

Commentary on Ephesians 2, by Chuck Smith 2.25.24

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February memory verse Galatians 6:7 (NKJV) Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

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Shall we turn in our Bibles now to Ephesians, the second chapter.

And you (Eph 2:1) Paul said. Now notice the words, *hath he quickened* (Eph 2:1),

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.

who were dead in your trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1);

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 a Spirit, they that worship Him worship Him in Spirit and in truth. The relationship with God would cease the moment that 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.

That is what God says about us, you may come closer than others, but we have all come short of the glory of God. We have all sinned; we have 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.

Wherein times past you walked according to the course of this world (Eph 2:2),

The word *walked* here in Greek is a word that should be translated *meandered*. That is, when you see a person walking you make an assumption he is going someplace and he has a purpose in mind. When you see a person meandering you get the impression he is 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 is translated *walk*. 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 is the way you

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turn, that is 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 is doing it, get on board.

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 to the prince of the power of the air, that even now works in the children of disobedience (Eph 2:2):

Paul said, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" They should thank God there is an escape, it has 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 follow 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 on the other hand, Jesus said concerning Satan, "That he is 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 is a course that is leading to destruction. And yet, people so blindly flow along with it. No worries, no concerns, no consideration, "Talk to me later, man, I'm having too great a time." No 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 so many who say, "When I get to my death bed, maybe, you know, I will consider turning my life over to Him. Now I am too busy. I am having fun. I don't want to commit myself to God." And what a wrong concept people have of what it means to surrender your life to the will of God.

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 (Eph 2:3).

Now the word *conversation* is an old English word, and we have a new definition for that word today. Conversation, we are talking with each other. This old English word

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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 is our whole manner of life. "Among whom we all had our manner of living, or 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 the others ([Eph 2:3](#)).

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 motivation 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.

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 ([Eph 2:4](#)),

In contrast to the blackness of my own past, now God

who is rich in mercy ([Eph 2:4](#)),

Brilliant colors flashed across this black background.

for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins ([Eph 2:4-5](#)),

God has loved you from eternity, there has 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 have got it.

he has made us alive together with Christ, (for by grace you are saved;) ([Eph 2:5](#))

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 are 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.

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And so He has 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 is 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 the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:6): Or in the heavenlies. You notice *places* 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 toward us, through Christ Jesus (Eph 2:7).

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. You know what that means? That means throughout the endless ages to come you are 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.

For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves (Eph 2:8):

What not of yourselves? Faith. You say, "Well, I believe God. Look at me, I believe." No, no. That not of yourself, the faith didn't come from you. Even the faith was the gift of God (Eph 2:8):

God has done a wonderful thing for us. He has brought us salvation and eternal life and He doesn't want us boasting in what we have done. In fact, He doesn't want any flesh to glory in His sight. So even the faith by which we are saved God gives to us as a gift. So I can't even boast about my believing the truth of God. "Well, the truth came to me and I examined the truth, and I decided I am going to believe it." Nope, "by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourself. It is a gift of God."

It is not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph 2:9).

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You see, God knows the tendency of our old nature to want to receive glory. That's a part of that sinful nature, that is the very thing that tripped up Satan. "I'm going to exalt my throne above the stars of heaven. I'm going to sit in the congregation in the sides of the north. I'm going to ascend into the heights. I will be like the Most High. I want people to recognize and worship and glory in me." "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Isaiah 14:12) Who did exalt thyself," looking for glory.

God knows that is a part of our nature, and therefore He placed salvation outside of our capacity, outside of our ability. He made our salvation on the basis of His grace, His work, His work through Jesus Christ and my believing that work. And then He gave me the faith to believe it. He drew me unto Himself, placed the faith in my heart to believe His truth, and granted unto me through His grace this glorious gift of eternal life. "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God." That faith by which you were saved. "It is not of works, [your salvation,] lest any man should boast."

For we are his workmanship (Eph 2:10),

The Greek word translated *workmanship* is *poiema*, from which we get our English word *poem*. You are His work. You are His poem. A poem is a thing of grace, a thing of beauty. God wants your life to be a thing of grace and a thing of beauty. And as God works in your life, it will become a thing of grace and of beauty; you are His poem.

The poet seeks to express Himself in beautiful terms. He seeks to express beauty in attractive terms. God is seeking to express Himself, and your life becomes that expression as God works in you. You are His work, as God works in your life conforming you into the image of Jesus Christ, you then become the revelation of God to the world around you--the expression of God.

