

Blessings in Christ - Purpose (Part 1)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 October 2014

Preacher: Don Coleman

[0 : 00] Ephesians 2 Ephesians 2 Ephesians 2

Ephesians 2 Ephesians 2 Ephesians 2

Ephesians 3-14 Paul praises God for his blessings and we praise God for our blessings in Christ Jesus and then Paul of course describes those blessings. Second, prayer.

Prayer because we have in verses 15-23 and we spent quite a bit of time on those verses we have Paul's prayers that the Ephesians these believers eyes and our eyes would be open to the fullness of God's blessings in Christ Jesus.

So not only praising Him for those blessings but understanding them, knowing them, having full knowledge of them. And then the third is purpose. Purpose and it's chapter 2 verses 1-10 where Paul details God's sovereign purpose for blessing us for blessing us in Christ Jesus.

[3 : 52] So he has a purpose in doing this. All these blessings that we looked at and studied and even the substance of Paul's prayers, all of these things lead us to Paul laying before us God's sovereign purpose for all of this.

So that's what we're going to be looking at tonight. This third emphasis, God's purpose, we could say, for blessing us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

God's purpose for that. Now, before we look at these ten verses, let me remind you of something and we really have to go all the way back to, I guess, our first session or my first message or teaching out of this book which I don't know how far we have to go back for that.

I remember when I started. It's been a while. But when we looked at Paul's salutation, first couple of verses in this letter, we looked at his salutation throughout, I said this, or in so many words I said this, throughout the pages of this great, wonderful, marvelous letter, the letter to the Ephesians. Throughout those pages, and we're going to see this all the way through, Paul shows us that through Christ and in Christ, we are God's new people. See, we're not just simply Highland Park Baptist Church.

[5 : 21] We ought to also consider that we are part of a brand new community. Now, it's been around a while. I don't mean brand new in the sense of, you know, the last century or decade or in our lifetime, but within the last couple of thousand years, and to God, that's pretty short, relatively short period of time.

We're part of a new community, a redeemed community, a redeemed community of people. We call it the church or the Bible calls it the church.

So, that truth is at the very heart of the message of Paul's letter to the Ephesian church. That's at the very heart of it, the very center of it. And, in fact, nowhere in the letter do we get very far from that idea.

Now, in the first part of the letter, he's going to be talking about this. He's referring to this in the context of theology, the doctrinal issues related to this new community, the founding of it and so forth.

And then, the latter part of the book is going to go into the practical things about this new community, the redeemed of the Lord.

[6 : 38] And so, the creation of a redeemed community is God's eternal purpose. I said that we're going to be considering the purpose of God here.

And this is his purpose to create a redeemed community. He's been doing that for some time in actuality. And we're a part of that by his grace and through faith.

So, we could even say that everything in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, to the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation, everything in the Bible unfolds for us this purpose of God.

This purpose of God. And that purpose being to create a new society, a redeemed community. And so, you know, this is the, I think, key to understanding God's Word.

Because it is the theme that ties it all together. And it's the key to a correct interpretation of God's Word. If you, as you're studying God's Word, if you keep very close in your mind that this is all about God's foreordained, predetermined purpose to create a new community of people, then that's going to help you in your interpretation of God's Word.

[8 : 05] And it's key, I think, to having a right worldview, too, because it helps us understand and interpret correctly some of the, in many cases, especially of late, some of the awful things that are taking place in our world.

How do you make sense of that? How are you to interpret that? What kind of conclusions do you come about? How are you to react to that? What effect should the things of our world have upon us?

Well, if we have a correct view of Scripture, we'll have a correct view of the world, and the purpose of Scripture is to unveil for us God's redemptive purpose.

That is, His purpose to create a redeemed community, a community of the redeemed, which is what we are.

Now, chapter 1, which we've already finished, reveals God's creation of this new society, this redeemed community. Alright?

[9 : 05] Redeemed community. Chapter 1 reveals that God, the creation of this new community, that it originated in eternity past.

That's what chapter 1 basically tells us. Chapter 1, verse 4, He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. So, God's creation of this redeemed community is something that He decided to do in eternity past.

Actually, when you say that, you still are assuming there is a point in time when it began, but there is no beginning point for it. Eternity past. So, way back there in eternity past, God, one day, had anything better to do, and He decided, I think what I'll do is create a new people.

And, we just can't, our minds can't take that in, figure that out, but it originated in eternity. This plan, this purpose to create this new society, and that's what chapter 1 tells us.

