

**This Is Your Life, Part 1**

**Ephesians 2:1-10**

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This morning, we come to a passage of Scripture that has probably had more impact on my own Christian life and experience than any other passage in the entire Bible. As you know, if you've been around our church for any time at all, I came to genuine faith in Jesus Christ as a senior in high school. And that fall, after my senior year, I went off to a Christian college to study pre-law with the plans of becoming an attorney. During my undergraduate course of study, I sat in a number of Bible classes, and many things that I heard and studied and read deeply affected me. But none greater than the first semester of my senior year.

That year I was serving as a resident assistant, responsible for a hall of about 80 to 100 guys. And from time to time, it fell my responsibility to call a hall meeting and to give a devotional to all the men on my hall and on the other end of the first floor as well. So, a couple of hundred guys. And one evening, as I prepared to teach those men the truth of Ephesians 2, the Lord gripped my own heart. For me, coming from the churches that I had known as a child and as a young person, it was a paradigm shift of the greatest magnitude. That night I experienced, what I believe, was one of the most profound examples of illumination, that we studied toward the end of last year, that I have ever experienced. As a result of what I learned from this text, I was just overwhelmed with this profound sense of joy. I had a personal confidence that I was truly in Christ that I had never experienced to the same degree before. If anyone had seen me that evening, quietly studying down in a private room they would have thought I was Pentecostal. And then that night, at about 10 o'clock, those men gathered and got the overflow of what I had learned. By God's grace over the next couple of weeks, a sort of mini-revival broke out there on the first floor of R. K. Johnson dormitory. Several men came to faith in Christ, and many others were gripped by the same truth that had so profoundly gripped me that night. Since that time, my senior year of college, the truth of the first ten verses of Ephesians 2 has dominated my understanding of the gospel, and colors my understanding of all of Scripture.

Now I can't promise you that this text will have the same effect on you that it did on me, but I can promise you this. If you have never embraced the truth that's taught here, it will be a life-changing experience for you. And if you have already come to enjoy and embrace the truth that's here, you will only be confirmed and strengthened as a result of our study together. And by the way, that's not because of me. That's because what we

will study together is the living and powerful words of the eternal God. Let me read to you, Ephesians 2:1-10.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

What a beautiful and profound passage of Scripture! We should start studying it together by noting how this sentence, and it is really one long sentence, again, in the Greek text. We should note how this sentence is connected to the first chapter. You remember that in chapter 1, we learned in verses 3-14 that we have received some amazing spiritual blessings through the work of Jesus Christ. And after he touches on those blessings in just sort of a cursory way, Paul moves on in verses 15-23, the second half of chapter 1, to pray that we would come to fully understand and grasp those blessings. And that happens through the work of the Spirit as He illumines our understanding, as he turns on the light so that we get it. We understand it. In that passage, we learned that nothing is as important to our spiritual growth and development as growing in our real spiritual knowledge of what God has done for us. If you're a Christian, you don't need some additional resource that God has not yet provided you. Instead, your growth in grace will be tied directly to your apprehension of the blessings that you already enjoy, the blessings in chapter 1.

But when we come to chapter 2, Paul is not done filling out our knowledge. He's not done teaching us. Remember, that he doesn't come to his first real imperative, his first real command, until chapter 4. The first three chapters of this wonderful letter are all teaching us about what God has already done in Christ. And as you will see when we get to chapter 4, when he finally does get to the imperatives, when he finally does issue commands, he builds those commands on the foundation of the teaching that he has laid

in chapters 1-3. Now this is so foreign to most American Christians. The average professing Christian says, 'Skip the doctrine and get me to the practical stuff. Don't teach me any doctrine, just tell me what to do. Tell me how to fix my marriage. Explain how I can communicate better, how I can be more successful at my work. Help me to learn how I can have my best life now.' It's not that those things aren't important. Certainly, we need to have marriages that honor Christ. We need to communicate in a biblical way, and Paul will get there in this letter. But for Paul, you are not truly ready to address those practical issues unless you have also begun to understand the doctrine on which they rest.

