, and *aiōn* (αἰών) represents any distinct age or period of human history as marked out from another by particular characteristics. . . . “Prince” is in the accusative case, “spirit” in the genitive. They could not therefore be in apposition. The connection is as follows: the prince of the power of the air is also the prince of the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. The question now is as to what this spirit is? It is the principle or power that comes into men from Satan, the spirit that is operative in the unsaved. The word “spirit” is used here as in the expression, “the spirit of Antichrist.” The word refers to one’s way of thinking and acting. We say, “the spirit of that man is beautiful.” It is an evil tendency, a way of living, a characteristic of the unsaved, the spirit of the unsaved. Satan is the one who dominates and controls this spirit in man. This spirit or disposition is said to work in the children of disobedience. “Worketh” is *energeō* (ἐνεργεω), “to be operative, to be at work.” “Children” is *huios* (υἱος), “sons” and is a Hebrew idiom in which one calls a person having a peculiar quality, or subject to a peculiar evil, a son of that quality. The unsaved are called sons of disobedience in the sense that they have the character of being disobedient. The word “disobedient” is the translation of *apeithēs* (ἀπειθης), “impersuadable,

⁵ Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [God's new society: the message of Ephesians](#) (p. 73). InterVarsity Press.

uncompliant.” Stephen called Israel stiffnecked in heart. This gives the picture of a person who is impersuadable and uncompliant. The definite article before “impersuadable” seems to point to a particular act of that character, possibly the original sin of Adam.”⁶

The third truth Ephesians 2:1-3 teaches us about spiritual deadness is that:

3. To be spiritually dead is to live as if we are the authority. (2:3)

- a. 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.
- b. I showed you verse two again so you would see that it ended with what is called an “em dash.” An “em dash” tells us the author of the sentence wants to drive in a little deeper into the previous thought and, in so doing, add something else to it for further clarification, context, or specificity. The phrase before the “em dash” is “sons of disobedience,” which Paul then further expounds by later saying we are all those who are “by nature children of wrath.” To be a child “of wrath” means that we are born in the condition of being under the wrath of God, which in this case is to be born with a nature that is inclined to disobey God.
- c. God was very clear with Adam concerning the consequence of disobeying Him. Disobedience meant death, first and foremost spiritually, and it would eventually include physical death as well. This spiritual death meant Adam’s nature was no longer one inclined to obey God, but now it was inclined to disobey God, and such we are as well! We are born with a mindset to disobey God, that is, to willfully and even confidently continue in the condemnation of living separate from God and His life.

Note: “...The clause means, therefore, that in their pre-Christian life those meant by the *hemeis pantes* (ἡμεῖς πάντες) (we all) were in the condition of subjection to the divine wrath; and that they were so not by deed merely, nor by circumstance, nor by passing into it, but by nature. Their universal sin has already been affirmed. This universal sin is now described as sin by nature. Beyond this, Paul does not go in this present passage. But the one is the explanation of the other. Universal sin implies a law of sinning, a sin that is of the nature; and this, again, is the

⁶ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 4, pp. 60–63). Eerdmans.

explanation of the fact that all are under the divine wrath, for the divine wrath operates only where sin is. Here is the essential meaning of the doctrine of *original sin*.⁷

