

March 19, 2017

Who are you?

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live...gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But, because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ..."
Ephesians 2:1-10

As we have already noted in this series, we are the product of our genetic make-up and the experiences we have had in our lives. These two things working together make us who we are. God created us to be eternal and gave us the power of choice over our behaviors, so unlike God, we are never the same. Who we are changes day by day.

In God's eyes however, we are designed to be something more. God has chosen to make us his children. As we noted last week, he has chosen us from the very beginning of time to be saved through Jesus Christ, and to adopted as his children. But, because we have that power of choice, we can, and sadly some do, reject him.



Today, we want to talk about our second great blessing in God. Paul would have us understand that, *"...because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ..."* We are chosen to be God's children. And, we are *"...made alive in Christ Jesus"*.

To fully appreciate what it means to be *"...made alive..."* we must first understand why and how we are counted among the dead. Paul makes it pretty clear; *"As for you,"* he tells us, *"You were dead in your transgressions and sins...All of*

us lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts." As we have discussed numerous times, without Jesus and the grace that God has poured out on us through him, we are the true 'walking dead'. We are *"...objects of wrath..."* without hope, condemned under the Law of Sin and Death.

Because our 'death' is not immediate it is easy for you and I to believe that we are really not as bad off as it seems. God's word tells me that I am a condemned sinner without hope, but day in and day out I still go on living. It is hard for me to grasp this idea that, without the grace of God, I am dead in my sins.

Because it is hard for me to realize my true condition without God, the offer of his grace seems less important to me than it really is. If I don't fully understand what it means to be dead how can I possibly understand the great blessing of being *"...made alive..."*

Among the many reasons for this obstacle to my complete surrender is the nature of the conflict that encircles me. For all of us, the challenge of fully realizing the blessing of being *"...made alive..."* is made even more difficult because the *"...ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient..."* is battling with God for our souls.

How does the enemy work on us? Jesus called Satan *"...the father of lies..."* and so we can understand that his favorite tool is the lies he constantly whispers in our ears. What kind of lies? He tells us that we are doing okay; at least we are not as bad as someone else; nothing bad will happen; he doesn't exist; there is no 'hell'; God loves us so much that he won't condemn us; we can

earn salvation by doing everything right; and so on. Satan's plan is obvious. He works constantly to keep us from understanding our true condition as the 'living dead'. Because he is so effective in this he keeps us from fully realizing the blessing of being "*...made alive...*" So, understand this! You and I are among the true 'living dead'. We are "*...objects of wrath...*" living without hope. But, God, because he loves you and me so much, has "*...made us alive in Christ...*"