So, chapter 2 continues with our education about what God has done for us in Christ. And specifically, here in this first paragraph, he explains how we as individuals came to enjoy the incredible blessings of chapter 1. We saw glimpses in chapter 1 of our sinfulness, and yet we have come to enjoy those great blessings. How? How does that happen? How does a sinner deserving of God's wrath come to enjoy those incredible blessings from His hand. Well, here, he tells us in chapter 2. As Harold Hoehner writes in his commentary, "Paul states here how sinners who deserve nothing but God's wrath become trophies of His grace."

You see, what you have at the beginning of chapter 2 is the spiritual biography of every Christian. It is your spiritual biography, and it is my spiritual biography. It's why I entitled this message, "This Is Your Life". This is your spiritual biography. And there's one key point that Paul wants us to get about our biography, about our story, our spiritual journey. And that is that God alone is responsible for why we have come to enjoy the blessings of chapter 1. Because this chapter, particularly this paragraph, is about what God has done in regeneration. Notice verse 1. "You were dead." Literally, the Greek text says 'You, being dead.' The Greek word for 'were' is a participle, not a main verb. So really verses 1-4 constitute a dependent clause. To accurately reflect it in English, we could translate it like this: 'When you were dead' and so forth. And then, the main verbs of the sentence don't come till verse 5 and verse 6. Notice verse 5. He made us alive. He raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places. 'He' being God. God acted. He gave us spiritual life. By the way, giving spiritual life to the dead is one of several word-pictures that the Bible uses to describe the life-changing work of God in the human heart. It's a powerful picture. Where there's death, God speaks life. So the theme of Ephesians 2:1-10 is this: God's amazing work of regeneration. We can reduce the powerful life-changing message of this passage to one simple sentence, and it's this sentence that still sticks in my mind from my senior year of college, because this is what I learned, and this is what I condensed it to then. This is the truth this passage intends to communicate: Salvation is entirely the work of God from beginning to end. That's the message of Ephesians 2:1-10. And if you miss this message, if you fail to understand this message, then your Christian life will be thoroughly man-centered. If you believe that

you contributed to your salvation in any way, then you will get some of the credit for it, and that steals from God's glory. If you believe that you had something to do with why you're a Christian, then you will conclude that you also have something to do with your sanctification, and your entire perspective about your Christian life and experience will be turned on its head.

Paul here, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, believed that it was crucial for us to understand exactly what God did when he saved us. And he lays out here what he wants to teach us about this dramatic change called regeneration. And we'll learn more about what that means, for those of you who aren't clear on that term, Lord-willing, two weeks from today. You can see the way he lays out this dramatic change in three simple parts of this sentence. You can see them clearly in the syntactical flow, even as I read it probably. In verses 1-3, Paul describes what we were. In verses 4-6, he describes what God did, and in verses 7-10, he explains why God did it. So what we were, what God did, and why God did it.

I want us to begin today with the just the first of those parts of this passage, what we were, presented in the first three verses of this amazing paragraph of text. In these first three verses, Paul reminds us in graphic powerful poignant terms of what we used to be. Notice the key expression down at the end of verse 3, "by nature." You see, what Paul describes in these three verses is what we were "by nature." Notice at the beginning of verse 2, he uses the word "formerly," and again down at the beginning of verse 3, he uses the same word. He's saying, 'I want you to know what you were by nature--what you used to be.' Now, remember to whom Paul is writing. He's writing to the church in Ephesus and the surrounding churches. These people, for the most part, are already Christians. They've already repented of their sins. They've already followed that spiritual path that leads down so it can lead up. They've already come, as our Lord taught, to acknowledge that they were spiritually bankrupt--that they were beggars in spirit. They knew they had nothing to offer God, and they've already mourned over their sin. Already, those things happened long ago when they became Christians, so why is it that Paul feels he needs to take them and us back down this road of how sinful we were? Why do we need to be reminded of that? I mean, isn't this kind of depressing and discouraging to think about what we used to be?

