

Ephesians

Lesson Six Resurrected Life in Christ

2:1-7

Introduction:

1. This epistle began with praise to God for the many blessings He made available through the wisdom of His plan of redemption.
2. Paul continued by enumerating the blessings that are found in Christ, including the assurance of salvation by the revelation of His will.
3. Then, he focused on the goal of God's great plan of the ages – the exaltation of Jesus as the head of the church.
4. Now, he emphasizes how the power of God toward the Christian results in a new life.

2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins

- A. Literally, "Even you who were dead in trespasses and sins."
 1. It connects to the end of 1:23 – "that filleth all in all."
 2. Even the Ephesians (particularly the Gentiles) were given all spiritual blessings in Christ as members of His body.
 3. The phrase "hath he quickened" is supplied by the translators in an attempt to connect Paul's thought to 1:20 or 2:5.
- B. The Ephesians were dead in trespasses and sins.
 1. A trespass is "a side slip; a lapse or deviation; error; transgression."
 - a. It referred to an "inadvertent violation" or "offence committed without deliberate intent."
 - b. The Ephesians practiced many things that were a part of their culture which they did not perceive as wrong.
 - c. 'Trespass' is the more specific term while 'sin' is more general.
 2. A sin is "an offence; an error; a violation of divine law."
 - a. It was the idea of "missing the mark" or "wandering from the path."
 - b. It referred to the deliberate, premeditated, willful practice of wrong.
 3. The result of either type of offence was death – separation and alienation from God and salvation.
- C. The verb form in the Greek indicates "when you were dead" or "being dead" – a continual state in which they lived.

2:2 Wherein time past ye walked according to the course of this world

- A. They continued to be dead in trespasses and sins as long as they continued to walk in them.
- B. They walked according to the age of the world – the *aion* of the *cosmos*.
 1. They were creatures of their time; they followed the beliefs of their generation – "*the course and current of this world's affairs.*"
 2. Their generation was worldly – of this world – not spiritual.
- C. Thus, they lived like the world, and suffered the fate of the world – spiritual death.

According to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience

- A. The “prince of the power of the air” is a reference to Satan.
 - 1. The word “prince” refers to “one who is first in rank; a ruler, commander, chief or leader.”
 - a. It is the same word used for “prince of the devils [demons]” in Matt. 9:34; 12:24; and Mark 3:22 – or “chief of the devils [demons] in Luke 11:15.
 - b. Jesus referred to Satan as the “prince of this world” three times (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).
 - 2. This word for “power” (*exousia* - εξουσια) means, “Authority, permission, right; the power or rule of government.”
 - a. It is different from “power” (*dunamis* - δυναμις) which means, “Inherent strength, power or ability” (cf. Romans 1:16).
 - b. Here, it refers to the realm of government over which Satan has control, rule or authority – “the whole empire of evil spirits.”
 - 3. The word “air” means exactly that – “air, atmosphere; especially the lower and denser region.”
 - a. It is used by Paul to describe the invisible realm wherein Satan has power and authority.
 - b. Though Satan is called the “god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4), dominion over the earth was given to man.
 - c. Obviously, God rules in Heaven (Acts 7:49).
 - d. So, Satan rules in the invisible realm in between the two.
- B. Those who follow the “course of this world” allow themselves to be ruled by Satan.
- C. He is the “spirit” who continues to work in those who disobey God.
 - 1. Clearly, Satan is a spiritual being.
 - 2. However, the word here refers more to an attitude or disposition that leads to rebellion and other wicked actions (cf. 1 Cor. 2:12).
 - 3. Those who display that attitudes that characterized Satan show that they are under his authority and are his servants.
- D. Those who act in the manner are not the children of God; rather, they are children (lit., “sons”) of disobedience.

2:3 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

- A. Paul remind his readers that all have sinned and, therefore, were dead (cf. Rom. 3:23; 6:23).
 - 1. Whether they were Ephesians or others
 - 2. Whether they were Jews or Gentiles
- B. The word “conversation” refers to one’s conduct or behavior; thus, “a way of life.”
- C. All men’s sins are not the same; but, they all carry the same guilt and punishment.
- D. All were guilty of following the flesh instead of the spirit.

And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others

- A. So, by living in such a manner, they had become children of wrath – under the wrath of a righteous and holy God.
- B. This had become their nature – formed in themselves by the practice of sin.

