



Empowering People to Change the World

Alive Together With Christ

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Road Declaration

“Alive Together With Christ”

Introduction:

- We've been in ***Ephesians 1***, looking at we were “born for war,” born to battle in our lives. All warriors know, all Military Colleges teach—your best location in battle is the high ground.
- Beginning with the elevated benefit of verse 3.
- The elevated position of Christ, verses 20-23.
- Now, in chapter 2, Paul recounts the lack of harmony of our lives before Christ. This section is one long sentence which in the Greek does not have its main verb until verse 5.

It begins with “and you” just like the great exposition of ***Romans 1-8***. The apostle does not talk about the grace of God until he shows us our desperate need for it through explaining the universal sinfulness of man.

- The trouble for us is not only that we are out of harmony with our environment; but we are out of harmony with people, and we are out of harmony with God.
- Before we came to know Christ, we were alienated from the life force of the universe! But the life of Christ is the spiritual resurrection power of the Holy Spirit that raised Christ from the dead. We can battle from an elevated position now.

Verse 1

- We were just dead in our spirits!

- There is essentially no difference between the nouns, “trespasses and sins.” The first means “missing the mark,” and the second, “slipping or falling away.”
- This is not physical death, but spiritual death. In those who don't know Christ, there is no spiritual life! The spirit is inactive.
- You were dead. No exceptions! Dead.

Ex. The father of Utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham, when he died, gave orders that his entire estate would go to the University College Hospital in London on the condition that his body always be present at the school. So, he is embalmed, and for many years the Auto-Icon was displayed in a wooden cabinet in the South Cloisters of the Wilkins Building. But in 2020, it was relocated to its new case in UCL's Student Centre on Gordon Square. It's his actual skeleton with clothes on and a wax face.

- The fact is dead people can't do anything! And that is what Paul is talking about - our spiritual state without Christ. We are dead.

Verse 2

- The course of this world is a “walk” further into sin! Without Christ, it is “step by step” into the “law of diminishing returns.”
- Ex. What gave you thrill before doesn't give the same thrill anymore. That is why kids begin to experiment so much in the teen years. “The law of diminishing returns” moves them further into deeper need for more thrills. If God doesn't intervene, this activity will lead into further sin. More sex, more drugs, just a little more, a little more...It is a “walk into the course of this world.”

- Like a high school or college course, you're getting educated further and further into selfishness, self-centeredness, and self-deception.
- The power comes from Satan and demons. This "spirit" is Satan! They just cannot stop! If you have not yet given your life to Christ, you cannot stop! Satan and demons are empowering the sin.
- This earth is controlled by Satan and his demons. Satan has power and authority over this world.
- John Stott writes, "[Ephesians 2:1-3] expresses a whole social value system which is alien to God. It permeates, indeed dominates, non-Christian society and holds people in captivity. Wherever humans are dehumanized - by political oppression or bureaucratic tyranny; by an outlook that is secular (repudiating God), amoral (repudiating absolutes), or materialistic (glorifying the consumer market); by poverty, hunger or unemployment; by racial discrimination or by any form of injustice - there we can detect the sub-human values of 'this age' and 'this world.'"
- There is an evil power ruling over all of this! Satan is a fallen angel.

Isaiah 14:12-14

*"How you are fallen from heaven,
 O Lucifer, son of the morning!
 How you are cut down to the ground,
 You who weakened the nations!
 For you have said in your heart:
 'I will ascend into heaven,
 I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
 I will also sit on the mount of the congregation
 On the farthest sides of the north;*

*I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
I will be like the Most High.'"*

- Sin was conceived in the heart of Satan; this is where it all began...then it was Eve and Adam.
- The sin conceived in the heart of Satan was pride and arrogance against God! This is why pride will always be your most difficult struggle!
- Pride really is all about setting up ourselves to be like god for our lives. Humanism is the ultimate teaching of pride, the doctrine of Satan, because it teaches that man is at the center of the universe and not God!
- In Chuck Colson's excellent book, *How Now Shall We Live?*, he speaks of humanistic philosophy, as it is portrayed in the 1966 book, *The Harrad Experiment*, by Robert Rimmer. The book sold 3 million copies and was instrumental in the "free sex revolution" of the 60's and 70's. Many attribute to the book the sudden rise in coed dormitories and new views on pre-marital sex.