We understand really what Paul is doing here, if you've ever been to a jewelry store. If you go into a jewelry store and you ask to see a diamond, what do the nicer stores always do? I remember this. I actually bought my wife's ring from, from a man that I was sharing an apartment with. He was into the jewelry business. And even he, even in that setting, did the same thing. But what do they do at a nice jewelry store? The first thing they do is lay down on top of the counter a dark pad, leather, velvet, black or the darkest

hues of navy. And then after they've laid that pad out on the top of the counter, only then do they reach inside the cabinet and bring out their stones and carefully lay each one against that dark background. Now why do they do that? Because you can only grasp the brightness and the dazzling brilliance of the diamond when it is contrasted with the dark. And that's exactly what Paul is doing in the first three verses of this chapter. He's laying down the dark background so that when he gets to the brilliance of the work of God in our salvation, we'll be able to see it in every facet. We'll be able to see it in all its glory. You cannot fully appreciate what God has done and live in the light of it, if you don't first come to a deep understanding of what you were before God intervened. The reason there is a shallow Christianity, I believe, in our country is because we do not understand for the most part, the pit from which we have been dug. William Hendrickson, the great commentator says, "The more men learn to see the dimensions of their utterly lost condition, the more they will also, by God's grace, appreciate their marvelous deliverance." So Paul takes us back. He takes us back in time to what we used to be. If you're a Christian here this morning, Paul wants you to remember. He wants you to think about how God found you.

Now, Paul's explanation of what we were before Christ includes several things. You'll notice in the first part of verse 1, it includes our true condition. In the second part of verse 1, the root cause, in "trespasses and sins." In verses 2-3, you have the practical results of our condition. How we lived, how that condition displayed itself day in and day out. And at the very end of verse 3, you have God's perspective about us in that condition. We "were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." So we're going to look, over the next couple of times we have together, at our true condition, the root cause of that condition, the practical results of that condition, and God's perspective about us when we were in that condition.

So in the time remaining this morning, I want us to examine our true condition before Christ found us. Notice verse 1, four words, "And you were dead." Literally, 'and you being dead.' Paul uses the present tense of the Greek verb for that participle to make a very important point. 'You, being dead.' In other words, death was our state of being. It was our constant condition. It was our nature. It wasn't an aberration that occasionally we were dead. We were dead as a condition. Now this cuts completely across the perspective of most people. James Montgomery Boice, before his death wrote that there have always been three basic views of human nature. One view says that man is perfectly well. That man, given the right opportunity will demonstrate the goodness of his heart. He'll do the right thing. Man is wonderful, and that the problem is the outward circumstances that have somehow pressed and forced him out of what he would do given the right opportunity. A second view is that man is sick. Man is sick. Now, the different views would have the sickness at various stages, from slightly sick to terminally ill, but

sick, nonetheless. The biblical view is that man is dead. That is, he is completely spiritually without life. He is dead in reference to God. Over in chapter 4, we see a glimpse of this. Ephesians 4:18. We read of those who are unsaved that they are darkened in their understanding, and notice the second part of verse 18. They are excluded, or alienated, from the life of God. They are excluded, or another way to translate it would be alienated, from the life of God. They don't enjoy the true life of God.

Turn back to Luke 15. In Luke 15, Jesus tells these three parables, you remember. The lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost sons, one who leaves and one who stays at home, but both lost. And notice what, how he describes, how the words He puts in the mouth of the father, representing God here, receiving a sinner. Notice how the father speaks of the son, the prodigal who's returned home. Verse 24. He says, 'I want you to throw a party for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again.' He wasn't physically dead. He was partying in the far country, and then reduced to the worst of situations, but from the mindset and perspective of the father, he had died and he needed life again. And he had been brought to life by his repentance. You see it again down in verse 32. We had to celebrate, he tells the older brother, and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live. Even when you get out of the narrative portions and the parables of our Lord, you see this same picture used. Turn to 1 Timothy 5:6. Here, Paul is talking about widows, and the right kind of widows. And then he talks for a moment in verse 6, about the sinful kind of widow, "she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives." What a graphic picture of sin and its pervasiveness! In 1 John 3:14, the apostle John writes, "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death." Perhaps the most chilling one of all is Revelation 3:1 as John writes to one of the seven churches there in Asia minor--the church in Sardis, and he begins like this in Revelation 3:1, "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this, [this is Christ speaking] I know your deeds [speaking to the church in Sardis] that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead." The spiritually dead can even be in Christian churches that claim to worship Jesus Christ.

