

[Don McMahon](#) March 29, 2020

“Alive with Christ” ([Ephesians 2:1-10](#))(3.29.20)

[Ephesians 2:1-10](#) (NIV84)

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

The word of God for the people of God.

Title: “Alive with Christ”

LET US PRAY.

INTRODUCTION:

When a man is dead it is hopeless for us to attempt to quicken him. But what we cannot do Christ does. Henry Varley was a great evangelist in England. He knew a blue collar worker’s family at the West End of London. This man was taken seriously ill.

Varley recalls, “I knew and had visited him before his sickness in order to bring to his mind and heart the Saviour of sinners. Again I called at the house when I heard he was sick. I found the door open, and quietly ascended the staircase which led to the room where the sick man lay. There, bent over the prostrate, form of the man, was his eldest son, deeply affected and weeping bitterly.

His face was close to that of the father’s, and I heard him, in an agony of earnest words, say, Father, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” Oh, my father, do trust Jesus! His precious blood cleanses from all sin. Only believe. My father, my father! O God, save my father!’

The hot tears and the intense anxiety of that young man I shall never forget. Poor fellow! He literally shouted into the ear that lay close to his lips. I had watched the scene for some minutes almost transfixed at the door. At length, approaching the bed, I observed that the father was dead. Tenderly I raised the young man, and quietly said, ‘His spirit has passed away; he cannot hear; you cannot reach him now!’ Poor fellow! He had been speaking into the ear of a corpse; the father had been dead some minutes.”

It was too late to secure a place for eternity with Jesus.

BODY:

I chose this today's scripture because of the COVID19 Pandemic and the response of the world. Can you imagine if the human race took spiritual life and death as seriously as we are responding to this virus? Our world would be a different place. And, what makes this particular cause of physical death worthy of any more attention than the top ten cause of death in the United States?

Death is part of life. Am I making light of death? Not at all! But, I AM concerned about something bigger than death; which is eternal life. What happens to the soul when the body's breath ceases?

Today, I have bad news, great news, and then we will look at how we are to respond. So here is the bad news. Before coming to Jesus, every single person is dead. As the apocalyptic TV series says, they are The Walking Dead. For those of us walking with the Lord now, we must remember who and what we were.

We were dead in our sins. We were missing the mark; we were failing to hit the target. We were not who we should be. We were not being the husbands, fathers, wives, mothers, sisters, brothers, neighbors, or the citizens we should be.

We were dead in our transgressions. We were trespassers. We would slip or fall; we were losing our way. We would stray from the path.

It seemed like we were ok because there was plenty of company on that broad way to destruction. We were worse than some but it felt like we were better than most. We were going with the flow. Little did we know that we were following the devil; for that is who rules this world. In fact, he is so good at it, we don't even want to believe it. Those who are disobedient to God are those that have the devil's spirit within them.

What an outrageous thing to say. No one wants to hear that they are under the control of the devil. If it was my hypothesis, it would be preposterous. But, it is what the LORD our God says. Where is the proof? If you are living like the rest of the world, there is your proof. The thing is, none of us are exempt. All of us were once dead in our sins and transgressions. We pursued the satisfaction of our sinful nature. Our sinful nature had its own agenda; its own thoughts; its own desires. And, these do not honor our God. They are self-focused. They are wrapped up in short term pleasure, no matter the cost and damage to ourselves or others. They are a counterfeit and a fraud.

We are all followers whether we want to admit it or not. Who are you following? Are you following the world? Are you following the Enemy? Or, are you a follower of Jesus?

Paul tells us here that every single person deserves God's wrath. Over and over again, the Bible tells us that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God.

Jesus tells us in [Luke 12:5](#) (NIV84) But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. Are you ready for great news?

[John 3:16 \(ESV\)](#)

16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

[Titus 3:5 \(NIV84\)](#)

5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, Spiritually, we were as a corpse. We could not, under our own power respond to God’s goodness.

[Colossians 2:13–14 \(NIV84\)](#)

13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

Grace, grace, God’s grace. It is by grace that we are saved. Amazing Grace.

If I died with Christ, I believe that I will also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, cannot die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. In the same way, may I consider myself to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

[\(Romans 6:8–11\)](#)

In our baptism, we celebrate that not only did we die with Christ, we are raised with Christ. With Jesus, we are submerged in the Jordan of repentance; and then, we are raised up with Jesus. The Father proclaims, this is my beloved son; this is my beloved daughter.

The disciples argued who would be seated next to the Lord Jesus. Paul tells us here that all believers are seated beside Jesus. Because we are in Christ Jesus, we participate with him in his heavenly duties. WE the Church, are His body, living out his mission here on earth.

Again: grace, grace, God’s grace. God’s goodness. Imagine the most astonishing treasure chest of jewels that could ever be gathered. They glisten and glow with every touch of light. This treasure is nothing compared to the riches of God’s grace. We earthly creatures are unable to touch the stars; and yet, even the brilliance of the stars cannot compare to the incomparable riches of God’s grace.

This is the grace that saves us. We are only saved by our faith in Jesus. [Romans 10:9 \(NIV84\)](#) ... if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

By what power is this possible? Only by the grace of God.

Where does this faith come from? It is the gift of God. But surely we play a part. Well...I believe we do; but not nearly to the degree we would like to think. Even our ability to say yes to God, is prevenient grace. God works in us before we are ever aware.

Maybe this is why the constant refrain of scripture is that the proud will be brought down and the humble lifted up. There can be no boasting. There can be no boasting in our

salvation. It comes not from within. It is a movement of the Holy Spirit within our being. Yes, there is a thread of response required of us; but, it is as fragile as the wisp of a spiker's web. No one can boast.

[2 Corinthians 5:17](#) (NIV84)

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Christ, Christ, Christ. The Lord Jesus is the Messiah; the anointed. Though we are not what we want to be, we are to be growing into our identity in the Lord Jesus.

Our good works do not earn our salvation. You see our salvation starts in the here and now. WE have already been saved through the finished work of Jesus. Our good works are the natural fruit of our living out our salvation. It is God's design for how His chosen people are constituted.

What better work could be done than to share the good news of Jesus? To invite another into a life with Christ?

CONCLUSION:

Dr. Preston, when he was dying, used these words, "Blessed be God, though I change my place I shall not change my company; for I have walked with God while living, and now I go to rest with God."

We live in uncertain times. It has been a long time in these United States since we have felt so threatened and insecure. We have been THE world power in these modern days. So, we do not know very well how to deal with this threat of death from an unseen enemy.

Death is not the Christian's enemy. We have at least one member here at Emmaus that is in their 10th decade who is not afraid of this COVID 19 virus. They realize that their eternity is secured in the Lord Jesus.

I do not know what lies in the weeks ahead. It breaks my heart that we will likely not celebrate Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter in the same way we do traditionally. It is the highlight of the Christian Year. Because of this time of trial, maybe people will seek the Lord. Maybe they will not.

We MUST be ready to respond to those that are asking questions. The Holy Spirit will be moving. Are you ready to testify to the goodness, the grace, the incomparable riches of God's mercy?

The alternative is that our friends, neighbors and loved ones will be objects of wrath. It need not be so. We must be prepared to share the good news of Jesus Christ. When we share Jesus, we must do so in humility. WE must make it clear that we are just like every other human being. Except, except...by God's grace, we have been made Alive with Christ.

[Colossians 1:21-23](#) (NIV84)

21 Once [we all] were alienated from God and were enemies in [our] minds because of [our] evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled [us] by Christ's physical body through death to present [us] holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23 if

[we] continue in [our] faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that [we] heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which [we] have become a servant.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.

[Reply](#)