Chapter 2 then reveals how God is actually creating this redeemed community. This gets into His purpose. God's creation, or God creates this redeemed community through regeneration.

[10 : 33] Regeneration. that's what verses 1 through 10, that's what these verses are all about. Although, we don't really begin to see that and understand it clearly until we get into verse 4 following.

All right, so, what we're talking about here, when I say regeneration, we're talking about the new birth. And so, when we think of a new society or a new community, a redeemed community, we're talking about something that one must be birthed into.

You have to be born into this community. you know, not of course born physically, that was the hang up Nicodemus had with this whole concept and idea, remember?

Not physically, but rather spiritually. Again, like Jesus said to Nicodemus in John chapter 3 verse 7, what did he say? He said, you must be born again.

And then, of course, he goes on to explain what that means. But what he's talking about is that theological word, regeneration. That's what happens when you're saved.

[11 : 54] At salvation, you are regenerated. In fact, there's no salvation, can be no possible salvation apart from regeneration. And that's what Paul is talking about in these first ten verses in Ephesians chapter 2.

The regeneration of individuals into God's society. That's what he's talking about in these ten verses. Let me say that again.

The regeneration, that's what we're going to be studying, the regeneration, the new birthing of individuals, because he doesn't regenerate groups.

He doesn't regenerate churches or families. He regenerates individuals, the regeneration of individuals into God's new society.

this is his redeemed community of people who, according to chapter 1, were chosen before the foundation of the world, predestined, adopted as sons to the praise and glory of his grace.

[13 : 00] And so that's what these verses are all about. So we can divide what Paul says about regeneration into two parts. Into two parts.

And in a sense, it's the before and after. What we once were, to understand regeneration, we have to begin with what we once were.

And then, that's verses 1 through 3, and then what we are now. What we once were, what we are now. In fact, that's a good outline for any testimony that a Christian might give.

Sometimes when we're going on a mission trip or various other times, kind of help people write out a personal testimony and here's a good outline.

What you once were and who you are now. What you are now. And then say something a little bit about what happened to make that change. That's a personal testimony.

[14:05] But this is how Paul divides these ten verses. What we once were and what we are now or now are. Alright, so number one, what we once were.

Verses 1 through 3 describe what we were prior to regeneration. What we were pre-converted in our pre-converted state.

And so he gives us a three-fold description of this. It's really pretty easy to pick this out. Using the phrases that follow, you can see this as it unfolds.

It's a description of what we once were. And it's three-fold, a three-fold description. First of all, we were spiritually dead. that's what we once were.

Though you may not remember it, if you became a Christian when you were very young, you may not remember, you might not have acknowledged, you might not understand it, but it's more than just simply experience this reality that Paul was talking about.

[15:28] We were, whether you realized it or not, we were dead, spiritually dead. Dead. And that's what it says in verse one, and you he made alive.

And by the way, this is the New King James Version. Some of you have the King James. And it I think says quickened, has quickened.

If you notice, if you have that Bible open, and even as I've printed it for you here, you see it's in italics. He made alive. Now, those words are not in the original text.

They've been added. And so it really should read and you who were dead in trespasses and sins. And it's interesting, it's like the Bible translator was anticipating what Paul was going to say a little later in these verses.

So it's not wrong, it's just he added those words for whatever, or they rather, added those words for whatever reason. But it's not in the text. And that's why you have an italic.

[16:31] So they're not trying to pull the wool over your eyes. Anytime you see words in italics in your Bible, that means that those words were added by the Bible translator. Sometimes they're added to make the English read better.

Sometimes they're added to help explain something. sometimes it's okay, sometimes I think it would have been a lot better if they left it out.

This doesn't make any difference, doesn't make any problems in our understanding of the text, because he's going to talk about being made alive a little bit later. But at this point, he's just simply saying this is who you or what you once were.

You were dead in trespasses and sins. And so that's the point. here is what you once were. Here is your pre conversion, pre salvation condition.

You might call it your BC condition. Your before Christ condition. You were, I was, every one of us were dead in trespasses and sins.

[17:41] Now, by the way, I'm teaching this on the assumption that everyone in this room has been made alive in Christ. I can't always assume that, but Paul was talking to believers and so I'm going to teach it the way he addressed it to believers.

And so we'll always think here in our study in terms of this is all of us. We were dead in trespasses and sins. So let's just kind of pick this apart because there are several words I think that need to be explained, probably not, explained not to this group, this astute group.

Does that resemble anybody here? I think it does all of us. You're all pretty astute folks. And so, you know, some of this you already know.

