

## **Ephesians. The Identity of the Church that Overcomes.**

### **Part 19: Saved from Wrath and Destined for Eternal Glory**

Houses of Light Church • December 15, 2024 • Pastor Netz Gomez & Ilse Marquez

#### **Focus: Ephesians 2:3-5**

*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 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— 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. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—* **Ephesians 2:1-5**

#### **Quick Review:**

We were all once spiritually dead, when we were we lived in sync with the rhythm of this world and the enemy's agenda. We were not as free or as autonomous as we thought we were, and in fact we were being coordinated by "the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience."

#### **In Christ, we are above "the Power of the Air"**

This is the second time we see Paul mention authority and powers that are at work in the world. In Ephesians 1:21-22, when he explains just how high Christ ascended after His resurrection, He states that, *"[the Father] raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 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. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church..."*

- Every form of this power/authority is under Jesus' feet, and we who are in Him are no longer subject to their influence. (What Paul is referring to is expansive — not just the man-made government power, or the power of great leaders, he is referring to the power of the thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy, the power of sin and death itself — Satan and all his demons, whom we were subject to when we lived in sin.)
- How does this happen?
  - *"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. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."* **Colossians 2:13-15**
  - These powers are disarmed over those who have had their debt canceled in Christ. This means Satan (also known as the accuser) no longer has a bending case against us. Our sins have been forgiven! He can try and attack us, but he cannot condemn us. We learn this in **1 John 5:18-19** - *"We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."*

In Christ, we have a decisive victory over sin and the powers of this world. Those who are not in Him cannot claim this victory — they have refused to be adopted into his family, placing themselves under the authority of someone else entirely. Jesus address this when he talks to the Pharisees in **John 8:43-47** -

*“Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”*

Satan continues to be a real force at work in the world and we are each in a war against this enemy who continues to oppose us with what few weapons he has left (since he has already been defeated).

**Ephesians 6:12** - *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*

Now that we know we are God's beloved sons and daughters, we hold fast to our identity and take our place in Christ! Even though these powers are in heavenly places, the One we are with is above them all!

### **Disobedience and the Wrath of God**

*“And you were ... following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 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.”* **Ephesians 2b-3a**

What are “the passions of our flesh?”

- When the Bible mentions the “flesh” it is referring to human nature separated from God. Paul defines the works for the flesh in **Galatians 5:19-21** - *“Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*
  - Can you identify the places in your life that have looked like this in the past? Do you actively see any of these “fruits” in your life today?
  - Let's look at a modern paraphrase of this passage (underline or highlight the words that stand out to you): *“It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on. This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom.”* (The Message translation)

Here we can see that following our flesh leads us to directly disobey the Lord, which puts us in the line of fire for His wrath. His wrath is his righteous anger, the zeal He carries to bring justice and make all the wrong things right. In the Bible we see His wrath in a few different ways, in our current world, this is how it operates:

**Romans 1:18-32** - *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them...Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things...For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error...And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”*

Here we learn that the unrestrained depravity we see in our time is in fact part of God's wrath that removes restrictions so people continue to lose themselves. He does not do this lightly, but rather, He is giving people time and showing great mercy and patience. He causes the sun to rise and both the good and bad with the hope of leading them to repentance! The consequences and challenges we face in this life could serve as wake up calls, but if we don't turn to Him while there's still time, we will be part of those who experience His wrath in the age to come:

*“ We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality”* **Romans 2:2-8**

God's wrath is unto putting an end to every form injustice and evil no matter where it is coming from — this includes the injustice at work in every human heart. This is why salvation is so precious! We each carried a great debt against God — the Holy and righteous judge! We were all dead and under the influence of the world, but in Christ, the eternal outcome of our story is changed!

### **God is Rich in Mercy!**

*“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, 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 coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”* **Ephesians 2:4-7**

It is important to note that because of God's great mercy and love, instead of wrath, in Christ we have obtained mercy. That is what salvation is all about; we are saved from the just wrath of God. Many people do not understand this. How can God, if He is rich in mercy and full of love, have this wrath?

Some have thought that perhaps God the Father is the angry one and Jesus is the nice guy who felt sorry for us, but that couldn't be further than the truth. He is One God, and both His mercy and His judgement come forth from His throne:

**Revelation 6:16-17** - *"calling to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?'"*

**John 3:16-18** - *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."*

**This is the deepest meaning of salvation. God, because He is rich in mercy and because He has great love, saves us in Christ from His wrath.**

**Reflection Questions:**

1. According to what we learned today, why are we so sure that the enemy no longer has any power over us?
2. How is the wrath of God revealed in the present and the future?
3. What did God save us from and why?

**Announcements:**

1. Wanna join our volunteer teams? We are now receiving new people in the ushers, security, parking, and kids ministry teams! Talk to one of our team members to sign up.
2. This Wednesday, December 18, Holy58 and the ministry of Y.A.S. will have its last service of the year. We return on January 8, 2025.
3. We're going to have a very special Christmas service next Sunday! Bring your friends and family! there will be fun surprises and snacks!

