

“Ephesians Chapter 2”

By Jesse Rairdon

Sunday, September 14th, 2014

God bless you. Thanks for coming today to hear from the Lord. Yes, I’m speaking, but this is God’s Word. This month we’ve been going through a month of Sanctification, as you see from the Scripture up front, here:

Joshua 3:5 *And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.*

So, as we’re going through this month of sanctification, how many are getting a blessing from it? A serious blessing. Amen. Me, too. This year I did something a little different. I took the advice of Parrish and some of the other leaders and I got myself an accountability partner. So, at the beginning of the week, this person called, we prayed, we reminded each other of the things that we agreed that we do this week for this month of sanctification, and then, later in the week, say Friday or Saturday, we give each other a call and see how we did that week on those things that we agreed to do for that sanctification. In the back, there are some things that you can have: There are some sheets that tell why we’re having this month of sanctification. Also, there’s a sheet with some tools, some friendly guidelines that could help you do this month of sanctification. This is not something that they are trying to mandate or make you do; this is something to help you. This is something to help us all come up higher. Amen? And take some of these things that you’re learning during this month of sanctification and make them habits. They say it takes about twenty-one days to develop a habit, and this is a whole month, so, if you start to develop those habits, maybe you can call somebody every week from now on. Amen? You start to read a little more in your Bible every week. Amen? Start to pray a little more for our leadership. Amen? Also, in the back, too, they’ve got a couple of baskets: One is the things that you’re praying for during this time of sanctification and things that you expect to receive, and the other one is blessings that you’ve received during this time of sanctification.

Brother Parrish shared last week—this is the month we’re going over Ephesians, too, in our sermons—(Brother Parrish says, “Hi,” by the way; I spoke to him earlier this week. He’s actually visiting family in Baltimore. He’s in Virginia, now, this morning. He drove to Virginia to be with worship, there at our headquarters church. He sends his greetings and his blessings. He says, “Hi.” He was so excited, he started getting into Ephesians Chapter 2, and had to call me up, earlier this week. He was just, “I gotta share this with you! I gotta share this with you!” So, we got to the third verse... Some of the things that God was teaching him. So, we had a prayer, and I said, “Now you’re dipping into t=some of the message that I was going to share. So, he and I are on the same page. God is always the same Spirit; He always works through us as a team of preachers, you know. Of course, we work with Brother Andy and Brother Parrish, who are the leaders of this fellowship, but we’ve been asked to share the messages. But God is the same Spirit, all in all, and He works with us, he shows us the same things, He teaches us the same things that we all need.) So, last week’s message, Parrish preached from Ephesians chapter 1. He gave a little of the location of where Ephesus was at the time, okay? A little bit of the demographics and geography of Ephesus. It was a quarter million people; second largest city of the Roman Empire. So, a lot was happening in Ephesus at that time. He mentioned this letter to the church—Paul being the Apostle to the church, wrote this letter to the Ephesians, which were in

Ephesus—this was not a letter of rebuke or judgment. This was kind of a letter of reminder of the things that God has placed in our lives. To hold onto those things; to remind yourself of those things.

He talked about the beliefs of the people in that city, and how these beliefs kind of had a stronghold—the gods that they worshipped, and the things that had taken hold of that city, and how the name of Jesus had started to take root. People had started to believe in Jesus, so there was conflict there; a lot of persecution the church was facing, because of their belief in Jesus, and the people that didn't like that, you know? It was almost their whole way of life; everything from the merchants to everything they did in that city, they paid homage to this god, this false god. Now, here comes these people preaching about Jesus, and there's power in the name of Jesus, there's real power. They start to convert these people that have all this money, and have all these things to do, and I've had this way of life, my whole life, you probably wouldn't be very happy. The same thing with us, we're going to be about our jobs and about our lives, and bringing into the workplace, into the environment, that talks about Jesus, the power of Jesus. They're going to see that in our lives, and they're not going to like it, and there's going to be conflicts. He talked about the power of the name of Jesus, and when we pray, we have access to that power. Then he talked about all the power in heaven and earth we have access to, through that name. That's a big deal! When you come through a situation, and you use the name of Jesus, things change. The atmosphere changes, people's faces change, the way they're thinking about things changes. There's power in that name. Why do you think people use that name as a curse word a lot? Why don't they use Buddha? Why don't they use Mohammed? Why don't they use some of those other names? because there's power in that name, and Satan tries to use that as a tool.

He went to Revelations and talked about how they were doing a lot of things right, but God had some things against them. Sometimes even in our own lives we may think we're doing so well and God will reveal things to us, teach us in areas we can do better. Getting back to that first love.