For example, the word dead. The dead, the word dead here, not talking about physical death, right? All right? Certainly not. You were once dead physically.

No, I've never been dead physically. Now, someday I will be. You know, talking about physical death, he's talking about a sphere of existence.

[18 : 57] Death in the sense of a sphere of existence or a state of being. And not a state of being physically dead. That wouldn't make sense, wouldn't it?

It's an ongoing kind of condition of death. And so, we then know he's talking about something spiritual. It's not physical death, but spiritual death.

Spiritual death. And so, Paul says, and to further explain that, he says, we were dead in. Now, preposition is very important, nearly always important in the Greek text.

Well, every word. I'd be pretty pitiful, I said, if I said one word was more important than another. Every word is important in God's word. It's all inspired.

And so, pay attention to prepositions. I've said this many times before. This helps us understand the meaning. He said, we were dead in, in trespasses and sins, in the sphere of it.

[19 : 55] Again, that means in sin was our realm of existence. Our sphere of existence. It was our state of being, in trespasses and sins.

sinned. Therefore, here's the idea. We were not spiritually dead because we sinned. We sinned because we were spiritually dead. You say, well, what's the difference?

Well, what's the big difference? Think about that. Let me say it again. We were not spiritually dead because we sinned. You know, sometime along the way, we got to a certain point in life and we sinned and we're spiritually dead.

Now, that was the case with Adam and Eve. They came to the point because God gave them the volition, the free will, and they chose to sin, and from that point they died.

But from that point all of us were dead to begin with. Born dead. So, we're not talking about something that comes as a result of sin. We're talking about something that is our state of being.

[21 : 03] We sin because we are spiritually dead. We are dead in, in the sphere of trespasses and sins. That's what defines us. And, I mean, you can think of it in these terms, a person, you may have heard it put in these terms before, but a person is not a liar because he tells lies.

A person lies because he is a liar. You see the difference? And that illustrates the concept here. We're dead in trespasses and sin.

That's our state of being, our sphere of existence, or at least it was for, I hope, all of us in this room. Likewise, a person is not a thief because, I'll put the ladies on the hook this time, because she steals.

I get a little tired of saying he or she. Alright, so a person is not a thief because she steals. She steals because she is a thief.

Likewise, she says the same thing about murder, about adultery, about sexual immorality, immoral behavior, anger, covetousness, and on and on.

[22 : 14] Spiritual death does not come as a result of sinful behavior. Sinful behavior is the natural result of, the automatic result of, spiritual death.

Jesus said in Matthew 12, 35, a good man out of the good treasures of his heart brings forth good things. And an evil man out of the evil treasures, again, of his heart, though it doesn't repeat it there again, but that's what he's talking about, evil treasures of the heart brings forth evil things.

The problem is in the heart. I've heard Adrian Rogers say this, I don't know how many times over the years, well, a long time ago now, he's been with Jesus for a long time now, he used to say the heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart.

That's the idea. Jesus said in Matthew 15, 18, he said, but those things which proceed out of the mouth come from where? The heart.

Come from the heart. And they defile the man. From out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemy, so forth.

[23 : 35] Alright, so there are two words for sin in this verse. Actually, there are several words for sin in the Greek language that appear in the Bible.

There are three, I think, in all, maybe four, and I'm hard-pressed right now to think of the other two, but these are two you'll see quite often. One of them you'll see more than any other. The first one is the word trespasses.

trespasses is from a Greek word, it's actually another one of these words that's a compound word, you have a preposition and then a word, it's peroptoma, peroptoma, and it literally means to fall beside or near, kind of fall beside something, and it can be used in a lot of different contexts.

the idea conveyed is a deviation from the truth, deviation, even if it's just a little bit of a deviation, a deviation from through the fall beside it, you see the idea behind the literal meaning of the word, a

fall beside it, or a fall near it, but not on it, and so it's a deviation, talking about a deviation from the truth, or the truth of God's law, or God's law, Proverbs 4, 26, 7, ponder or watch the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established, do not turn to the right or the left, remove your foot from evil, see, head straight forward for it, the truth of God's word, not falling to the side of it, or near it, then you have the word sins, and that's the, you know, the only English word really we have, we still have the words trespass and things, but we don't think of those words in relation to sin, so then you have the word sins, we have trespasses and sins, and sins, the Greek word behind this word sins, is the common word in the

