

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for July 8, 2018**

**Dead in Sin**  
**Ephesians 2:1-3**

*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked,*

- Our passage begins by stating the main theme of those without Christ
- For us, this is the truth regarding our life before Christ
  - We were spiritually dead
  - This spiritual death was because of our own trespasses and sins
  - We were walking or living in sin as a way of life
- This simple statement clearly declares what is known as the doctrine of total depravity or man's depravity
- While God did make mankind in His image in the Garden, that image was marred and damaged due to the sin of Adam
- As a result, sin has spread to all mankind such that this is the proper description of every person on this planet without Christ
- We were all dead in sin
- While this would be sufficient to make Paul's point and then jump to verse 4 in order to talk about God's grace; instead, Paul decides to camp out on this concept of total depravity or man's depravity
- You might be thinking, "Great! We are in for a real downer today!"
- However, I hope that your appreciation of your salvation increases because of looking back at where we have been

I. We followed the world

*following the course of this world,*

- Our past, before Christ, was determined and dominated by the world
  - Paul says we walked, "following the course of this world"
- The word, "course" is the literal word, "age"
  - We were under the influence of this current age
  - We were under the control of the world's dominion
  - We were following this world's dominion
- Thus, our walking in sin was in accord with that which characterizes and epitomizes the world
  - This is why most English translations will say that we walked according to the "course" or "path" of the world
- What is the course or path of the world?

- Is it good, peaceable and charitable?
- Absolutely not!
- This is made obvious when we consider how Scripture describes the world
- The “world” is commonly utilized in Scripture to refer to the system or realm of mankind that is opposed to God
  - James 1:27 “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”
  - James 4:4 “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”
  - John 15:18-19 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”
  - 1 John 2:15-17 “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 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. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”
- Given this description of the world, it is clear that the path of the world is directly opposed to God
- We live in a time and era where this world rebels against the will of God
  - This is not something I need to labor at in order to convince you
  - You know that the world is opposed to God
  - Simply look around and you observe the world’s apathy, or in some cases hostility, toward God
    - This apathy and hostility toward God permeates understandings of morality and discussions about one’s purpose in life
    - Regardless of the subject, the fixated end and goal of the world is self—not God our Creator
- We ourselves were bought into this rebellion against God when we allowed the world to influence and dominate our thinking and living
  - We too lived for ourselves as the world applauded and encouraged us to do so

## II. We followed the Enemy

*following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—*

- We learn that we were not just following the course of the world, we were also following the Devil
- Paul says that we were “following the prince of the power of the air”
  - This is one of the several descriptions of Satan in Scripture
  - While he has many names and titles such as the Devil, Satan, the Accuser, the father of lies, the ancient serpent, the god of this age; here, he is described as the “prince of the power of the air”
  - The word, “air” mentioned here is probably a reference to the unseen realm of spiritual forces like angels and demons
    - “in Paul’s day the air was considered as ‘the dwelling place of evil spirits.’”<sup>1</sup>
  - Thus, Satan is described as the ruler over the demonic forces
- But we must ask, how exactly did we follow Satan, the ruler of the demonic realm?
  - The verse goes on to state that Satan is “the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience”
- We followed Satan because he somehow had an ability to work upon us and control us!
- How did Satan do this to us? How does he do this to others still?
  - Satan exercises control over unbelievers through his control over this current world
    - Scripture teaches that Satan is working and even directing this world
    - 2 Corinthians 4:4 “In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”
    - 1 John 5:19 “We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”
  - How does Satan control and work in this world?
    - These verses indicate some obvious ways:
      - He is blinding unbelievers from seeing the gospel of Christ
      - He is the evil one who is obviously encouraging evil in the world
    - Additionally, Scripture describes other ways that Satan is at work:
      - Scripture also describes Satan as a lion prowling around and looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8)
      - Satan also masquerades as an angel of light who encourages false doctrine and division in the church (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
- This further describes and highlights the extent of our depravity

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<sup>1</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 312.

- We were dead in our sin in the way that we followed the world and did not even realize that Satan was the very one directing the world in its influence over us

### III. We fulfilled our flesh

*3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind,*

- Not only were we going with the flow and following the ways of the world
- And not only were we unaware of Satan’s control over us as we followed the world
- We also were living our own lives of fulfillment in pleasing our flesh
- Paul states that, “we all once lived in the passions of our flesh”
  - Our depravity is now three levels deep
  - The world, Satan and even our own flesh
- This is not a positive statement about our flesh
  - While there are times when Scripture affirms positive passions that we have as believers, this is not one of them
  - These passions are coming from our flesh and our flesh is opposed to God
- Scripture makes it very clear that our flesh is opposed to God
  - Galatians 5:16-17 “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”
  - Genesis 6:5 “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”
  - Paul goes on to state that we were not just feeling these desires inside but that we were also expressing these desires on the outside
- He states that we were “carrying out the desires of the body and the mind”
  - It is impossible to simply hold one’s sinful desires within and never allow any expression of that desire
  - Going back to Galatians 5, Paul made evident the desires of the flesh AND their manifestations
    - Galatians 5:19-21 “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 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.”
  - You might see a list like this and think, “Well I can’t really relate because I was saved at a young age, so I don’t think I was too bad of a person...”
  - Wrong!

- First, to say that you didn't have jealousy, envy or impurity is quite debatable
- Second, Scripture declares our depravity from birth even!
  - Psalm 51:5 "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."
  - There is no question that babies and infants are adorable
  - However, there is no hiding the displeasure or anger that displays itself when a little one does not get what he or her desires
  - This is an example of the sinful flesh that we have all inherited from Adam as a result of his sin in the Garden of Eden
  - Romans 5:12 "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned"
  - This is the clear and obvious indicator of our spiritual death and depravity due to our sinful nature
- We chose to give into our internal fleshly lusts and allowed them to have an external display of sinful rebellion against God
- This was our condition before Christ

#### IV. We faced God's wrath

*and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

- We were in love with the world, brainwashed by Satan, addicted to our flesh, and in a most terrifying reality, this was not the worst part of our condition before Christ
- Paul states that the result of the previous three levels of depravity was that we "were by nature children of wrath"
- What does Paul mean that we were children of wrath?
  - Paul is stating our logical and necessary position before Christ
  - Before Christ intervened, we were obsessed with sin
  - And any good deeds we tried to offer were worthless
    - Isaiah 64:6 "We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."
  - We fell short of God's perfect, holy and righteous standard
  - Consequently, there was only one necessary outcome for us—the outcome of experiencing God's righteous wrath and punishment
  - We were rebellious children that deserved God's wrath
  - This is the case for anyone who fails to believe in Jesus, God's Son
    - John 3:36 "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."
- Paul adds that this position was true not just for us but also "the rest of mankind"

- This is still the dreaded position for anyone who walks on this earth without the hope and salvation of Jesus Christ
- We look at Ephesians 2:1-3 and we praise God for the cross
  - We praise Him for our salvation
  - We praise Him for undeserved grace and love that He has shown to us
  - We rejoice that we are no longer destined for God's wrath
- But for the rest of mankind, it's a different story
  - They are still in love with the ways of the world
  - They are still blinded by Satan and his influence
  - They are still living in the passions of their sinful flesh
  - They are still in a position where they will face the wrath of God