

SERIES: 'WALK WORTHY'- -11/24/24 (#4) PASTOR NATE

- Pastor Nate begins with a pictorial...that of a prisoner on death row...chained...closely guarded...completely locked down....with an advance guard shouting “*Dead Man Walking!*”! So while still technically alive, he was effectively dead.
- In Eph, Chapter 2 today, we will see two people: one is a ‘*dead man walking*’ (who *thinks* they are alive) and another who was once a ‘*dead man walking*’ but today is *alive*.
- As we study this passage today, ask yourself: ‘*which person am I?*’ Or maybe: ‘*do I even know which I am?*’”
- Paul’s good news , however, is that....unlike the death row prisoner....you can, in fact, lose those ‘chains’ and become alive, walking worthy in Christ. That is, in faith, trust and in aligning ourselves with Him.....stumbling but humbly trying to be obedient to all that He modeled and taught. Yet, you can hardly walk worthy if you are spiritually dead. What does Paul say about ‘dead men walking’?

Eph 2: 1- 3 - - 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.

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- So Paul is saying that ALL of the believers, then and now, were - -at one point prior- - ‘*dead men walking*’. We were condemned because of sin....thinking or acting in ways which are contrary to what God designed us to be.
 - In this passage, Paul talks about three different forces (“*implacable enemies of the soul*” Thomas Aquinas) that lead us to sin:
 1. “*course of this world*”: aka..... culture contrary to God's design
 2. “*prince of power of the air*”: aka....Satan (rebellious angel who roams/tempts/ and destroys.) There is a tendency to discount his existence...don't!
 3. “*the flesh*”: ...aka....that self-centered part of us that craves control and power. Ironically, we crave things that would destroy us and are contrary to God's intent.
 - All three of these are at work in us at all times.....combined with our own internal corruption. And we make every excuse to sin (eg. I'm just being true to myself, etc).
 - Hence, we are all, by nature, children of wrath (of God)....condemned for our sins. But very fortunately, that's not the end of the story.....

Eph 2-4- 7- - 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— (6) and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (7) so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus

- What a contrast! **YOU WERE DEAD.....BUT GOD MADE YOU ALIVE!** You could have just left us as “dead men walking”we deserved it!....But because of His love and mercy , He gives us a chance at re-birth! Per Paul, He did three things:
 - 1. God made us alive together with Christ.
 - 2. He raised us up with Him.
 - 3. He seated us with Him in the heavenly places.
- So, see the parallel!...the three forces of evil and the three gifts of God which offset and defeat. Note that when God graces us with re-birth through Jesus, He also begins to indwell in us thru His Holy Spirit. This empowers you for God’s service and transforms you into a new (Re-Born) person. How does He do all this...these next two verses are two of the most important in all the Bible:

- *Eph 2: 8-9- -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.*

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- What are we being saved from?.....the wrath of God. How are we saved?.....at its core, by “Grace” (ie. an undeserved gift or favor) which is our justification through Jesus Christ....and....His Godly intervention throughout our lives. We do NOT earn Grace.... (ala Catholicism’s theory around “means of grace”sacramental grace, etc.) No....grace is given to us freely by God!
 - With Grace as the ‘base’, our salvation culminates and is received by Faith...the ‘means’ by which we are saved.
 - Two words symbolize and define Faith....’belief’ and ‘trust’ with the latter reflecting your strong *reliance* on your belief.
 - How does this faith manifest? 1. You believe Jesus is God come to the earth as a man 2. That He lived a perfect life 3. That He died on the Cross so as to take all the sin of humanity upon Himself. 4. That He conquered death in His Resurrection. 5. You take these core of beliefs and you chose to trust...totally rely upon these facts and Christ as your life’s center.
 - But note, as Paul says....we do NOT save ourselves....it is NOT of your own doing. Salvation is a gift of God! We are NOT in control....God is! HE is our Savior. Now, WHY are we saved?

- *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.*

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- So.....In answering the ‘WHY’(?)...we are not saved BY ‘good works....rather.....we are saved FOR ‘good works’so that we would live our lives in ways that would honor Him. How? **BY WALKING WORTHY!!!** Again, the pre-cursor to this is our re-birth, our renewal, in Christ.
 - Pastor Nate again urges self assessment....’dead man walking’ (even those who self-identify as a ‘good person’) or ‘man made alive’ through God’s grace embracing Christ and walking worthy. **THROUGH GOD’S GRACE, YOU HAVE A CHOICE THROUGH FAITH/TRUST IN JESUS!**

****WALK WORTHY****

