

(Through the Bible) Ephesians 2a

by Chuck Smith

The sermon explores the themes of spiritual death, the nature of sin, and the transformative power of God's mercy and love in our lives.

Duration: 43:11

Scripture: Ephesians 2:1

Topics: "Sin And Redemption", "Salvation Through Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the bondage and darkness of the world. He highlights the destructive forces orchestrated by Satan, such as immorality, pornography, abortion, and homosexuality. The preacher describes how humanity, including himself, was once trapped in this aimless and sinful lifestyle. However, he then shifts to the message of hope and salvation through Jesus Christ, emphasizing God's great love and mercy. The preacher concludes by urging listeners to recognize their fallen nature and turn to Christ for deliverance from the bondage of sin.

Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles now to Ephesians, the second chapter? Paul is going to talk about someone tonight, very interesting. You. Well, at least you're interested in the subject.

For many of you, it's your favorite subject. If we were able to take a wide-angle lens picture of the service this evening and post it on the bulletin board, and you went up to look at that picture, who's the first one you'd look for? Of course, and you, Paul said. Now, notice the words, *hath he quickened*, are in italics.

What it means is that these words were added by the translators, that they do not appear in the original Greek text in this place. Now, they do appear in the original Greek text down in verse 5, but it does not appear here at the beginning of this text. And so, they wrote *hath he quickened* in italics in order to indicate the fact that they themselves added those words.

They are not a part of the original text. And you, evidently it was just a little bit too heavy. The things that Paul has to say about you, so that they tried to sort of cushion the whole blow by giving you a peek ahead at what he's going to say about you.

But at this point, Paul is just saying, and you who were dead in your trespasses and sins. God said to Adam, in the day that you eat thereof, you will surely die. Talking about that forbidden fruit in the Garden

of Eden.

God was talking about spiritual death. That awareness of God, that communion with God, or that fellowship and oneness that God intended that man should have with God. That would cease.

For God is the Spirit. They that worship Him, worship Him in spirit and in truth. The relationship with God would cease the moment man disobeyed the commandment of God.

The moment man transgressed. And so, and you who were dead, really as the result of your transgressions and sins. The Greek word for sin, *harmatia*, is a word that means to miss.

Our English word sin comes from a root to miss. In fact, it comes from a game in archery that the British used to have. They put a hoop on a pole.

And each man would take his quiver of arrows. And shoot his arrows through the hoop, one at a time. And so maybe you'd have five men in the contest.

Each of them with ten arrows. And one after another they'd shoot their arrow through the hoop, there at the top of the pole. Now, if a man should miss the hoop, then he was called a sinner.

You've missed. And he would have to treat the rest of the fellows to the drinks. He was a sinner.

He had missed the mark. Now, by the very root of the word, it does indicate, which is also true, that it is possible to be a sinner without wanting to be. It is possible that you would be trying very hard to hit the mark.

But no matter how hard we may try to hit the mark, none of us have really hit the mark that God has required for man. All have sinned or missed the mark and come short of the glory of God. Now, some may have come closer than others.

If we decided to go sailing out here in the channel and maybe sail to Catalina, but halfway across the channel we spring a leak in the boat and it starts to go down. And some of you who can't swim go down with the boat. Others who are novices at swimming may swim a few feet and then go down.

Some who are strong swimmers may swim for a mile or two before they go under. And there may be a marathoner in the group that will get within a mile of the shore before he goes under. Someone may even make it almost to the pier, a hundred feet off the pier.

Now, you've all come short. No one made it. That's what God says about us.

You may come closer than others, but we've all come short of the glory of God. We've all sinned. We've all missed the mark.

There is none righteous. No, not one. That means that we all need help.

None of us can make it on our own. The mark that God has established for you is perfection. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

And then the scripture says, none of you are perfect. Now, do you agree with that or not? If you don't, your wife does. All of us have sinned.

All of us have missed the mark. Even though we may be trying our best to hit the mark, we've come short of the glory of God. And as the result, the soul that sinneth it shall surely die.

The wages of sin is death. The loss of fellowship with a holy God. So, and you who were dead because of your trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world.

The word walked here, as we've pointed out in Greek, is a word that should be translated meandered. That is, when you see a person walking, you make an assumption he's going someplace and he has a purpose in mind. When you see a person meandering, you get the impression he's not really going anywhere and he doesn't have any purpose.