So, this week, were going to go into Ephesians chapter 2. The three areas I would like to focus on in Chapter 2 are:

1. Where we were
2. The change
3. What we have become

1. Where we were

Ephesians 2:1-4 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; [Notice there's a difference here: trespasses and sins. He didn't just call it all sins. I don't have time to really dig into that deeply here, what the two differences are, but, to kind of relate to it, if I were your neighbor, and somebody comes to my lawn by accident, they kind of trespass on it, But, if they come into my garage and if they take something, they have committed a sin against me. They stole something; there's a difference. And there's a difference with God, that's why he kind of broke that down. That's your homework; you can find a little bit more about that.] Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: [You were once disobedient. You just kind of did what you did, however you wanted, whenever you wanted, and Satan was kind of in control of your life.] Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*

He kind of showed that mercy, that grace. As a result of where we were, we were dead to God. We were in a sin. We were trespassing against God, and, a lot of times, didn't even know it. So, God is

trying to deal with us, and we're in a place we have to change. A lot of times, we don't realize that sin is bad. When I was lost, I thought it was fun. Did you ever get a little puppy or kitten, and you're playing with it and, that's nice, if you're not allergic to them. You might break out or something. But, if that same cute little puppy or kitten gets hit by car, and it lies dead by the side of the road for a few days, you might not want to pick it up and cuddle it. It's dead. It's dead. It's sin. That's kind of the way God looks at sin, it's death, and it's separating you from God. He doesn't want you to mess with that anymore. He wants you to change, amen? So, when we were led by Satan, we were disobedient, We talked about whatever came to our minds, and we fulfilled whatever desires and lusts we wanted to do. We needed a change.

2. The Change

Ephesians 2: 5-9 *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

God set this up in a way that no one could take credit for it. You can't take credit for your salvation. You can't take credit for the gift that God gave you; you can't take credit for God's grace. I can't take credit for it; it was given to me. God decided to show mercy to me. Amen?

Let's go to the Old Testament and look at a man to whom God decided to show grace. Someone who found grace; we're talking about Noah. There was a time when God was just so frustrated, and so angry with what He had created, us, because we had gotten so bad and so sinful, He was going to destroy every living thing. Can you imagine that God, who loves us, who cares for us, who created us, would want to do that? He got to that point, that's how much He hates sin.

Genesis 6:5-8 *And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. [Have you ever been a parent, and thought, "Man, I wish I hadn't had this child?" That's a sad place to be.] And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. [He wasn't too happy.] But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah, I, you, we found grace in the eyes of the Lord. So, Noah found grace, and he was told to do something. He was told to, basically, build a big ship. God spared everybody, and put everybody in that ship, and destroyed everybody else in the flood. Noah is not like the Hollywood Noah. I mean, you might want to watch that for entertainment, but don't watch that for your biblical perspective. Hollywood likes to put their own little twist on things, just to make a little more money.

Ephesians 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

The word "workmanship" means, "that which is made, a work, a work of art". So we are something that God created, like a work of art, but at one time, God said, "I'm going to destroy all my works. I just want to destroy everything and start over," but Noah found grace.

Ephesians 2:11-12 *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

Once again, along the process of time, God decided to set Himself beside a chosen people, Israel. If you weren't a part of Israel, you were on the outside; you didn't have the grace and the blessings of God that Israel did. You could only see that; it was apparent. but you weren't part of it. Amen? The same is with us; before we were part of God, you can kind of see how God blesses people, but we were kind of on the outside looking in. We could see that testimony in someone's life. Six years before I get saved, the only thing I saw was someone's testimony in their life. Okay? When the time came for me to make a commitment, then I remembered that testimony. I said, "Somebody had a life like that. I remember them. They were on the ship and this person prayed and they didn't curse. They didn't laugh at jokes that I would laugh at, or talk about." God will bring those things to remembrance, so always have a good testimony about you as Christians, so that others who aren't in the faith can see that, amen?

Ephesians 2:13 *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

So we were kind of like distant relatives. Ever have family, even though they might be close, they still were kind of distant? That's kind of the way we were. We're all God's children, God created us all, but Israel was kind of special to God. They were close to God. Before the shed blood of Jesus, the only way you could even get close to God, was to be a part of Israel. You had to go through the covenant, the covenant of circumcision, and you had to follow the laws, and be accepted in their community, and you had to become a citizen of Israel. So, just like that, we were like long distant relatives to God. Did it ever seem like, before you were saved, you were kind of-when you would pray, your prayers that you were praying would kind of hit the ceiling, kind of like they weren't getting answered, like you weren't getting anywhere? That's because you didn't have that special relationship. Got heard you, and He's still trying to deal with you, but there's something you have to do.

Brother Paul, before he got to the church at Ephesus, he was traveling, and found some who needed a change. We all need a change. If you are not ready to make that change yet, God will get you. It took six years after I saw someone's testimony before I was ready to make that change. Make it when you're ready; you don't have your whole life. You don't even know if you have tomorrow.

Acts 19:1-5 *And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. [Holy Ghost? What are you talking about Paul? What is this Holy Ghost?] And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. [Notice he didn't say, "Who is your preacher?" or "What church you go to?" "Would you believe what your denomination has said to you that this is the way you need to be baptized?"] Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. [There was something new on the scene. There was a new gospel. There was something different from what John was teaching . There was a new baptism.] When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

It's ok to be wrong, especially if you haven't been taught, but it's not ok to stay wrong. So, if that's something you need a little further study on, you might want to seek God about that, and get that right. Amen? I don't want to stay long on that.

