

Series: EPHESIANS: THE CHURCH EMPOWERED

Title: UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Text: Ephesians 2:1-10

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Story of Dave and Carol, an illiterate couple – men’s group shirt made...they had an emblem... Carol stitched words copied from a sign out front. Men loved the shirt and the emblem – it described Dave’s walk with God perfectly “under new management.”

Through what Jesus did on the cross you have a new nature, and you have been placed under new management.

In Ephesians 2:1-10, the Apostle Paul provides encouragement for the believer; he gets at the very heart of who we WERE, who we ARE, and who we WILL BE.

I. Consider Your Past – Eph. 2:1-3

Eph. 2:1-3

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² 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— ³ 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.

You WERE Dead

Eph. 2:1

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

- Paul is not speaking about physical death.
- John Calvin insisted that Paul is speaking of a "real and present death."
- Trespasses and sins.—
 - These two words, more often used separately, are here brought together, to form a climax.
- The word rendered “trespass” signifies a “swerving aside and falling”
- The word rendered “sins” is generally used by St. Paul in the singular to denote “sin” in the abstract, and signifies an entire “missing of the mark” of life.

Ephesians 4:18

They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

- Sin places a body of death upon us.

Romans 7:24

Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

- Wretched body of death
 - This term to which Paul alludes is descriptive of a shocking execution that was employed by the Romans.
 - A cadaver would be fastened to the condemned person so that he could not be released from the corpse.
 - Every move he made was accompanied by the deceased. the decaying flesh of this cadaver would spawn disease and infection upon the condemned individual.
 - Eventually... he would die a slow, painful, and emotionally horrifying death.
- There is a qualifier..."WERE." "You WERE dead."
 - Meaning you in Christ are no longer dead in the trespasses and sins.
 - But now are no longer dead.

You WERE Unrighteous

Eph. 2:2:3

...²in 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—³ 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.

- v.3 – All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts.
- In verse 1, Paul focuses on our "death."
- In verse 2 he turned his attention to life—
 - That is, the manner in which we lived our lives that resulted in our death.
 - Paul uses the phrase "in which you formerly walked."
 - The term "walked" is speaking to our conduct.
 - Paul is saying that we lived in our sins. We walked in our sins.
- In contrast to our "Christian walk..."

- Paul refers to our "sinful walk."
- "...according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working..."

These statements reveal the source of the old management under which we served.

- Long ago Radio personality Paul Harvey told a story about how an Eskimo kills a wolf. It is a gruesome story, but it offers fresh insight into the consuming, self-destructive nature of sin.
 - First, the Eskimo coats the blade of his knife with animal blood and allows it to freeze. Then he adds another layer of blood and allows that to freeze, and another, and another, until the blade is completely concealed by frozen blood.
 - Next, the hunter fixes the handle of the knife into the ground with the blade up. When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait, he licks it, tasting the fresh frozen blood.
 - The wolf then begins to lick faster, more and more vigorously, lapping the blade until the keen edge is bare. Feverishly now, harder and harder the wolf licks the blade in the arctic night. So great becomes his craving for blood that the wolf does not notice the razor-sharp sting of the naked blade on his tongue, nor does he recognize the instant at which his insatiable thirst is being satisfied by his own warm blood. His carnivorous appetite just craves more--until the dawn finds him dead in the snow!
 - Like that wolf, Paul says that we were consumed by our own lusts.

Our willingness to yield to the old management--to live in sin--resulted in our death and made us objects of wrath.

You WERE Objects of Wrath

Eph. 2:3b – ...and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Colossians 3:5-6

⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the **wrath** of God is coming.

NIV - Therefore consider the members of your earthly body dead to sin for it is because of these things that the **wrath** of God will come upon the sons of disobedience.

- The concept of wrath is a process that sinners bring upon themselves,

- Paul personalizes the term. The expression of wrath comes in the form of alienation from God.
- In Romans 1:24 we are told that "God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them."
- A popular preacher once said, "When we fall into the outer darkness, we do not go in bands and companies--each man must fall by himself. And this same loneliness will mark the judgement of each soul. 'Thou must go forth alone' is the hardest part of the verdict pronounced upon the impenitent sinner."
- But, if we view God's wrath--or judgement--in light of our own court system then we can be comforted by the fact that (in American jurisprudence) when we stand before the judge we will have at our disposal a team of two, perhaps three, attorneys to defend our case.
 - All that will be required of us is to grace the court with our presence and let the lawyers battle it out.
 - We will never be required to take the stand and never have to answer directly to the charges against us.
 - And if for some reason we are ordered to speak on our behalf, we can claim our constitutional right to "plead the Fifth [Amendment]" after which we can comfortably sit back and plea-bargain for a lesser sentence.
- Regardless of how strong our desire to fool ourselves into a sense of false security, we would be wise to consider the message that Paul is conveying.
 - He paints a very grim picture for those who do not know Jesus Christ.
 - Paul said that we lived in sin, we identified with Satan, and therefore we were spiritually dead and deserving of God's wrath.
- If you do not know Jesus Christ as your personal savior--if you are still living under the old management, there is very little reason for hope. But Paul does not leave us without hope. In reality, the hopelessness of life without Christ elevates even higher the hope we have in Him.
 - There is a common phrase used in the Billy Graham School at the Seminary. Before you get a man saved...you have to get him lost. In our world today the message of salvation through Jesus Christ is not readily received.
 - Why? Most people are in a state of denial. After all, some would say, I have nothing from which I have to be saved.
 - But that argument certainly does not stand up when put to the biblical test.
 - The Bible says very clearly that if you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, you have plenty from which you need to be saved.
 - Paul says you need to be saved from death, from the power of sin, from the wrath of God. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ—
 - Reflect on your Past. Paul says THAT'S WHERE YOU WERE!