He's just sort of wandering, meandering. So, this Greek word, meander, is the word that Paul uses here. It's translated walked.

But in times past, you were just meandering through life. That is, you really didn't have any real eternal purpose. You were really not going anywhere.

You were just existing. But there was no real purpose to your life. In times past, you meandered according to the course of this world.

The word course has its root meaning in Greek, weathervane. That is, whatever way the wind is flowing, that's the way you turn, that's the way you go. So, the flow of the world, you just flowed with it.

Whatever was the current fashion, whatever was the current fad, here I am flowing with it, you know. Everybody's doing it. Get on board.

When I was a small fellow, I used to often ask my mother if I could go a certain place, do a certain thing. And if she'd say, no son, you can't. I'd say, why mom? Everybody's going.

Everybody's doing it. And she used to say, son, it doesn't make any difference if everybody is doing it or not. If everybody is jumping in the fire, are you going to jump in the fire? As a Christian, you're going to have to learn to go against the current.

Any dead fish can float down the stream. It takes a live fish to swim against the current. I thank God for that good, godly advice from my mother.

In times past, we just flowed with the current. The weather vane. As it moved, as it meandered.

Following the crowd, following the course of the world, following the fads. But then Paul gives us an awesome insight. And that is that these fads and fashions of the world are really being directed by none other than Satan.

According, he said, to the prince of the power of the air that even now works in the children of disobedience. Now, there may have been a time in the history of the world that a person would challenge the fact that Satan is behind the course or the flow of the world. I don't think that that would be challenged much anymore.

As we look at the course of this world, as we look at the way things are going. As we look at the latest rock stars. The latest idols.

They've become quite obvious. Of the bondage and of the chains. And of the cruelty.

And of the evil by which they are inspired. In Copenhagen, we saw these posters all over town. In fact, I ripped one off and brought it home.

Figured it was alright because there were so many around town. I didn't think anybody had missed the one. I really thought it was worthwhile having.

I have asked the Lord to forgive me. But I ripped off this poster that was there because it was so intriguing. The poster has the picture of a young man.

Blood all around him. Tied with chains. And in big letters it said, No escape.

That's the message to the young people of Europe today. There's no escape. There's bondage.

The world is going down the tube. And there's no escape. That's the world's message to the world.

Paul said, How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? Thank God there is an escape. It's been provided by Jesus Christ. The glorious salvation that He has given to us.

But outside of Christ, the message is true. To those who want to reject Christ, the message is true. There is no escape.

Satan is behind. The world's fashions, the trends, directing, orchestrating those destructive damning forces that we see pervading our society. The increase of immorality.

The increase of pornography. The acceptance of abortion and homosexuality and these other trends that we see. Satan is behind them, orchestrating as he is leading the world to hell.

And we at one time were following that course. Dead in our trespasses and sins. Living an aimless life without purpose as we followed the trends that were being set by Satan.

What a sad and tragic picture of man apart from Jesus Christ. It is interesting to me how that so often people fear the will of God. Having walked in the will of God, I cannot understand why any man would fear it.

But Satan has so lied to people about God, about the nature of God, that it has caused people to oftentimes fear submitting their lives to God. Now, when I was a child growing up in church, so many times I would hear people say, you be careful what you say you're not going to do because that's exactly what God's going to make you do. The boogeyman will get you, you know.

And God was almost a boogeyman to us, just waiting to prove us wrong. You say you're not going to do something, uh-huh, you just wait, you know. The moment you yield your life to God, that's exactly what He's going to make you do.

And I was fearful of yielding my life to God. There was a lot of things I didn't want to do. And I was fearful God was going to suddenly start making me do all these distasteful things that I said I would never do.

What if my son should come to me and say, Dad, you know, I've been thinking, I've really had a good life. You always provided a roof over my head. You always provided food on the table.

I always had clothes to wear. And I really appreciate all that you've given to me, Dad, and all that you've done for me. And to show my appreciation, Dad, I just thought that today I would come over and just do whatever you'd like to have me do for you.

Any task that you may have around here, I just would like to spend the day with you, Dad, doing whatever you'd like for me to do. Now, as a dad, do you think that suddenly I would think, all right, I've got this kid now where I want him, you know. Boy, I had the worst time with him trying to get him to, you know, hoe weeds in the backyard.

