

Pastor Lenard Tavernelli--2-9-25---Union with Christ Ephesians 2:1-7 You Were DEAD...But GOD

Main Idea: Let us remember and celebrate God's saving grace that united us with Jesus Christ when we were dead

in sin to show us his immeasurable grace forever. You are worse than you think you are but far more loved than you can imagine. This passage is indicative (it's fact) not a command--results in praising God due to His grace. It undergirds our unity and kills pride. It helps us walk in newness of life, for evangelism and a challenge for unbelievers.

Sermon Summary: Just as a black lite exposes dirty clothing and history exposes our evil nature, so God's word exposes our self-deceptions. We were spiritually dead...not twitching, not a little alive...stone cold dead. Shocking! (Gen. 2:17: "...for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die"). We are spiritual zombies. We all lived in the lust and desires of our flesh and mind and were under God's wrath. But God...the 2 most beautiful words in the bible—summarizes the gospel. God is surpassingly rich in mercy, love, grace—and regenerated and re-created Christians to be alive in Christ—all because of Christ.

1. You were once dead in sin (2:1-3).

- In Condition: Sin means missing the target. Its living for ourselves in our own way—we are our own god. We de-god God.
 - Galatians 5:19-21; “the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 - “Sin is essentially the resolve—the mad, utterly blameworthy, but nonetheless, utterly firm resolve—to play God and fight the real God. Sinners resolve to treat themselves as the center of the universe and so they keep God at bay on the outer circumference of their lives.” (JI Packer)
- In Practice: Our desires are not naturally godly desires. We were following Satan (not all possessed—but influenced). This is because our origin is the same: in Adam. Some say: “I’ve never sinned”—which is self-deception. We grade ourselves generously. Its someone else’s fault. Virtually all have victim mentality (though some truly terribly victimized).
 - 1 John 2:16-17; “For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.
 - “The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart.” (Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn) We are all capable of terrible evil and sin.
 - Matthew 15:19; For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.
 - Jeremiah 17:9; The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?
- In Nature: We are by nature and choice sinners. We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners. Total depravity doesn’t mean we’re as bad as we can be. Rather, sin affects all we think and do. Rom. 8:7; “The mindset of the flesh is hostile to God...”. Rom. 3:10,12 “None is righteous, no not one....no one does good, not even one”.

2) You have been made alive with Christ (4-7)

- God's motive (2:4) Who He is—overflowing love, mercy and grace.
 - Exodus 34:6; “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...”
 - Romans 5:8 “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- God's means (2:5-6)
 - “Union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation.” (John Murray)
 - God made us alive with Christ
 - God raised us up with Christ—He did not wait for you to respond (you were dead).
 - God seated us with Christ
- God's purpose (7) “To the praise of His glorious grace”. Its all about God—and who He is.

Questions (select some to discuss):

- Looking back pre-Christ, can you see yourself as spiritually dead? What evidence do you see from your own life?
- When did you start seeing yourself as a sinner? Did you not think about it much? Did you minimize your sin (ex. other people's fault)?
- Do you fully or partially agree with JI Packer's quote above? Explain.
- Do you believe you're true, deepest desires are becoming more godly? What steps can you take this week to grow in godly character?
- Are you ever overwhelmed with God's goodness and grace? Did He choose you while you were an enemy? Why?
- In your words, what is union with Christ? How is it “the central doctrine of salvation”?