- C. This verse is used by many to teach the doctrine of Inherited Sin or Total Hereditary Depravity.
1. They argue that man is born with a sinful nature – which made the Ephesians children of wrath before God saved them by grace alone through faith alone.
 2. However, the Bible nowhere teaches this doctrine.
 3. The word “nature” has many different meanings and uses in Scripture.
 - a. It means, “Growth (by germination or natural production).”
 - b. Thus, it can refer to a person’s lineal descent or bloodline.
 - c. It also means, “Disposition, constitution or usage.”
 - d. It can also refer to *nature* – “the force, laws and order” of the natural.
 - e. The best definition for its use in Ephesians 2:3 comes from Thayer – “A mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature.” {*We might call this “second nature.”*}
 4. This specific word occurs 14 times in the New Testament.
 - a. **Nature** – 10 times
 - i. Romans 1:26 – *course established by the Creator*
 - ii. Romans 2:14 – *natural reason; instinct, conscience*
 - iii. Romans 2:27 – *original constitution*
 - iv. Romans 11:24 – *course established by the Creator*
 - v. 1 Corinthians 11:14 – *commons sense or custom*
 - vi. Galatians 2:15 – *birth or natural descent*
 - vii. Galatians 4:8 – *original constitution*
 - viii. Ephesians 2:3 – *long-practiced habit*
 - ix. 2 Peter 1:4 – *quality, disposition, principle and purpose*
 - x. See also 1 Cor. 2:14; 15:44 – **natural** – in contrast with divine revelation and the spiritual
 - b. **Natural** – 2 times (Romans 11:21, 24)
 - c. **Kind** – 1 time (James 3:7)
 - d. **Mankind** – 1 time (James 3:7)
 5. Thus, the word “nature” has to be defined by its context.
 6. Here, the context is clear...
 - a. The “walked according to the course of this world.”
 - b. They were not born this way, but chose to walk this way.
 - c. They were “children of disobedience” – thus, they made the decision to disobey God.
 7. Furthermore, the Bible teaches that each person is individually responsible for his or her own actions (cf. Ezekiel 18).
- D. This verse does not teach inherited sin; but, it does teach that sin can become habitual.
- E. Thus, we must be on guard against **all** practice of sin and never harden our hearts against the Word of God.

2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us

- A. The simple sentence is: “But God hath quickened us and raised us up and made us sit together.”
- B. Yet, the description of God is powerful and important.
- C. God is rich in mercy.
 - 1. He is not just merciful, but rich in mercy.
 - 2. He abounds with mercy.
 - 3. Mercy is compassion and pity toward one in a difficult situation.
 - 4. It is clemency or deliverance from a plight – in this case, one that is inescapable by human effort alone.
- D. God’s love is abundant and overflowing.
 - 1. The double use of the word love is meant to doubly emphasize the extent of God’s love.
 - 2. To “love with love” is to have an unbounded and overflowing love.
 - 3. God’s love for one man overflows to all men – for the Jews overflowed to the Gentiles.
- E. We must learn to love as the Father does – enough to show mercy and compassion.

2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ

- A. The nature of God’s love is emphasized further by the condition of those He loves.
- B. He loved us even when we were dead in sins – trespassers, following the course of the world, servants of Satan, and living in the lusts of the flesh.
- C. Even while we were under His wrath, He loved us – and provided a way to escape His wrath and justice.

(By grace ye are saved)

- A. Though no man deserved it, God made salvation available.
- B. This is not “grace alone;” for, Paul was writing to Christians who had obeyed the Gospel.

2:6 And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus

- A. The magnitude of God’s love is magnified further when we realize what He has done for us.
- B. We were dead, but He quickened us – made us alive (cf. 1 Tim. 5:6; Luke 15:24; Gal. 2:20).
 - 1. “With Christ” does not mean at the same time that Jesus was raised.
 - 2. Instead, Christ is the means by which we are made alive.
- C. After giving us life, He raised us up (cf. Ezekiel 37; Rom. 6:1-6; 1 Cor. 15).
- D. Then, He allowed us to live in heavenly places – the spiritual realm of salvation and fellowship in Christ.

2:7 That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus

- A. When the world sees the saved, God’s grace is magnified.