So I'd say, all right, start out in the backyard, that weed patch back there, you know. When you're through with that, wash out the garbage cans. Do you think that I would think of every dirty, miserable task around the house and send him to do them? Well, if you think I would think that, you don't know me.

I'll tell you, I'd be so shocked if I had one of my sons come and say something like that to me. But pleasantly shocked that I would want to make that one of the greatest days of his life. A day he wants to share with his dad.

Well, why don't we, you know, head on down to Huntington and spend a little while surfing, you know. And then maybe we can, you know, do a little water skiing in the afternoon. And I'd be looking for those things that we could really enjoy together.

I'd be so pleased that he's wanting to do something to please me. I would want to make it a great day. Now, do you think that our Father in Heaven is any different? Do you think that when you finally come and say, Father, I do realize You've been good to me.

You've done so much for me. You've blessed me so much. I just want to, you know, do whatever You'd like me to do today, Father.

I'd like to just commit my life to You. And we somehow have an impression that God then is going to just get all these dirty, nasty things that we said we'd never do and say, all right, start here. You know, they're there.

And God is going to lay some heavy, heavy trip on us just because we've submitted ourselves to His will. Not so you don't know the Heavenly Father. You've got a wrong and blasphemous concept of God.

Who just delights to spend pleasant days together with you. Who is delighted when He sees you happy and joyful. Who wants to see you enriched in all things in Christ.

Now, on the other hand, Jesus said concerning Satan that He has come to rob and to kill and to destroy. Satan's purpose for you is your destruction. And so as He is guiding the course of the world, it is a destruction derby.

It's a course that is leading to destruction. And yet people so blithely flow along with it. No worries, no concerns, no consideration.

Talk to me later, man. I'm having too great a time to worry about where the path, the flow is leading. And they seem to have no qualms yielding and flowing with the will of Satan which will lead to their ultimate destruction.

Whereas, you talk about submitting your life to the Lord. Oh no, I hate that. When I get to my deathbed, maybe, you know, I'll consider turning my life over.

No, no, I'm too busy. You know, I'm having fun and all. I don't want to commit my life not to God.

And what a wrong concept people have of what it means to surrender your life to the will of God. For once a person does, they find as Jesus said, I delight to do Thy will, O Lord. It becomes the pleasure, the delight, the thrill of our lives.

Now, the other people looking at us can't understand that because they don't know what's going on inside. You mean you go to church on Sunday evening? And you listen to a Bible study? Man! And they don't know the joy that we have in the presence of the Lord as we worship Him and as we sing unto Him our love and our praises and our thanksgiving. And then as He begins to minister His truth to our heart and it begins to really speak to us, they don't understand that thrill of God's Word really ministering to our lives and to the things of our lives.

And so looking from the outside in, they can't understand. But once we're on the inside, walking in fellowship with God, experiencing His presence and His joy, we understand what it's all about. And it's just such a joy and a pleasant delight to gather with God's people and just to experience God's love and the love within the family of God and the warmth of God's truth as it just bears witness to our spirits.

But Paul said that we were all once in that boat where Satan was guiding, leading to a shipwreck, among whom also we all had our conversation. Now the word conversation is an old English word and we have a new definition for that word today. Conversation, we're talking with each other.

This old English word conversation doesn't really give you the true meaning of the Greek word, which is our manner of living. It isn't just our talking, it's our whole manner of life. Among whom we all had our manner of living, our lifestyles in times past.

What was our lifestyle or what was the manner of life that we lived? What kind of a life were we living? We were living in the lust of our flesh as we were fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind as we were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. That is, we were living by the lower nature, the animal nature. Living after the lust of our flesh and the lust of our minds.

These are the things that were the motivators behind our lives. These are the things that governed our lives in the past. My life was ruled and dominated by the lust of my flesh and by the lust of my mind.

I spent my life trying to satisfy my fleshly desires. We read concerning Solomon the king as he was trying to find meaning in life. How did he pursue so many different directions? First of all, he felt that it must lie in riches, which often many people feel.

And so he began to amass to himself wealth until he was the richest man in the world and silver was as common as rocks in Israel. And if you've ever been to Jerusalem, you know how common rocks are around that city. It's the rockiest city in the world.