So God wants you to be the expression of Himself to this world. And that is the purpose of God's work in your life, to conform you into the image of Jesus Christ. Now, as we get to the fourth chapter of Ephesians, Paul will tell us that God has appointed in the church pastor-teachers, evangelists, prophets, apostles, and not in that order. He put pastor-teachers last, but I like to reverse the order since I am a pastor-teacher.

But their purpose was for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ until we all came into the unity of the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the complete or fully mature man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the image of Christ. You see, this is God's work in you: conform you into the image of Christ.

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said, "We all, with open face as we behold the glory of the Lord, are being changed from glory to glory even into that same image" (I Corinthians 3:18). God expressing Himself through you as God knocks off the rough edges and as God smoothes out those rough spots. His whole purpose of His work in

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my life is to conform me into the image of Christ, that He might reveal Himself through me to the world. His love through me, His grace through me, His kindness through me.

You are His poiema, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Eph 2:10).

God has already determined, foreordained, that work that you are to accomplish for His glory. God has a plan and a purpose for your life.

So God has been preparing you. How do you know but this isn't what God has been preparing you for? As God works in our life, we can know that God has a purpose and a plan. He doesn't just work happenstance in us. It isn't just some kind of a capricious act of God that I have been through these severe testings or trials. It is a part of God's plan in preparing me to do the work that God has already decided that I should do for the glory of His kingdom.

There is still something to be done, God still has a purpose and a work for me yet to fulfill. When I have completed, when I have apprehended that for which I was apprehended, do you think God is going to leave me in this sin-cursed world any longer? No, He loves me too much. He is going to take me to be with Him in the eternal glories of His kingdom.

Wherefore remember, that you in time past as a Gentile in the flesh, were called the Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands (Eph 2:11);

So remember as a Gentile you were totally excluded by the Jews. Excluded to salvation.

That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world (Eph 2:12):

Now he is going back again. You, before the coming of Jesus Christ into your life--a real separation, a real wall between you and God, you and the people of God. You were without Christ, you were an alien and strangers from the covenants of promise and you had no hope, for you were without God in the world. That is one of the saddest, most tragic pictures of mankind. No hope, without God in the world, without Christ, without hope, without God.

It is a tragic thing to try to exist in a hopeless state. One of the greatest things the Bible does for us, it gives us hope, even in a world that is deteriorating around us, there is hope. In fact, the more the world deteriorates the greater the hope becomes.

But now, in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off you've been brought nigh by the blood of Jesus Christ (Eph 2:13).

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You were once an alien; now you have been made a part of the family of God. You were once a stranger; now you are at home in the kingdom.

For he is our peace (Eph 2:14), Not, "He will bring us peace." He is our peace.

who has made both one (Eph 2:14), That is, both the Jew and the Gentile, He has made us both one.

and broke down that wall of partition that used to separate us; having abolished in his flesh that enmity that once existed, even the law of commandments contained in the ordinances; in order that he may make in himself of the two one new man, so making peace (Eph 2:14-15);

So Jesus took the two diverse and divergent systems, the Jew who was trying to under the law to be righteous before God, and failing; the Gentile who was totally alienated because he wasn't even close by way of the law. And this tremendous difference that existed between the Jew under the law, and the Gentile without a law, both of them failing to please God or to come into fellowship with God. And Jesus broke down this barrier, this wall that existed between man and mankind and He has made it all one in Him. So Jesus the common denominator, and He is one way by which man can come to God. The Gentile apart from the law, the Jew within the law system, all have to come this new route that Jesus has established. So that as we all come by the same path through Jesus Christ, we become one. And no longer does this great difference exist between the Jew and the Gentile. So in making from the two, one new man and thus, He has made peace.

That he might reconcile both unto God in the one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (Eph 2:16):

Or, in the cross He fulfilled the law. The righteous demands of the law were fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ. The law righteously demanded that the sinning soul should die. Now, under the ordinances they had the provision that they could take an animal as a substitute and thus cover their sins. But the righteousness of the law had to be satisfied. It was satisfied in the death of Jesus Christ, and so there He brought an end to the law and its authority over man, because the law has now been totally satisfied through His death. And now through His death He has reconciled both--that is, the Jew who could not keep the law, or the Gentile who had no relationship to the law. We have both been reconciled to God in one body of Christ by the cross, and there He put an end to this enmity that existed between the two.

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off, and to them which were close (Eph 2:17). The same message He preaches to all men. Whether you were far, or near.

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Eph 2:18).

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"There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). And you have no access to God apart from Jesus Christ. And I don't care how I am accused of being narrow in that statement. I am only stating to you what the scriptures declare.