New Testament, very common, the common word, hamartia, hamartia, used 173 times in the New Testament, by the way, very common, the usual word, the preferred word, by most of the New Testament writers, and the literal meaning is to miss the mark, to miss the mark, and I gave you a little picture there, hope you enjoy that, I didn't draw that, seems like I'm always not criticized, but, you know, someone always makes some comment about the artwork that appears on somebody, I haven't done it for a long time, so, you know, anyway, this kind of visually helps you understand, because in the, and I've given this to you in your notes, in the secular context, hamartia, beauty, you know, by the way, and I've said this before, many of these great theological words that we think are specifically and uniquely religious or sacred, nearly all of them have secular meanings, secular usages, and had secular usages long before the

[26 : 54] Holy Spirit inspired the writers to put them in the Bible and give them a connotation that is very theological, very spiritual, hamartia is no exception, and it's, you know, a technical term used in archery, and it's also used not just archery, but also hunting, and, I mean, if you're out hunting, you know, and you've got the bow and arrow, if I had to depend upon food in that way, I would start death, I can't shoot a bow and arrow for anything, but, you know, you shoot that arrow and you want to hit the mark, all right, now with an animal, like a deer, you want to hit the heart, you want to put that animal to death, immediately, that would be hitting the mark, but in the archery sense, and this is a very common use of the word hamartia, the mark refers to the dead center on the bull's eye of the target, and so it represents the perfect score,

I mean, if you want a perfect score, you must hit dead center, and then, you know, if you're in competition and your competitor is some guy by the name of Robin Hood, then he can split your arrow and still get dead center, that's another story, not a Bible story, biblical principles, perhaps, but, all right, so to miss the mark, then, means to miss the bull's eye, right, it means to miss it, or to come short of a perfect hit, perfect score, all right, so that's the meaning of hamartia in the secular usage, and, but the idea conveyed, of course, is to fall short of God's acceptable standard, his standard, it's not, we could even use the word his law, his precepts, put whatever word you want in there, but it's the only acceptable standard, and, and, to fall, we fall short of it, the famous passage, Romans 3, 23, for all have sinned, there's the word hamartia again, and fall short of the glory of God, fall short, and, I kind of like, MacArthur's illustration of this, and so I want to give that to you, you can kind of visualize this, and he kind of opens up this little illustration by saying the man's common state of sin can be compared to a, and you can picture this, a very diverse group of people standing on the bank of a wide river, a mile-wide river, and each of them trying to jump to the other side, not swim, but jump to the other side, so here they are all grouped together on the side of this river, mile-wide, they want to jump to the other side, so they're all going to make that attempt, you can kind of picture that, can't you?

You can also picture how stupid that would be, out, but think about this diverse group, alright, so there's little children there, there are little children and elderly people there, and maybe they can jump a foot, two feet, maybe, I started to ask someone here, how far can you jump, but then I wouldn't want to say that this person was elderly, so I won't do that, I can jump about, alright, even if you get a running start, a child get a running start, little kid, little toddler, you can picture that, they can jump a few feet out into the water, then you have older children there, and also young adults who are still pretty strong, and pretty athletic, and perhaps, I mean, they're able to jump several times further than the children and elderly people, and maybe jump as much as six feet, if you've got a running start, maybe a little more than that, then you have athletes there, you know, and they're able to jump many, many times further than that, and maybe one as far as 29 feet, 4.36 inches, which is the current world record, long jump.

That's a long way, 29 feet, over 29 feet, and yet, none of them gets even near to the other side, not even near.

[31 : 55] Their degrees degrees of success, there are degrees of success, aren't there? Degrees of success, but their degrees of success vary only in relation to each other, but in relation to achieving the goal, every one of them are equal failures.

years, see the idea? That helps us maybe understand this missing the mark, because maybe there are people who have come closer than another person, and yet still, they miss it.

And, you know, I know some good people, I've known some good people, good pagans, you know, and a person might even think, somebody, I've been to some funerals, done some funerals, for, you know, the husbands of some wives in my church, and these husbands are unbelievers, and yet, good men, good men, do anything for you, all you have to do is just think of a need, and they are there to give it, and they love people, and they're great neighbors, and they're great citizens, and so forth.

And so, you know, you might be tempted, though I've never really been tempted to say this, but a person might be tempted to say, well, if anybody can make it on their good works, he can, because he's a good man.

And so maybe he's as good as this athlete who jumped 29 feet, and yet he's still a failure. See, this is Paul's point here in Ephesians 2.1, we are all dead, all of us, but we were all dead, in trespasses and sins.