- d. Therefore, as “**sons of disobedience**” who are “**by nature children of wrath**,” we don’t just live with a generic or arbitrary purpose to simply say no to God but rather with a very specific purpose to say yes to ourselves! If in saying yes to ourselves we think or do something in agreement with God, then it's merely a footnote of coincidence or convenience, not purpose! As human beings, we are all born with a nature that rationalizes disobeying God to justify obeying the desires of our flesh.
 - e. Now understand. Not every desire of the flesh is sin, but rather living in submission to our desires is. God made us to desire food, sex, sleep, and other things that are not of themselves immoral or unethical in any way at all. However, as ones born with a nature to disobey God as if we are the authority over ourselves and the universe, we instead ironically submit ourselves to be ruled by our desires for those things rather than God, and the results are disastrous. The temporary pleasure of the temporary fulfillment we get when we become the authority of how and when we fulfill the desires of our flesh creates total spiritual, physical, and relational chaos for ourselves and the world that we impact. The decay of death is contagious; it’s why we put dead things in the ground.
- C. This is who we “ALL” “WERE” before we got saved. There is an obvious textual emphasis on “ALL” of us, so nobody gets to see themselves as an exception. There’s also a textual emphasis on it being who we “WERE,” meaning that those who have been saved are no longer, by nature, looking to disobey God but rather to obey God. We are no longer by nature operating with a mindset or disposition to say yes to whatever I desire, but instead with a nature or disposition that is striving to say yes to what God desires! We are no longer those who see ourselves as the authority and thus rationalize saying yes to whatever we want, but rather, we now see God as the authority and strive to live in submission to HIM! This is where Paul shifts his focus, and, in so doing, contrasts our past reality as unbelievers with our current reality as believers.

The second reality contrasts with who we WERE by focusing on who we ARE.

(2) We are now spiritually alive (Reborn/Regenerated). (2:4-7)

Note: 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together

⁷ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 4, pp. 63–65). Eerdmans.

with Christ--by grace you have been saved--6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (2:4-7)

As in our previous reality, Ephesians 2:4-7 gives us three truths; however, this time, in contrast to our past spiritual deadness, we learn about our present and eternal spiritual life. The first truth is that,

A. God gave us spiritual life because He loves us. (2:4)

1. 4 **But God**, being rich in **mercy**, **because of** the great **love** with which he loved us,
2. First, the word "**But**" shows us that this is in contrast with the previous reality, and it's a contrast that is entirely to the credit of "**GOD**" and HIS "**love**." Furthermore, Paul says this reality is our reality "**because of**" the greatness of God's love, a love that He, by His own free will, chose to apply to us. As my son used to say when he was little, "the matter reason is," God's love! Even though we were by nature sinners who stubbornly refused to submit to God, sinners who continually chose to bow down to our own desires as if we were the creator and authority of the Universe, God was nonetheless still not deterred from us!
3. It's why Paul wrote this in Romans, "**but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**" (Romans 5:8)
4. I also want to make sure you don't confuse "**mercy**" with pity. Pity is when you feel for somebody because of how bad things are for them, but apart from how bad things are for them, you, at best, wouldn't have any feelings towards them. For instance, as I stated the other week, there are more than 8 billion people on the planet, and, as such, there is no possible way I can truly love them all, because by definition I can't love someone I don't know or I'm not involved with in some way. Remember, love isn't a state of mind or an emotion, but a commitment that demonstrates itself through obvious actions. However, when I hear of something terrible happening to somebody I don't know, I do experience pity. It's very normal to have some level of empathy for someone going through something horrible that they can't do anything about, even if you don't know them, but that's not love, nor is it mercy; that's pity, and that's not what God had for those of us that He redeemed!
5. "**Mercy**" occurs when wrath is justified, but you decide to withhold it. Mercy is withholding warranted punishment, and it makes the way for grace, which is to give blessings that aren't deserved! God, in His salvation, has done both except He didn't withhold his wrath; He redirected it. It's why Paul wrote,

6. **8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)**
7. Even though we defiantly refused to submit to Him, He nonetheless decided to rescue us because He loves us! It wasn't pity in that He felt sorry for people that He otherwise did not know of, but rather, an absolute, sincere, and pure desire to rescue us whom He loved from the slavery of sin and the curse of death to be His fully favored children who experience His life forever! God loved us so much that He did something, the only something that can save us. To do what He did had to come from a well overflowing with mercy! To send His forever and only Son to bear the burden of His forever wrath on our sin is eternally bigger than passing over our sin! He withheld His just eternal damnation on our sin and instead placed it on His eternally perfect Son, who willingly gave His life to save ours!