Imagine in Solomon's day when silver was as common as rocks. And he said, I looked at all of the wealth and I said, how dies the rich man like the fool? This is emptiness. And so I gave myself to understanding and to wisdom.

I said, the answer must lie in knowing. And so I applied myself to wisdom until I was the smartest man in the world. And I said, how dies the wise man as a fool? This too is empty.

It doesn't satisfy. And so I said, it must lie in leaving great monuments. And so I applied myself to building and I built all of these great monuments around Jerusalem.

And when I looked at all of these great buildings and all I said, this too is empty. It doesn't satisfy. Until he finally concluded that life was empty and frustrating.

There was nothing worthwhile under the sun. That's after it says, I did not withhold from myself anything that my heart desired. You see, after the total indulgence of the lust of his flesh, not withholding anything from himself, he came to the conclusion, life is empty and frustrating.

There's nothing worthwhile under the sun. Sort of concluded you might as well just bomb out and stay drunk. No, there's nothing else.

Too much pain to try to face reality. Sort of the philosophy that a lot of people have taken today. They've tried everything.

They've jaded themselves. They've run the full ten yards. It's still empty.

You might as well just, you know, get into a fuzz of drugs or into the folly of liquor because there's no sense of trying to be sober. Reality is hopeless. Isn't that what existential philosophy pretty much declares? That reality will lead to despair.

Therefore, you cannot face reality. You've got to take the leap of faith into the second story and hope that you land on something. You've got to just hope that you can have some kind of a satisfying experience of truth because if you face reality, truth doesn't exist and thus you'll only end in despair.

There we were. Tripping right along with the crowd as they were trying to satisfy the lust of their flesh and the lust of their mind for we were by nature, that is, we were doing what comes naturally to the fallen man. We were by nature the children of wrath even as others.

The fallen nature of man which is dominated by his flesh and thus is ruled by his fleshly desires. That's the natural man apart from Jesus Christ. And you, black, black is this picture that Paul paints of you and of me.

Verse 4, now he takes this canvas in which he has painted all of this charcoal slate black and he begins to splash on it some brilliant colors. But God, in contrast to the blackness of my own past, now God, who is rich in mercy, brilliant colors flashed across this black background for His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins. God commended His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.

Here in His love, not that we love God, but that God loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. But God, rich in His mercy, in His love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses and sins.

When did God start loving you? So many times we think that God started loving us when we started being loving. When we started being sweet and kind and, you know, generous and good and when we started

just living such a perfect life, God said, My, isn't that lovely? Aren't they perfect? My, I love them. When did God start loving you? When we were still dead in our trespasses and sins.

God loved us. God has loved you from eternity. There's never been a time when God didn't love you.

There will never be a time when God doesn't love you. But God who is rich in His mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead has made us alive. Now it is here in the Greek text.

Finally we've got it. He's made us alive together with Christ for by grace you are saved. So I was once dead because of the trespasses and sins, but through Jesus Christ, God has provided the forgiveness of my trespasses and sins.

So with the psalmist in Psalm 32, I can say, Oh, how happy is the man whose transgressions are forgiven! Oh, how happy is the man whose sins are covered! When I tried to hide my guilt, I was miserable. The hand of God was heavy on my life. I thought I was going to die.

But then I confessed my sin and God forgave me my sin completely. Oh, how good it is to have God's forgiveness. Oh, how happy is the man.

And so, God provided the way for the forgiveness of our sins and having forgiven us our sins, we became alive in the Spirit or were born again. Our first birth, the natural life, was of the flesh. I was born in a body of flesh and from the beginning, my fleshly appetites were dominating me.

I was a pretty good little kid until my fleshly appetites took over and then I began to yell until they took care of feeding me. And sometimes if they didn't feed me when I wanted to be fed, I would flail and kick and scream and holler. I was a natural man dominated by my fleshly needs.

Some people never grow beyond that stage. They're still natural men dominated by their fleshly needs and if they don't find satisfaction, they scream and holler and yell and flail and kick. But I was born again by the Spirit of God.

A spiritual birth. A new life. I no longer relate back to Adam, my Father after the flesh, but I now relate back to Jesus Christ, my Father after the Spirit.

I've been born again by the Spirit of God through Jesus Christ, you see. And now this spiritual birth. My Spirit is now alive.