[33 : 35] Now, we may have been good sinners. I don't mean good at sinning, I mean good people who are sinners. We may have been really good people, but none of our acts of goodness could bring us near to God.

None of them could. No matter how good they are. And regardless of the number of the good works, they can't bring us near to God because, you see, according to what we're learning here, it was our condition of sinfulness and not our particular sins sinfulness.

It was our condition of sinfulness. It was our condition of sinfulness as opposed to particular sins.

So, again, let me say, it was our condition of sinfulness, not our particular sins, but our condition of sinfulness that separated us from God.

Therefore, the same is true to say our acts of goodness could never, ever reconcile us to God.

Never. Never. Never. Never. Never. No matter how good they may be.

[34 : 47] All right, so Paul gives us then a three-fold description of what we once were. And the first one, as we've just seen, we were spiritually dead.

Second, we were enslaved to the powers of evil. And powers plural. plural. The powers of evil.

Verses 2 and 3 are the first part of, or major part of verse 3. In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

So let's just break this apart a little bit. Those really, again, not complicated. The word, of course, we're very familiar with this concept, the word walked.

It's actually a Hebraism. I know the letter was written in Greek, but it was written by a Hebrew. A guy by the name of Paul. And this word is a Hebraism, which refers to one's conduct in life.

[36 : 02] How one lives a life, the way a person lives. So we already know that, don't we? When you find that in the New Testament, this concept of our walk, we're talking about lifestyle, talking about conduct, talking about the way we live our lives.

The phrase in which, or if you have a King James, wherein, connects this way of living or walking with our trespasses and sins.

So this takes us back to the trespasses and sins. So in which, in trespasses and sins, that's the way we once walked. That's how we lived our lives. And so this, again, was our sphere of existence.

Our lives, and here's the idea, our lives prior to Christ, our lives were enslaved to a certain way of living. And we could say a certain way of thinking as well.

we were enslaved to that prior to Christ. So our former enslavement consists, according to Paul here, of three distinct, though I would say still very connected, powers.

[37 : 20] Three distinct, though connected, powers. Our lives were enslaved to these powers. And I can shorten them by saying to the world, the devil, and the flesh. Paul puts it, gives us more detail about that.

And so we can say it this way, number one, this first power that we are enslaved to is conformity to the world. We were enslaved to the conformity, to conformity to the world, according to the course

of this world.

That's what we were enslaved to, the way of the world, the course of this world. And it's not talking about the physical world, the planet, right, but rather the world's course, the way, meaning the world's philosophy of life, the world's philosophy of life, the world's system of values.

Now you can see these things, the difference between the world's, the way the world thinks philosophically about things. We were enslaved to that.

The world's set of values, which is ever-changing, isn't it? And as it changes, it always changes away from God's word.

[38 : 48] So this is what we're talking, this is what Paul, we're enslaved to conformity to this world, the world's philosophy of life, the world's system of values, the world's way of thinking and doing things.

That, by the way, always defy God. The way the world, their philosophy of life, their system of values, their thinking and doing, always defies God and His word.

That's the world, and we were once enslaved to that, conformity to the world. Number two, bondage to Satan.

Bondage to Satan, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. Now, the point is, and it's not just here in Ephesians that we find this, but Satan is the prince of this world.

He's the ruler of this world. not because he conquered it and somehow is stronger than God, but God has allowed this. You can ask God about that when you get there, why he did that.

[40 : 05] It's not God, you know, some weakness in God or some limit to his sovereignty. Satan's not a lesser power to God in terms of degree or so forth.

Satan's no power whatsoever apart from God. There is no power or authority that God has not ordained. And, in fact, God created Satan, didn't he?

And so, where did his power come from? He has any. It came from God. And God allows him to exercise that power and authority on this planet.

He's the ruler of this world. And, now, that's not going to last forever. He's the ruler of this world until, of course, Jesus one day casts him out. And he will do that.

Now, his demonic forces, or his fallen angels, are the power of the air. That's a reference to his demonic forces.

[41 : 08] Power of the air. He is the prince of, he is the ruler of the power of the air. He has his forces. His demonic forces. I don't know how many there are, but I think there are a whole bunch of fallen angels.

And we don't know how many angels there are to begin with, but, you know, a bunch. And Ephesians 6.12, For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this age.

By the way, Paul, and we're going to get to this passage maybe before Jesus comes, angels. But we'll get to this passage, but this is really kind of conveying a hierarchy of authority within the kingdom of Satan, his forces.