Now let's tie this grace Noah found with this baptism and see how this change happens.

1 Peter 3:20 *Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, [So, it took a long time to build this ark. God was very long-suffering, and people could have had a chance to repent, but they didn't.] Wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*

Eight souls, out of all the people that were living in the world at that time, were saved by water. You say, why water? That flood washed away the rest of the wickedness and sin in the world. God used that water. God had used water from the beginning of time.

1 Peter 3:21 *The like figure [meaning few] whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:*

When Jesus died, was buried, and resurrected, that's when he gave the commandment of baptism. If you want to follow him, you have to be baptized. I know that's not a popular message; not a lot of people want to believe that. Not a lot of people want to follow that. A lot of people didn't want to believe Noah, either; a lot of people didn't want to get into that ark. Let me ask you this, If Noah wouldn't have built the ark, would he have been saved? Should you be saved if you refuse to get baptized? That's just something to think about.

3. What we have become

If you want to know little bit more about that baptism, stick around after the service. Myself and some others will be able to share a little bit more about it. Maybe there are some things you haven't really looked at quite yet, and maybe you're thinking, "No, I don't really think I need to get baptized. Nobody ever really taught me that." Maybe God's trying to teach you that now. Go ahead and learn a little more.

So, now, here we are, what are we? What have we become?

Ephesians 2:19-22 *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*

You are now a citizen of God's country. You have certain rights, you have certain privileges that only the Jews had before, but now you have, according to God's grace. My wife, who is holding our lovely daughter back there, is a citizen of Belize; she has certain rights and privileges in Belize. She can own property, they basically give you a piece of property; as long as you live there, and you maintain it, you can have a piece of property in Belize. Also, because Belize is a Commonwealth of England, she can go to Cambridge, or someplace like that relatively cheap. Now, me, even though I'm married to my lovely wife, I can't go to Belize and say, "I want my piece of property." Why not? Well, I'm not a citizen. Well, I want to go to Cambridge; give me that deal that they get. Ain't going to happen. And she, likewise, because she's not a citizen here, she can't go down to the courthouse and say, "Give me my

piece of property." Ain't going to happen. They're going to look at her like-"Well I'm a citizen of Belize; they get a piece of land there." No, it doesn't work like that. But you do have rights and certain things as a citizen here in this country, that they don't have in other countries. And the same thing with any country that you become a citizen of. It's the same thing with God. There are certain things, certain rights, that you can get from God only. Amen? I can't just go and demand, "I have a right to be in the city, I have a right to be a citizen." The same as with God. Jesus talks about that in Matthew chapter 7. Back to Noah, too, that's one ship I wouldn't want to miss. When I was in the Navy, when you were in port, you had to get back to that ship, or you would have what was called, "missing ships movement." Missing movement is an even worse offense in the Navy than being AWOL or being late for work. That's a big deal; you are required to be on that ship, you have a certain job on that ship... I didn't want to miss the ship when I was in the Navy, and I don't want to miss the ship for God either.

Matthew 7: 21-23 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* [So you can't just say, "Lord, Lord," call on his name, and expect to be a citizen in God's home.] *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?* ["We've done great things for You, God."] *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you:* ["You didn't have your citizenship."] *depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

I never knew you. Imagine going through your whole life never knowing God, and maybe serving him, speaking about him, maybe seeing miracles and the things happen? You weren't a citizen.

As we get ready to close, I know this is kind of last-minute for the music department, but there's a song we sang a few weeks ago, and I'll ask Andy to come up and lead that: "Bound for That City." As citizens of God we have a right-as citizens of God there's a place set aside for us. There's a holy land; a city. An eternal inheritance; streets of gold, gates of pearl, walls of jasper. A place where there is no more sorrow, no more remembering the things of the past, no more pain, no more aging, no more dying, no more sorrows, no more worrying about whether we have a job. Right? No more bosses except for Jesus, and He's a great boss to work for.

GREAT LAKES Bound for That City

Verse 1

There's a city of light,
where there cometh no night.
For the sun never sets in the sky.
In the Bible we're told that the streets are pure gold
And a cool gentle river runs by.

Chorus

I'm bound for that city, God's holy white city, oh yes I am.
I'll never turn back unto this world anymore
No matter how rough may be the way
No matter how oft I stop to pray
I'm bound for that city on the evergreen shore.

Verse 2

Little children will play and their hearts will be glad
As they stroll through the city of God

No more dying up there, no more sorrow to share.
And no one will be feeble and old.

Chorus

I'm bound for that city, God's holy white city, oh yes I am.
I'll never turn back unto this world anymore
No matter how rough may be the way
No matter how oft I stop to pray
I'm bound for that city on the evergreen shore.