With my Spirit alive, I now have fellowship with God. I've been joined back together with God through the Spirit. And His Spirit is bearing witness with my spirit that I'm His child.

And because of His Spirit bearing witness with my spirit, I cry Abba, I cry Father. Very naturally. And I worship Him in spirit and in truth.

And so, He's made us alive. Alive spiritually. For by grace are we saved.

That is, we don't deserve it. That is, we can't earn it. There is no work that you can do that can make you alive spiritually.

That is not the result of some great effort on my part. That is not the result of killing the seven-headed dragon and grabbing the three golden apples. But it's by grace.

God's glorious gift of love to me. By grace are you saved. Now, not only has He made me alive, but He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Or in the heavenlies. Notice, places again is italicized. So, it's far more than just saving me from my sins.

It is making me alive unto God and then raising me up into the heavenly levels where God now seats me together in Christ in these heavenly places. Or in the heavenlies. This new walk and life that I have in the Spirit.

This resurrected life of Jesus Christ. The purpose? That in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. Now notice verse 5, with Christ.

Verse 6, in Christ Jesus. Verse 7, through Christ Jesus. All of these things that God has done.

He has done for us in and through and by Jesus Christ. Now, the glorious future that awaits us. As Paul prayed in chapter 1 and we studied last week, he prayed that they might know what is the hope of their calling.

God has called you to be His child. Do you know what that means? That means throughout the endless ages to come, you're going to be dwelling with God in His eternal Kingdom as God is revealing unto you the exceeding richness of His mercy and of His kindness towards you through Christ Jesus. The psalmist said, as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high is God's mercies towards those who fear Him.

And God throughout eternity is going to be revealing the exceeding greatness of His mercy and of His kindness. These things that He has given and provided and done for you through Jesus Christ. You'll never discover it all.

Eternity isn't long enough. Throughout all eternity, God's grace and love and mercy being revealed. For by grace are you saved through faith.

And that not of yourselves. What not of yourselves? Faith. You say, well, I believe God.

Look at me. I believe. No, no.

That not of yourselves. The faith didn't come from you. Even the faith was the gift of God.

You remember when the Midianites had covered the land like grasshoppers, were ripping off the crops from the children of Israel. They were hiding their food in caves and all. And Gideon was in a cave as he was threshing the wheat to hide from the Midianites.

And the angel of the Lord came to him and said, Gideon, go in this thy might and deliver the children of Israel from the oppression of the Midianites. And he says, hey, who are you? And you've got the wrong address. My father is a nobody and I'm the least in my father's household.

You can't be meaning me. And the Lord says, yes, I do mean you. Well, I'd like to know that for sure.

Let Me put out a fleece of wool. And in the morning if it's wet and the ground is dry, then I'll know that it's you. So in the morning when the fleece was wet and the ground was dry, he says, now I want to make sure about this.

Tomorrow morning, let the ground be wet and the fleece dry. I might be stumbling onto a phenomena here of nature that I don't understand. But the morning when it was reversed, then he came to the realization it was God and he blew the trumpet in Israel and gathered together 32,000 men to face the 135,000 Midianites.

And God said, Gideon, the men that are with you are too many because I know the heart of this people. And if I would deliver the Midianites into the hands of the 32,000, they'd go around glorying in themselves. So, go out and tell all those men who are afraid to go to war to go home.

Gideon went out and faced his troops and said, alright, fellows, all of you that are afraid to go to battle, you can go on home. 22,000 of them turned on their heel and left. Left him with 10,000 men to face the 135,000 Midianites.

And the Lord said, Gideon. Yes, Lord. The men that are with you are too many.

I know the heart of this people. If I would deliver the Midianites into the hands of the 10,000, they would go around boasting in themselves and glorying in themselves. Take them down to the stream and let them get a drink of water.

And all of those that get down and put their face in the water, send them home. Those that pick it up in their hands and drink out of their hands, then with these will I deliver the Midianites into the hands of Israel. And Gideon took them down to the stream and 9,700 of them got down on their knees and put their face in the water and began to drink.

And 300 of them picked it up in their hands. And so Gideon took the 300. Now what was the purpose of God? To keep man from glorying or boasting in what God was going to do.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6597.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-ephesians-2a/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net