The second truth in Ephesians 2:4-7 about our spiritual life is that,

B. Spiritual life gives us a new position and disposition. (2:5-6)

1. **5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved--6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,**
2. Verse 5 begins with the reality we previously discussed, but this time it serves to ensure we notice the contrast. Paul also wants to again emphasize something he's going to continue to emphasize—our spiritual life is by no means a result of our actions, but God's! This all happened when we were dead in our trespasses! We WERE in a position of spiritual deadness when God counted the work of Christ as our righteousness, that is, when God considered the death of Christ as the perfect work to count us justifiably worthy to be His kids forever, and as such changed our position and our disposition!
3. "Now comes the interjection, 'by grace ye are saved.' We have here in the Greek what is called a periphrastic construction. This is used when the writer cannot get all of the details of action from one verbal form. So he uses two, a finite verb and a participle. The participle here is in the perfect tense, which tense speaks of an action that took place in past time and was completed in past time, having results existent in present time. The translation reads, "By grace have you been completely saved, with the present result that you are in a saved state of being." The perfect tense speaks of the *existence* of finished results in present time. But Paul is not satisfied with showing the *existence* of finished results in present time. He wants to show the *persistence* of results *through* present time. So he uses the verb "to be" in the present tense which gives durative force to the finished

results. Thus, the full translation is, “By grace you have been saved in past time completely, with the result that you are in a state of salvation which persists through present time.” The unending state of the believer in salvation could not have been put in stronger or clearer language.” The finished results of the past act of salvation are always present with the reader.”⁸

4. When your position changes, your disposition changes, and that means your life changes! I can think of no greater example than the men and women I met in Uganda last year from Darfur. Under strict Islamic rule, these people lived in one of the most spiritually dark places in the world because it is filled with people who are under the demonic oppression of Islam. Even if they were faithful Muslims, they lived in constant fear of what would happen to them if they were even mistakenly accused of violating the Muslim law. Their position was hopeless, and it seemed to get even more desperate when the war in Sudan forced them out of their homes into refugee camps. BUT GOD! For instance, we heard the testimony of one man who had been a soldier and began to question his Muslim faith as he watched his fellow Muslim soldiers yell out “Allahu Akbar” (God is most great) while gang raping and killing other Muslim women as they went village to village slaughtering men, women and children for no other reason than they were in a different tribe. He quietly abandoned his faith but was too afraid to tell anybody because he would then be killed. Somehow, he eventually ended up in a refugee camp where he heard the Gospel and gave his life to Jesus, and everything changed! It was in the refugee camp that this former Muslim soldier and most of the other Darfurians we met with had their eternal position and disposition changed! Despite the fact that Muslims still surround them and, as such, many of them have been severely beaten and live under the constant threat of being killed for believing in Jesus, their mindset (disposition) has been radically changed because their position has been changed. They are no longer children of wrath under the curse of sin, but they are now alive with Christ and as such have HIS life as their life forever!
5. When God saved us, our position changed from sons of disobedience to adopted brothers and sisters of the eternal Son of God, and thus we are seated with Christ! Our position went from being children of wrath who deserve God’s wrath to being children of God who deserve the Kingdom of God!
6. “... Our identification with Christ in His death broke the power of indwelling sin. Our identification with Him in His resurrection resulted in the

⁸ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 4, pp. 66–67). Eerdmans.

impartation of divine life. This is what Paul has reference to when he says, 'We were made alive together with Him.'"⁹

7. "Fundamental to New Testament Christianity is this concept of the union of God's people with Christ. What constitutes the distinctness of the members of God's new society? Not just that they admire and even worship Jesus, not just that they assent to the dogmas of the church, not even that they live by certain moral standards. No, what makes them distinctive is their new solidarity as a people who are 'in Christ'. By virtue of their union with Christ they have actually shared in his resurrection, ascension and session. In the 'heavenly places', the unseen world of spiritual reality, in which the principalities and powers operate (3:10; 6:12) and in which Christ reigns supreme (1:20), there God has blessed his people in Christ (1:3), and there he has seated them with Christ (2:6). For if we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies, there can be no doubt what we are sitting on: thrones! Moreover, this talk about solidarity with Christ in his resurrection and exaltation is not a piece of meaningless Christian mysticism. It bears witness to a living experience, that Christ has given us on the one hand a new life (with a sensitive awareness of the reality of God, and a love for him and for his people) and on the other a new victory (with evil increasingly under our feet). We were dead, but have been made spiritually alive and alert. We were in captivity, but have been enthroned."¹⁰
8. We went from those who were dead in our desire and ability to live in a sincere submitted relationship to God, to those who are now sincerely driven to live in total glad and joyful submission to God; to those whose lives are not a life following the prince of **the power of the air, of obeying the passions of our flesh, of carrying out the desires of the body and the mind**, but are instead finding their joy and fulfillment in life by being in an actual loving relationship with God; in being loved by God and in loving God; in loving others as He loves us; in gladly walking in His commands; in having our position changed from one trapped in sin and the death that sin brings on us and everyone around us, to one who is given eternal life as the opportunity of the quality of our life now and guaranteed as the quality of the reality our life forever when He returns!