The novel portrays an experimental college where the students are expected to couple up with various combinations to develop a free and uninhibited approach to sex. In a postscript to the 1990 version of the book, Rimmer writes, "Can we lift ourselves by the bootstraps and create a new kind of society where human sexuality and the total wonder of the human body and the human mind become a new religion - a humanistic religion, without necessity of a god, because you and I and all the billions who could interact caringly with one another are the only god we need? I think we can." (p. 241)

This is the essence of Satan's trick! No need for God; no need for restraints; no need for morality; no need for the Bible! This is the battle of humanism in our schools and colleges today.

Where does this lead?

Verse 3

- It is interesting that Paul changes the second person to the first person, and includes himself, “we.”
- Even a Pharisee of Pharisees, a devoutly religious man all his life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul would have hotly denied that he was like that; but since his conversion, he has come to realize that all of us have this sinful nature...
- **Romans 3:23**, *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*
- Without the Holy Spirit, without a spirit made alive in Christ, you can only “fulfill the desires of the flesh.”
- Paul had realized that the law would not save him! The religious law cannot save you!
 - Outward religious practices do not necessarily save us.
 - I know of many people that when you ask them about their faith, all they can talk about is giving money, building buildings, serving in the kitchen, ushering, whatever...
 - But they speak nothing of a deep growing faith in Jesus Christ...
- Many will have said, “Lord, Lord, but He never knew them.”

- “Children of wrath” speaks of the condition before Holy God. Without the blood of Jesus, without the cross, our destiny is into the wrath of God...hell on earth and hell in eternity.
- Ex. Have you figured out that without help from Christ, without power from the Holy Spirit, this life leads you into hell. Your life is getting worse and worse...leading to despair. The doctrine of Satan is despair and discouragement.

Verse 4a

- The greatest words ever spoken to me...But God!
- You will never hear more sweet words...But God!
- You will never experience greater peace and comfort...But God!
- “I can’t make it...but God; I can never change...but God; I am a loser...but God; but God, but God, but God!”
- **Psalm 27:13**, *“I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.”*
 - Look next at what God has done! Look what God can do to a life that Satan has attempted to destroy...

Verses 4-6

- Rich in mercy...agape, unconditional love...made us alive in Christ...saved us by grace...raised us up with resurrection power to sit together with Christ!
- The key word is “sit” down with Christ! It is a command to “be seated” with Him. God wants us to “sit down.”

- Ex. What does it mean to sit down?
 - When we walk and stand, all of our weight rests on us!
 - All the effort to remain upright is on us. We must carry the weight; the effort belongs completely to us.
 - We grow weary walking. We grow weary standing.
 - We expend our energy when we walk and stand.
 - All of the strain of our muscles and nerves happens as we walk and stand.
 - But to sit down is to rest.
 - To sit down is to allow the thing we are sitting on, the chair, to take all of the weight.
 - All of the energy, all of the work is on that which we are seated upon...Christ.
 - Christ wants us to “be seated” with Him in the heavenlies! Christ carries the burden for your life...rich in mercy, grace, love, forgiveness, and power.
 - It is all Him! Rest in that! You can’t rest until you sit down in Christ.
 - **We are alive together with Christ.**
 - Did you notice that the first chapter of this letter are all in the past tense?
 - 1:3 - He blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies.

- 1:4 - He chose us before the foundation of the world.
 - 1:5 - He predestined us to adoption.
 - 1:6 - He made us accepted.
 - 1:9 - He purposed in Himself.
 - 1:13 - Sealed with the Holy Spirit
- God gives us our position of rest. We don't earn it. We can't earn it. We are naturally children of wrath; but God demonstrated His love toward us.

"But God demonstrated His own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

- We can't earn it or deserve it. It is His finished work at the cross that brings rest to our souls.
- It is best expressed in the invitation to the banquet, "... 'Come, for all things are now ready.'" **(Luke 14:17)**
- At creation, God worked for six days and rested on the seventh. It was on the sixth day that God created man. Man was "born" and then rested. Man's first day was rest! Man didn't do anything. Adam had nothing to do with his creation. Imagine Adam saying, "I've got to get going, to repay God." No, the Lord had him rest in Him on the first day.
- So, how do we receive the power of the Holy Spirit for service? How do we labor for God? Must I fast and pray? Must I afflict my soul with self-denial to merit it?
- You must be "in Christ." To be in Christ is to begin to experience what Christ has done in and through you.

- Are you “in Christ?” Are you experiencing Christ and all His riches?