What Paul is describing here as death, we were 'dead,' is what theologians call total depravity. Now that term is misleading in some ways because when we say that people are totally depraved, we do not mean that they act as bad as they really are by nature. We all understand that sinful man can admire and even do what is good and virtuous. Our Lord acknowledged this. In Luke 6, He said, 'If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.' Luke writes in Acts 28:2 that the natives there after the shipwreck, those who were unconverted, showed us extraordinary kindness. Unbelieving people can be generous and do good and do lots of wonderful things. Nor do we mean that every sinner will indulge in every form of sin.

And we certainly don't mean to say that every sinner is as depraved as he possibly can become. As John Gershner, the theologian that is now with the Lord, used to say, "There's always room for deprovement." Total depravity simply means that the corruption inherent in every human being is total in the sense that it permeates every part of us. Every part of our nature. It doesn't just affect one part of us. It permeates--it's total in that sense. It taints and ruins every faculty and power, both of our souls and of our bodies. And the result is, there is nothing spiritually good in the center at all.

Scripture speaks unequivocally about this. Let me just give you a few examples. Genesis 6:5, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 8:21, "The intent of man's heart is evil from his youth." I Kings 8:46, "There is no man who does not sin." Psalm 51:5, David writes, "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me." You know what David was saying? He was saying, 'My sin of adultery and murder--those are not aberrations. I didn't just slip up, I'm normally a good person, but this just happened to me.' No, David was saying, 'I am what I am and this is simply an expression of it. What I did shows the true nature of my heart.' Psalm 143:2, "In Your sight, no living man is righteous." Ecclesiastes 7:20, "Indeed there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins." Ecclesiastes 9:3 "The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives." The insanity of sin. Isaiah 53:6, "All of us like sheep [All of us like sheep, the prophet writes] have gone astray." Each of us has turned to his own way. Isaiah 64:6. "For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment." You see, we may do many things that appear good, but our good is actually bad, because it is designed to maintain our rebellion against God. And God sees absolutely no spiritual or eternal value in the good that fallen human beings do.

Perhaps, nowhere is our depravity more graphically portrayed than in Romans 3. Turn there with me for a moment. Romans 3:9. He is now speaking here, Paul, about Jews and Greeks. In other words, everybody. There's no one not included in that expression. Jews and Gentiles is the idea. All of us are under sin. Verse 10, "As it is written, there is none righteous, not even one." Our morals are corrupt. Look at verse 11. Our intellects are corrupt. "There is none who understands." Our wills are corrupt. "There is none who seeks for God." And then beginning in verse 12, and running all the way down through verse 17, he details how our behavior is corrupt. But look at verse 18, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Here is the apex of human sinfulness. There is in each of our hearts, and in every person born, an inherent lack of submission to, and worship of, and obedience to the one and true and living God. We are born that way by nature. Many in our culture try to understand the problem with man and come up with all the wrong conclusions. You can read today in various publications that the problems we experience

are because of negative environments, and if we can just improve the environment, then we'll solve the problem. Or maybe it's bad nutrition. I've even read that one lately. It's just bad nutrition. You give them better vitamins and better food, and people will behave better. Or it's a lack of opportunity, that's the problem, is people don't have the opportunity to be who they need to be and express themselves, and so that creates sin. Or that creates problems I should say. But God says that none of those are the heart of the problem with man. Here in a nutshell is man's problem. He's dead.