You can only have access to God through Jesus Christ. Yes, it is a straight gate and it is a narrow path, but it leads to eternal life. Broad is the gate, and broad is the path that leads to destruction, and many go in. There is the flow, the flow of the world. But straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to eternal life and few there be that find it. So Christ has made the way by which man can come to God, it is a road that is marked by blood, but it brings us into fellowship and in communion with the Father.

So you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you have been made a fellow citizen with the saints, and of the household of God (Eph 2:19);

So it is not only Christ settling down and making Himself at home in your hearts, but you just being a part of the household of God, at home with God.

And you are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets (Eph 2:20),

Now, these are the prophets of the Old Testament. We are not really built upon the foundation of the apostles. They are not the foundation upon which we are built, but we are built upon the message of the apostles. That is the foundation. Paul said, "No other foundation have we then this which is all ready laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Peter said, "You are the messiah the son of the living God," and Jesus said, "That is good Peter. God revealed that to you, and upon this rock I am going to build my church."

He is the foundation upon which we are built, the message of the apostles and the prophets, that God has provided salvation through Jesus Christ. And that He is the way by which we might come to God. That is the foundation, laid by the apostles and the prophets in their teaching and in their ministry.

Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Eph 2:20);

God is building a habitation for Himself. A body in which to dwell, the body of Christ. The body of believers. I become a part of that building of God. You remember Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst." We are the building of God. We have been built upon that foundation laid by the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ the chief cornerstone upon which this building is built. You remember that Peter, standing before the Sanhedrin, quoted that particular Psalms 118 referring to Jesus Christ. He said, "This is the stone which was set of nought by you builders but the same has become the chief cornerstone, this is the work of God it is marvelous in our eyes," Psalms 118. Christ the chief cornerstone. He was the stone that was set of nought by the builders. They rejected Him. He came to His own and His

own received Him not. Those leaders of the Jewish religion rejected the chief cornerstone.

So Jesus Christ, set of nought by the religious leaders, by the builders, but God has made Him to be the chief cornerstone. This is the work of God. It is marvelous in our eyes, and neither is there salvation, Peter said, in any other, because there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved. The chief cornerstone upon which the whole thing is built.

In whom all of the building is fitly framed and grows unto the holy temple in the Lord (Eph 2:21):

So when you have Christ, building on Him, the whole building goes together fitly framed together the holy temple in the Lord.

In whom ye also are built together as the house of God through the Spirit (Eph 2:22).

Again, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst. The house of God where He comes to dwell among His people. How glorious it is to be able to gather together with the family of God and to experience the presence of Jesus Christ and the power of God's Spirit as He is working to build this habitation, not a physical building, but our lives that are being knit together, fit together in this whole plan of God, this glorious building where God will reveal Himself to His people, and through His people to the world.

Thank you, Father, for that wonderful work of your Holy Spirit in our hearts and lives. For that grace whereby we were saved. For Your work in us as You prepare us to do Your work, for Your Spirit drawing us near when we were without hope and was without Christ, and was without God in this world. For making us a part of the family of God. Fitting us together as we are built upon Christ. Oh Lord, You are beautiful, and we love Your work. Amen.

You are His workmanship created together in Christ Jesus unto the good works that God has foreordained that you should walk in them. God has a plan for your life this week. God is working in you. God wants to work through you. As you yield yourself, your lives to God, you will begin to discover that which God intended and purposed for you to do for His glory. But you can only discover it by yielding to Him.

As a potter works with the clay, and as he begins his work with the clay, in his mind he has a vessel that he intends to make out of that lump of clay. To take that shapeless bit of mud and to carefully work with it until he forms a vessel that he has in his mind to form from this bit of clay. So God takes your life as a bit of clay and has in His mind a vessel that He wishes to form in order that it might perform a specific work or function. God knows exactly what function He wants you to fulfill within the body.

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Now that clay has really no choice of its destiny. Nor does it have necessarily any knowledge of its destiny until, as the potter begins to form it, it can begin to understand what its destiny is going to be as you begin to look at its shape. I begin to realize that God is preparing me for this, or is preparing me for that, and I begin to understand what God is preparing me for as I see the thing take form and take shape. But the only way I can really discover what God has in mind for me is to remain completely yielded to His touch. The moment I resist and stiffen, the work will be marred in the hands of the potter, and many times He has to start all over again. Take that piece of clay, and here I go again back to zero. I hope I listen this time. The wheel starts turning, "Oh Lord, what are you doing now?" Boy, how many times I was back to zero. Just a blob again. But in time we learn that the potter knows best. Just to yield our lives to the touch of God. To let God work in us, that we might do the work that He has planned for us.

So God bless you as He works in your life this week. Making of you an instrument that He might use to bring glory to His name.