

“Why Some Will Be Saved When You Witness”
(Ephesians 2:1-10)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

What we saw this morning has a very clear application to evangelism.

The One who created the world

Came into the world,

But the world refused to recognize Him.

He came to His own, but His own didn't receive Him.

But there were those who did,

Not because of any ability of their own,

But because of God's mercy.

What is our number one fear in sharing the Gospel with others?

For some of us, it might be we're afraid that we won't do a good job of explaining it,

Or maybe we're afraid that our life isn't what it should be and we'll look insincere or hypocritical,

Or maybe we're struggling with just wanting to do it because we're not that spiritually strong.

Many of us don't want to because we're afraid those we talk to won't like what we say and get angry with us.

This morning, we saw that they will get angry and why –

It's because of their heart condition – they hate God.

That is a very real concern.

But isn't another reason we shun evangelism
Because we believe that what we do won't matter –
That they won't believe us,
That it will all be for nothing?
Let's be encouraged by the second thing we saw:
Because of God's grace and His work,
There will be some who will receive Him:
You can know your evangelism will be successful.

B. Preview.

That's what Paul tells us in our text:
He points to what your condition was when you came into the world;
But that God changed you.

He is at work in the world –
Changing hearts everyday through the Gospel,
And this should give us all confidence
That when we evangelize, some will be saved.

That's what I want us to look at tonight.

II. Sermon.

A. First, remember what you were like when you came into the world.

Paul writes, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1).

You weren't physically dead –

But you were spiritually,

Because of what we saw this morning:

Like David, you were conceived and born in sin (Ps. 51:5),

Because of Adam's choice in the garden (Rom. 5:18-19).

You came into the world loving sin and hating God (Rom. 8:6-7),

Which is why you had no desire to get to know Him (Rom. 3:10-12),

And could do nothing to please Him (Rom. 8:8).

This is why you lived the way you did,

Paul writes, "You formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind" (vv. 2-3).

You didn't make the choices you do now –

The kind you know God will be pleased with

Because you love Him –

You did what *you* wanted to do –

What you *felt like* doing, because it *felt good*.

That's what it means to live according to the flesh –

To let your desires dictate how you live, rather than God's Word.

When you lived that kind of life,

You were far from God and under the sentence of eternal death.

Paul writes, you "were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest" (v. 3).

B. The point is, that's what you were – but you're not like that any longer, because God is merciful.

Paul writes, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” (vv. 4-5).

Again, this is a hard pill for many Christians today to swallow:

It was God who made the difference, not you.

We're not talking about who provided salvation –

Clearly only God could do that –

But who gave you the ability to receive that salvation.

It wasn't you:

It wasn't because you saw the danger you were in,

Because you sensed your need for Christ,

Because you reached out and took hold of Him,

Turned from your sins and trusted Him.

You did all those things,

But you didn't do them in your own power,

Because you were spiritually dead:

You hated God,

You hated His Laws,

You couldn't bring yourself to submit to them,

You weren't seeking God,

You could do nothing to please Him,

Because you didn't want to please Him,
In your flesh, you couldn't do anything about your situation.

But God could and did:

When you heard the Gospel, He made it powerful to save you.

Paul writes, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16).

He raised you from spiritual death to life: He "raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus" (v. 6).

He did this through His Spirit:

The Spirit works through the Gospel to save you.

He baptized you into Christ, causing you to be born again,

As Paul writes, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13),

Once you were in Christ:

Whatever He went through, He went through for you.

When He died, you died with Him on the cross.

When He was raised from the dead, you were raised with Him to a new kind of life.

"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4).

When Jesus ascended to heaven, because you are in Him, you ascended with Him, Paul says that even now you're seated with Him "in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6).

Because you're united with Jesus, God considers, and you can consider as well, heaven to be a done deal.

Paul writes in Romans 8, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified” (vv. 29-30).

And once you are with Him in glory – and He will bring you there –

You will be with Him forever,

“So that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 1:7) –

So that He might continue to reveal more of that love He has for you in Christ –

The love you have begun to experience here on earth –

For ages to come – forever.

You didn't change your heart,

You didn't open your eyes,

God did, “*But God*, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” (vv. 4-5).

It was purely by His grace, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (vv. 8-9).

Even the ability to believe (faith) is a gift of His grace,

It's one of the many blessings God gives when He brings you to Himself,

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (v. 10).

C. You were dead, but God made you alive.

You were His enemy, but He had mercy on you.

How can this give you confidence when you evangelize?

What He has done for you, He can and will do for others.

1. First, understanding what Paul says here is true,

Realize the fears you have in evangelism aren't completely unfounded:

The people you're trying to reach with the Gospel really do hate God,

And they will hate you for telling them the truth – that's their nature.

They'll get along fine with you as long as you don't talk to them about Jesus.

But when you do, don't expect them to congratulate you,

Expect that they will likely get angry –

Jesus said to His disciples, “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you” (John 15:18-19).

And Paul wrote to Timothy, “Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, *and* sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium *and* at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:10-12).

Brace yourself;

Prepare yourself;

It's part of the cost of evangelism.

Knowing this to be true, make sure that it's the Gospel that offends them and not you.

If you approach them the way the Lord tells you to –

Not with a judgmental and condemning spirit,

But in a spirit of love and gentleness,
 With a genuine desire to help them find their way to Christ –
 Your chances of success will be much greater.

Peter writes, “But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, *you* are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, *yet with gentleness and reverence*; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame” (1 Pet. 3:14-16).

If you approach them in love, and they still get angry,
 Don’t retaliate – don’t return injury for injury –
 But bear their abuses patiently and with love –
 Even as parents do the offenses of their children because they love them.
 If you do, the likelihood that what you’ve said
 And how you’ve conducted yourself
 Will stay with them as a witness the Lord can use.

Again, Peter writes, “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pet. 2:12).

2. Second, know that the Lord will use your witness to bring others to Himself.

Jesus says in John 10, “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and *they will hear My voice*; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd” (vv. 14-16).

He says, “I have other sheep, which are not of this fold.”

He's referring to the Gentiles, to you, and to those yet to be called.

He says, "They will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd."

You heard His voice and were saved – they can hear it and be saved as well.

How will they hear His voice? Only through you – through your witness.

Jesus has commissioned you to take His Gospel to others:

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15).

You are His witnesses, by the power of His Spirit.

He said to His disciples, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

He didn't give this blessing only to the eleven,

But to all His disciples – the one hundred and twenty that had gathered together to devote themselves to prayer (Acts 1:15).

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit* and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

He says, "They will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd" (John 10:16).

Some will hear Jesus speaking through you,

They will believe in Him and turn from their sins,

And they will enter His flock – the church –

And submit to Him as their head.

The Spirit will open their eyes and ears, and they will receive Christ,

You can be sure of it.

The doctrine of God's sovereignty doesn't kill evangelism –

As many well meaning Christians believe –

It is the only grounds for evangelism –

The only reason any will be saved.

If you went out to share the Gospel,

With man's condition to be what the Bible says it is,

Without the promise that God would be at work through you,

All you could expect would be hatred and failure.

But knowing He is at work, you can expect some will be converted.

The greatest evangelists who have ever lived believed in the sovereignty of God.

They didn't do their work in spite of that sovereignty,

They did their work because of it.

His sovereignty should encourage your evangelism as well.

As the Puritan Thomas Goodwin wrote, "Oh despise not election! Therein lies all your hope, that there is a remnant who shall infallibly be saved." Amen.

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