- Then, celebrate your present.
- Celebrate...because you have been saved from spiritual death.
Celebrate...because you have been saved from the power of Satan.
Celebrate...because you have been saved from the wrath of God.

II. Celebrate Your Present – 2:4-6; 2:8-10

BY GRACE you ARE Saved 2:4-5; 2:8-9

Eph. 2:4-5

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

Eph. 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- The first two words in verse 4 serve as the springboard for the remainder of our text.
 - "But God..."
 - These two words stand between the grim picture of unrighteousness, death, and wrath and the hope of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ.
 - God is the Initiator. God is the Creator. God is the Designer.
 - God is the organizer of the plan of salvation.
 - In verse 4, Paul conveys the theme of Psalm 145:8

Psalm 145:8

"The LORD is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness."

- The first quality mentioned in verse 4 in "rich in mercy."
- Mercy is the antithesis...the opposite of divine wrath.

Ephesians 1:7

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

- **The definition of mercy is, having withheld that [punishment] which is deserved.**
 - In this case, we deserved God's wrath and ultimate condemnation.
 - But because of his great love He made us alive.

- By his grace, the old life has ceased.
- By his grace our past has been pardoned.

THE OLD MANAGEMENT HAS RETIRED AND THE NEW MANAGEMENT HAS TAKEN OVER.

- Illustration - Lloyd H. Steffen, Professor of Religion Studies and University Chaplain at Lehigh University, wrote in *The Christian Century* how when King Frederick II, an eighteenth century king of Prussia, was visiting a prison in Berlin, the inmates tried to prove to him how they had been unjustly imprisoned ... all but one. That one sat quietly in a corner, while all the rest protested their innocence. Seeing him sitting there oblivious to the commotion, the king asked him what he was there for. He answered, "Armed robbery, Your Honor." The king asked, "Were you guilty?" "Yes Sir," he answered. "I entirely deserve my punishment." Then king then gave an order to the guard: "Release this guilty man."
- You see, like this prisoner, you and I were in prison.
 - We were in bondage to sin.
 - We were slaves to sin and spiritually dead. And like this prisoner, we were pardoned.
 - Did this man do anything to deserve it? No! Likewise, what God offers you is by his initiation.
- As we read in verse 8: "*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*"
 - You cannot earn your salvation. Paul makes it clear that is from God, and from God alone. We have been given an everlasting gift. For that reason, we are to celebrate the present.

Not only did God save us from the power of sin, death and wrath, verse 6 says we were "raised up."

BY GRACE you ARE Raised

Eph. 2:6

...and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ...

Colossians 2:12

Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

- Here we see a connection between Jesus' resurrection and our having been raised up.

Romans 6:5 says,

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Illustration - The highest spot in the continental United States in Mt. Whitney in Northern California.

- It stands a majestic 14,495 feet. From its top, a beautiful panorama of landscape unfolds.
 - But just 80 miles southeast is Death Valley, the lowest spot in the United States at 280 feet below sea level.
- Death Valley is also the hottest in the country with temperatures reaching 134 degrees in the shade. It is a stark contrast to Mt. Whitney.
- In these verses we see the stark contrast between the "Death Valley" of sin and despair and the mountain peak to which God lifts us up.
- D.L. Moody, American evangelist once said: "God is so anxious to save sinners He will take everyone who comes. He will take those who are so full of sin that they are despised by all who know them; who have been rejected by their fathers and mothers, who have been cast off by their wives and their husbands. He will take those who have sunk so low that upon them no eye of pity is cast."

BY GRACE you ARE Re-created 2:10

Eph. 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

In verse 10, Paul writes that "we are his workmanship," literally we are his making.

- We have been created. We have been formed.
- This is not in the general sense, but in the sense of a new creation.

2Cor. 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

- Paul says we have been re-created "for good works."
 - The emphasis here is on holy living, the exact opposite of how we lived in the past.
 - Alive in Christ for a purpose
- Illustration-
 - When the Standard oil Company began to refine petroleum, there was a black substance, a by-product, that no one knew what to do with.
 - It was black, sticky, stinking, it could not be buried, not burned, and everyone complained of the all but endurable stench.
 - If it were run into a stream, it killed all the fish.
 - Therefore, the company offered a reward to anyone able to solve the problem. a great many chemists, attracted by the promised reward, occupied themselves with the task of coming up with a solution.
 - Finally, one walked into the office of Mr. Rockefeller with a white, shining substance free from every offensive quality--and in fact extremely useful. It was what we know of today as paraffin, used for candles and hundreds of other purposes.
- Like this chemist, God takes the dirty, sticky, stinking parts of our lives and applies the cleaning agent--the blood of Jesus Christ--through which the dirt is removed. We are cleansed, and re-created.