The third truth in Ephesians 2:4-7 about our spiritual life is that,

C. God's purpose in giving us spiritual life is to demonstrate His glory. (2:7)

1. **7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**

⁹ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 4, pp. 65-66). Eerdmans.

¹⁰ Stott, J. R. W. (1979). *God's new society: the message of Ephesians* (p. 81). InterVarsity Press.

2. Verse seven not only tells us the purpose of how God brought us to spiritual life, but it also sets us up for what we will learn in verses eight through ten next week. Verse seven, then, is both an independent informative statement and a transitional statement leading to something more profound. But as big of a deal as what it's transitioning us into is, the informative aspect of this statement is still far too significant to gloss over or ignore.
3. God raising us up out of spiritual death and into life with Him that is both capable and eager to live life in submission to Him and with Him has been done to demonstrate for all eternity just how immeasurable the riches of His grace are. That is to make it blatant to us and all the universe for all of time the massive and immeasurable kindness He showed us in all that Christ is and all that Christ did for us!
4. We were not just lost; we were determined to stay lost. Everything in us refused to accept God's life. There was nothing in us that longed to live in submission to God other than those things that we incorrectly thought were ways we could manipulate God into allowing us to justify living in submission to ourselves! Yet, God sent His son to pay the penalty of our sin and gave us the life we so desperately needed, but so defiantly resisted.
5. In a letter to the local church in Rome, Paul explained this contrast more thoroughly. Paul wrote,
6. **15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. 16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. 18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:15-19)**
7. The grandeur, wealth and immeasurable abundance of God's grace is no more clearly seen than when the eternal Son of God, in all His sinless perfection was falsely accused, rejected, mocked, beaten, scourged, paraded down the street and then nailed naked to the cross to helplessly bleed and suffer in front of everybody until He suffocated under His own weight for no other reason than to willingly and completely suffer the entire eternal penalty of our sin for us!

8. All that we see in the grace of God poured out on us should cause us to sing praises to God in a way that even the writers of the Psalms couldn't do. No one in the universe should understand and sincerely cry out the following words more than us!

9. **1 Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! 2 Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. 3 Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! ... 7 Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! 8 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! 9 Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth! ... 11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; 12 let the field exult, and everything in it! (Psalm 96:1-3, 7-9, 11-12)**

Challenge: Which reality is your life a testimony of?

What is the reality of your life? Is it a reality of being one of God's kids and living in God's life or one of being a child of this world who, at best, is trying to act like one of God's kids?

Last week, we talked about how God illuminates us, and here we kind of see that again, just with more detail. In bringing us to spiritual life, He gives us a new natural desire: a natural drive to know and fellowship with God, rather than living in submission to our desires. In bringing us to life we are rescued from a hopeless position and the disposition that goes with it, into a new situation where our spirit or disposition becomes one that longs to say yes to God instead of yes to the flesh, that instead of submitting to the desires of our life, many of which came from God, we instead submit those desires to God! It's a life that wants God and His life more than this world, so much so, we are more than willing and eager to fight the sinful desire in us that try to keep us from obeying God; so much so that we long for the day that Christ returns and we live in a flesh void of any concept of a life lived in anything but glad and joyful submission to the God of glory and love!