So all these things, we wrestle against these things, the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. That's what the power of the air is a reference to, the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Satan has marshaled these demons as his army. And, you know, Hollywood has such a fixation on this kind of thing, don't they?

[42 : 27] I mean, always have, but things of late, just about every other movie has to deal with some kind of demonic force, demonic person.

And they can make it quite graphic and scary and so forth, and yet they don't even know. They don't even know, we don't even know, the wickedness of these unseen demonic forces that are at Satan's bidding, his control, his king over them.

And they're operating in this world. So Satan rules these wicked forces, and then it's through these demonic forces that Satan now works in the sons of disobedience.

Who are they? All unbelievers. All unbelievers. This is who we once were.

We once were the sons of disobedience. Satan works through his demonic forces, and he works in the sons of disobedience.

[43 : 42] Verse 3, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves. We were children of disobedience. We were slaves of the one we obeyed.

I'm talking about we were. Romans 6.16, Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you that one slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness?

All right, so what do we have? We have bondage to Satan. These are the powers, the powers that we were once enslaved to or by.

Number 3, the bondage to the flesh. These are very logical, aren't they? You see them. Paul's just unfolding these things right before us.

Among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. There are a number of words here in this passage that we need to define.

[44 : 54] lusts, not just talking about sexual immorality, but a word that refers to any and all strong cravings, cravings and inclinations, and it's used here in this sense to refer to sinful things, obviously.

There are good things we can lust for. God even lusts. lusts in the good ways, the desire, the inclinations, but generally in the New Testament, lust is used in the context of evil, of sin.

So there are lusts, there are cravings that are here. And then the word desires, which is very similar, but it refers more to the inner determination.

So you have kind of the cravings, and then you have desires, which are the determination to have these things, and to do certain things.

And then the flesh, and I'm just kind of taking these in a little different order in the way they appear, but flesh appears here twice in this passage, and flesh refers to that part of us out of which come our sinful lusts and desires.

[46 : 23] Now, as believers, we still have the flesh. It's still there. It's being conquered. That's the work of sanctification.

But it's still there and will be there until it is redeemed as well at the resurrection. But we still battle with the flesh. But in terms of what we once were, we were completely enslaved by the flesh, controlled by the flesh.

And it's that part of us, it's out of that that come these cravings for sinful things and desires to have them, no matter what.

And then the mind is also in there. Mind refers to the place where our willful choices are made. And in this context, Paul speaks of deliberate, willful choices to defy the will of God.

the same as saying the word of God. So these are the masters who once enslaved us. We've met the enemy, the enemy, the world, the devil, the flesh.

[47 : 29] We still battle against these three things, by the way. They're still our enemies. And we still struggle with them. But once we were enslaved by these powers, the world, the devil, the flesh, and if we're not careful, we can enslave ourselves again to these masters, these powers of evil.

We can choose to be enslaved by them. Not permanently. I don't think a believer can just on going on a permanent basis, return again to allegiance to the powers of evil.

But we can allow those powers to hold sway over us for a season. And that's the spiritual battle that we face every day.

Alright, so we're talking about what we once were. First, we were spiritually dead. Second, we were enslaved to the powers of evil. And then one more. Third, we were objects of God's wrath.

And this really is ultimately what it all comes down to and will come down to for many, many, many countless people.

[48 : 43] God's wrath. Verse 3, latter part of verse 3, and were by nature children of wrath just as the others. You were just like everybody else. Praise the Lord, you were.

Not now, but children of wrath. And, you know, contrary to what the world teaches and would like to have us believe, we're not all God's children. It's a sense of all of mankind.

You know, we're just all God's children. Have you ever heard that said? Well, we're not. Now, in one very remote sense, we, all mankind is in the sense of creation.

But, in sense of relationship as a father, son to a father, daughter to a father, we're not all God's children. Now, I hope we all are here in this room. Rather, by nature, this is what Paul says, by nature.

That means what man is innately by birth. What we are, what we were, just when we were born, just innately, inborn in us.

[49 : 50] We were all children of wrath from the very beginning. Now, what does that mean? What does it mean to be children of wrath? Well, children of wrath is another hebraism.

And it describes a person whose nature is worthy of and, consequently, subject to the wrath of God, the judgment of God.

Alright, so, certainly, we're judged for the things we do, but even before that, we're judged because of who we are, what we are. We're children of wrath.

We're worthy of his wrath. And, unless Jesus, unless you trust Jesus, unless you're born again, one day we'll be subject to the full wrath of God because of sin.

That's what we once were, and Paul says, just as the others.