

## Made Alive With Christ

Ephesians 2:5

April 5, 2026

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This morning, my message is a reminder about what God has done. As a Christian, as a believer, a follower of Jesus Christ, God has “made you alive *with* Christ”.

And if you have not yet been made alive *with* Christ, or if you don’t know what that means, my prayer is that, you will know what that means as we walk through this passage.

My hope is that you will see what a wonderful and amazing thing it is to be spiritually alive. This is the Good News! But there is bad news that precedes it. So, we will have to look at what the bad news first before we get to the good news.

Let’s look at Ephesians 2:1-5:

*<sup>1</sup> And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:1-5)*

In the field of Mathematics, you are probably aware of number systems - binary system (has only two digits – 0 and 1), decimal system (has ten digits) or hexadecimal system (has sixteen digits). I think Paul followed a binary number system. Because Paul talks only in two categories.

Paul says there are only two categories of people in this world - those who are spiritually dead and those who are spiritually alive. Those who are spiritually alive today were once dead.

You are either spiritually dead or alive but not both at the same time. You have zero heaven without Christ but you have all heaven when you are one with Christ.

Paul answers *four* key questions as we walk through this passage.

*What does it mean to be spiritually dead?*

*What should spiritually dead people expect?*

*What does God do for spiritually dead people?*

*Why does God give life to the dead?*

Paul says “*you were dead*” in verse one. What does he mean?

*He means the Ephesians, the church he wrote this letter to in the first century and (including you and I) were once spiritually dead to God.*

You know what this implies?

There was a time in your life, you were spiritually *dead* to God. You did not desire God for God’s sake. Your desire, capacity and aptitude for God was zero. Paul echoes this truth in Romans 3 verse 10-12. “*No one is righteous—not even one. <sup>11</sup> No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.*”

A dead man doesn’t do much of anything except decay. Why? Because there is no life. Similarly, being spiritually dead people don’t do anything to seek God.

How do know someone is spiritually dead? Paul gives us *three* tests or criteria to identify spiritual deadness:

Part#1 Spiritually dead people *defy* God

Verse 1, 2 and 3.

*<sup>1</sup> And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked.. <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind*

Trespasses – What are these? Ever saw a sign with the words ‘no trespassing’ or ‘all trespassers will be prosecuted’? *Trespassing is walking in false steps, deviating from what is not right.* Spiritually dead people are *trespassers* of God’s Law.

Sins - Jesus tells us what sin looks like. Jesus said in Mark chapter 7 verse 21-22 “*For from within, out of a person’s heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness*”. Spiritually dead people are identified by sins.

Passions – Passions are unrestrained, inordinate, or uncontrolled desires or cravings. In verse 3, Paul says he too was spiritually dead at one time. Verse 3 “we also lived in the passions of our flesh”.

Desires – The corrupt desires of the body and mind. Spiritually dead people live out passions of the flesh and direct their lives by giving to their carnal desires.

So spiritually dead people are identified by three active verbs– *walking* in trespasses and sins, *living* in fleshly passions and *carrying* out the desires of the body and mind.

Now, not every spiritually dead person trespasses, sins and lives in passions and desires in equal measure but they can be identified by this first test.

Part#2: Spiritually dead people are *followers* of this world.

*Verse 2 “following the course of this world”*

A plain translation reads like this - ‘following the age of this world’. Whatever we have in this world is temporary, isn’t it? Things like material goods, stuff – cars, houses, jobs, gadgets, accumulating wealth. There was a time you once pursued temporary things as if they were eternal things. They used to be so attractive to you. You were followers of this world’s system. This is all the world offers – temporary stuff for temporary pleasure that ends in despair and emptiness. Having stuff in not wrong but the *pursuit* of them, *the running after them* is what identifies a spiritually dead person.

*“For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. <sup>17</sup> And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave.”. 1 John 2:16 (NLT)*

Part#3: Spiritually dead people are *followers* of the devil’s agenda.

*Verse 2 “following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience”*

This phrase “*prince of the power of the air*” refers to the devil or Satan. Paul says you and I, prior to knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, whether you realized it or not, you used to follow the devil’s agenda.

What does *following* the devil’s agenda look like?

Jesus helps us understand. Jesus said that the devil is the father of lies. The devil is a murderer. All that the devil wants to do is to steal, kill and destroy. So, habits of lying, cheating, hatred or murder are habits of the devil.

When Jesus confronted the religious leaders of his day, they said they knew the law of God and even claimed to follow the law of God but secretly in their hearts, do you know what they were doing? They *hated* and *envied* Jesus and were plotting to *murder* him. (John 8:39-47). Jesus knew the condition of their hearts.

So, he said to them - “*You all are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires*”. John 8:44

So spiritually dead people are identified by one: living in *trespasses, sins, passions and desires*, and two: *following* the world and three: *following* the devil’s agenda.

You could summarize spiritually dead as those having a nature, a temperament, a disposition or an attitude that defies and rebels against God.

At the end of verse 2 Paul summarizes this temperament: “*the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience*”.

*What should spiritually dead people expect?*

It gets worse.

Let's look at the last portion of verse 3.