Now, obviously, Paul isn't talking about physical death. He's writing to people who were alive at the time he's writing to them. And during the time that he says they were dead according to verses 2 and 3, they were committing sins, and they were living in the world. So he's not talking about physical death. Our family, when I was growing up, got its first TV when I was about 8. That's not because my parents were against TV, nor am I so old as that it was just coming out. But when you have ten kids, the choice is simple. What shall we buy? Food or a television? Fortunately, they waited to buy the television. But we did eventually get one, and I remember occasionally coming across, we weren't allowed to watch them of course, but I remember occasionally coming across one of the B horror movies, like "The Blob" or something ridiculous like that. And I remember one in particular, and I don't remember what it was called, and I didn't watch the whole movie, but I remember catching glimpses of these walking dead. They were people who had died and who had then come to some kind of half-life, and they walked around terrorizing the living. That is exactly what God says is true about every human being from His perspective. We are physically alive, our hearts beat, our brains function. We have families, we have jobs, we have careers, we go to church, we have religions of various kinds. We sleep, we eat, we play, but without Christ, we are the walking dead. John Calvin put it this way, "As spiritual death is nothing else than the alienation of the soul from God. We are all born as dead men and we live as dead men until we are made partakers of the life of Christ." This wasn't just true of the Ephesians. Paul begins verse 1 by saying 'You,' talking to the Ephesians, but he quickly includes himself. Notice in verse 3, 'we.' It's everybody. John Stott writes that Paul is not referring to some particularly decadent tribe or degraded segment of society, or even of the extremely corrupt paganism of his own day, but it is the biblical diagnosis of fallen man in fallen society everywhere.

But in what sense is every person by nature a walking dead man? How does this spiritual death manifest itself? Well, Scripture lays out a series of categorical negatives that describe man's spiritual death. They tell us what a spiritually dead man cannot do. Death in a sense is defined by that, isn't it? The absence of life. The absence of ability to respond, to communicate, to do anything. Those of you, again, who've been a part of our church for awhile, know that as a seminary student, as a poor seminary student, I lived in



a mortuary for awhile, in an apartment there, and did some of the functions that were necessary. And so I looked a lot about death, and I saw a lot of death, and what I came to realize is that the defining qualification of death is that there is an utter inability. And that really is what defines spiritual death as well. An utter inability. There are several New Testament passages that use the Greek word '*dunamis*.' It's a word which means "to be able, to have the power, to have the capacity." And these passages detail what spiritual death looks like. What the absence of ability looks like when a person is alive physically but dead spiritually. Man, apart from Christ, has no ability to do several things. Let me give you a little list.

Number one, he has no ability to act contrary to his nature. No ability to act contrary to his nature. Jeremiah 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good who are accustomed to doing evil." In other words, you can't change your nature. You can't make moral choices that conflict with who you are by nature. Jesus puts it this way in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 7:18, "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit." Can't happen. You will produce the fruit that reflects what you are by nature. And so, a dead man has no ability to act contrary to his nature.

Number two, spiritual death is defined as having no ability to enter God's kingdom. John 3, that wonderful interchange between our Lord and Nicodemus, one of the leading teachers of the Jews. In verse 3, Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Cannot. "Does not have the ability" is the word He used. Again, let me remind you that in Greek as in English the word 'can' implies ability. He cannot enter the kingdom. Verse 5, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit [He's talking about the new birth] he cannot enter the kingdom of God." A spiritually dead person does not have the ability to act contrary to his nature, and he does not have the ability to enter God's kingdom.

Number three, a spiritually dead person does not have the ability to do anything spiritually good. John 8. Our Lord tells the leading religious leaders of His day. Men who did many good deeds, who gave great alms, who gave huge portions of their money, who did a lot of wonderful things. He says, 'You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. Everything you're doing has more to do with the devil than it does to do with God.' That's what Jesus told them. In John 15, Jesus talking to His disciples says to His disciples there at the Last Supper. He says apart from Me, you can do what? Nothing. He was talking about nothing spiritually good. Nothing pleasing to God. Nothing that will be beneficial in eternity. That was true of the disciples and it's true of unbelievers as well, and they are without Christ, and so they don't have that capacity to do anything spiritually good.

Number four, spiritual death is marked by the lack of ability to believe, or understand the truth. To believe or even to understand the truth of God. 1 Corinthians 2:14, a very familiar verse to all of us, says, “A natural man, that is an unregenerate man, a man who hasn't been delivered by God, does not accept the things of the Spirit of God.” Why? Because they're foolishness to him. And he cannot understand them. He does not have the ability to understand them. And therefore he doesn't accept them, because to him, they're just foolishness.