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

Spiritually dead people should expect wrath and judgment from God. Some interpret this verse to mean that there are some angry people in this world. That is surely true of some people but not true of all mankind. There are some people given to rage, anger and violence that is reprehensible. It doesn't take long to set some people off but not all people are like that. There are many people who are quite reasonable and rational.

In the book of Romans, Paul writes about God's wrath this way -

*For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. <sup>6</sup> He will judge everyone according to what they have done.* Romans 2:5-6

Now God's fury or wrath is not like man's outburst of anger.

God's is slow to anger. God is perfect in patience giving chances to repent. Paul knows this from experience. Paul himself once was a violent man but God was so patient with Paul.

So far, we covered two major questions:

What do spiritually dead people do? – they *defy* God, they *follow* the world and the devil.

What should spiritually dead expect? – wrath from God.

If you are hearing and thinking, “Isn't this is a very bleak picture of all humanity?” Yes it is but there is incredibly good news.

That leads us to answer the third question:

*What does God do for spiritually dead people?*

*<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved*

Notice what Paul says after the word “but”? Paul says “but God”.

(There are those who say they have the ultimate decisive capacity to choose God on their own. Paul, however, says, we were once dead and in that condition we freely sinned, followed the world and followed the devil.) But only God made us alive. Not you and

God. Not you cooperating with God.

Something was done in you. God's initiative and intervention made spiritual dead people alive. Some say becoming a follower of Jesus or a Christian is like a sick man in a hospital who needed resuscitation. Resuscitation is for sick and dying people. Dead people don't come to life with a resuscitation but with *resurrection*. Resurrection is for dead people. Jesus was really dead before he rose again.

God gave new life to these spiritually dead people. To those he specifically mentions in verse 4 "made *us* alive". Who are "us"? Paul tell us who he is addressing - "*To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus*". (Ephesians 1:1). These are the 1<sup>st</sup> century believers who have put their faith in Jesus Christ and you or anyone who is faithful in Jesus Christ.

The most significant portion in verse 4 is, "*made us alive together with Christ*". Paul says you have been made alive with Christ. We know that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and physically rose again from the dead on the third day. But here Paul says, you have made alive *with* Christ. This sounds astonishing, astounding and amazing. What does he mean?

Here is what Paul means – the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. It's the same power that made you spiritually alive.

In Ephesians chapter 1 verse 18 -21

*"having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might <sup>20</sup> that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come"*.

How did the spiritually dead come to life?

Verse 19: Because of the immeasurable greatness of God's power.

Now, some might say. Well, I believed I put my faith in Christ. It was I who did it.

Ephesians 2:8 answers who might offer such a pushback – "*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*" Your faith was a gift. The gift came when you became spiritually alive to God.

Resurrection Sunday is to remember Christ has risen from the dead. It is also to remember that God gave new life when you were still dead in sin.

It gets even better. God not only gave you spiritual resurrection but also promises a physical resurrection after your death.

How do we know this?

The phrase “*by grace you have been saved*” in verse 5 is in perfect tense – meaning God saved you (past tense) and will save you one day (future).

*What happens when God gives life to the dead?*

1. God forgives all your sin
  - a. “*And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross*” Colossians 2:12-14
2. God’s wrath against you is canceled
  - a. When you repented, confessed your sin and trusted in Jesus, at that moment your judgment is revoked. How? Because, Jesus received the wrath you and I deserved.
3. Jesus become your identity
  - a. When you trust Jesus for what he did, you have a new identity. Your past is gone. Your new life is in Jesus alone.

*Why does God give life to the spiritually dead?*

<sup>4</sup> *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us*

God gives life to the dead because that is who God is. God is rich in mercy and his love is great.

God’s love is the most potent force in the universe. This should be true of those who are spiritually alive – they have experienced the wonderful and incomparable love of God. This is no love like the love of Jesus.

Last question to consider:

*What spiritually alive people do?*

They love Jesus! They have a peace and joy the world cannot never give.

They do what spiritually dead people don’t do.

You see those who are spiritually dead act on their bodily impulses and thoughts, they follow the things of the world, they follow the devil’s agenda.

But those who have been alive by God, they love Christ!

I pray that you have experienced the great love of God.

But I don't want to assume.

In closing I ask: Are you obeying the desires of your body and mind?

Are you following the world's agenda?

Are you following the devil's agenda?

The Bible says you are only storing up wrath for yourself by defying God.

Jesus said "Repent and believe". Turn from your sin and turn to Jesus. Jesus will never let you down. Jesus said "I have to come to give life and life abundantly".

And he rose from the dead to vindicate this claim.

*"If it is not a fact that Christ literally rose from the grave, then you are still guilty before God. Your punishment has not been borne, your sins have not been dealt with, you are yet in your sins. It matters that much: without the resurrection you have no standing at all". D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Made Alive. Ephesians 2:1-5

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What does Paul mean by God "*made us alive together with Christ*"? Who gets credit for your salvation? Go around and share.
2. HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.
  - Do you believe faith is a gift from God and not a result of your own effort? Why or why not?
  - What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

3. HEART For personal reflection: What does Paul encourage believers to do in light their being "*made alive*"? Ephesians 2:9-10.