Spiritual death also means that we do not have the ability to obey God. Turn to Romans 8. Romans 8:6. Let's go back to verse 5, where Paul begins this line of argument. He says, “For those who are according to the flesh [he's talking about unbelievers here] set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” He's talking about believers and unbelievers. And he says in verse 6, “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.” So he's drawing these two parallel lines. You have the one who lives in the flesh, he's dead. And the one who lives in the Spirit has life and peace. Verse 7, “because the mind set on the flesh [so we're talking about the unbeliever now] is hostile toward God; [He's God's enemy.] for-” Here's why. You may not think of yourself as an enemy. We probably didn't. I didn't think of myself as God's enemy before I was saved as a senior in high school, but I was, and here's why. Because my mind, verse 7, “does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.” An unbelieving person who is dead cannot obey God. He is not even able to submit himself to the law of God. Stay right here in Romans 8 and the next lesson we learn about man's lack of ability in spiritual death is, he cannot please God. He cannot please God. Look at verse 8. “And those who are in the flesh [here's the coup de grace] cannot [‘do not have the ability’] to please God.” Doesn't exist. They can't.

There's one final lack that spiritual death brings. Not only is there no ability to act contrary to our nature, no ability to enter God's kingdom, no ability to do anything spiritually good. No ability to believe or even understand the truth, no ability to obey God, no ability to please God. Finally, there is no ability even to come to Christ for salvation apart from divine intervention. Turn to John 6:44. This is a remarkable verse about human depravity. About spiritual deadness, because Jesus says this, “No one [verse 44, no one, that's a categorical negative. Everybody is included in that. No one.] can come.” No one ‘can.’ There's our word again is ‘able to, has the ability, has the power.’ No one has the power or ability to come to Me. That's a familiar expression our Lord used of coming to Him in faith and repentance--of accepting Him as Lord and Savior, of salvation, of entering into salvation. So no one without exception ‘can,’ ‘has the ability or power,’ to come to me. That is for salvation unless, here's the one exception, unless the

Father who sent Me draws him. The meaning of this verse is crystal clear. No human being by nature has the ability or power to approach Jesus for salvation unless the Father intervenes and compels him to come. Now, those ‘cannots’ describe what it means to be dead to God. We *cannot* act contrary to our nature. We *cannot* enter God's kingdom. We *cannot* embrace the truth. We *cannot* obey God. We *cannot* please God. We *cannot* come to Christ for salvation.

Now you tell me, what does the reality of spiritual death like that require? It requires that God intervene, and He bring life where there is death. It demands that salvation be a sovereign declaration of God. It demands as theologians would say that salvation be monergistic. “Mono-” meaning one. “-erg” meaning energy or power. ‘One working.’ That is God working versus synergistic, that is working together. The sinner and God working together. Absolutely not. The sinner is dead. Salvation must be entirely a work of God from beginning to end. If you're a Christian here this morning, it is imperative that you come to grips with this life-changing truth, you were dead in all the ways we have described. And God, because of His mercy, and because of His love that He set upon you brought you to life. That's why you have any relationship to God today. And if you're here this morning and you know, even as we've gone through this passage together, by the work of the Spirit of God in your heart by the pricking of your conscience. If you know that you are still dead to God, that you are one of the walking dead, your only hope is to throw yourself on the God of mercy and love and plead for Him to change you because only God can speak life into those who are dead. And thank God, He has done just that. Let's pray together.

Our Father, we are literally overwhelmed by this truth because it brings us to our knees. It brings us to the reality that if You had not in grace and mercy and love intervened, we would still be dead. The walking dead, soon to suffer eternal death. Father, we thank You. We thank You for this reminder from the pen of the apostle Paul, of who we were. Father, I pray that the blackness, the darkness of who we were would only cause us, as we contemplate and reflect on the brilliance of Your grace and mercy to us in Christ. May it only make it shine more brightly. May we be more dazzled, and overwhelmed by what You have done. Father, I pray for the person here this morning who is still dead to You, who is excluded or alienated from Your life, who has no capacity to do those things that we just looked at together. O God, may Your Spirit even now be working to show them their need and to drive them to throw themselves on You, and on Your mercy in Christ. May this be the day when You change them, when You cause life to be where there was death before. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.