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Recommended Citation

Vaught, W. O., "Our Conditions when God Found Us" (1975). *Vaught Sermon Notes: Ephesians*. 15.
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OUR CONDITIONS WHEN GOD FOUND US

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 11
EPHESIANS 2:1-7

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EPHESIANS 2:1-7 "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sin; 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: 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, 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."

Though we will study only this first verse tonight, I wanted you to read these first seven verses so you would have the full content in your minds. A correct translation of this first verse should read--"And you, who being constantly dead in trespasses and sins".

In Chapter 1 we studied God's divine plan for man. This plan was designed by God for man in eternity past. God designed the plan and Christ and The Holy Spirit carried out the plan. This plan designed for us in eternity past was a perfect plan, but man comes along and because of his sinfulness he distorts and confuses the plan. Man can take a perfect plan and distort it. Anything that is designed by man eventually breaks down. Man by man's efforts cannot solve man's problems. For one reason, there is a super race in existence called angels, and the super angel of that super race is called The Devil and Satan. Since Satan is the ruler of this world which is emphasized in Ephesians 2, and since man exists under the rule of Satan, and since man is propagandized by Satan, and since man possesses that which is called in our passage "the flesh", there is no way for man to come up with a plan whereby he can solve man's problems. Now that doesn't mean that God is going to leave man and let him flounder and go down in failure. God has provided a perfect plan. This plan is a picture of the perfect mind of God, and reaches all the way back to eternity past. Back there in eternity past God made perfect provision for our every need. The relationship precedes the provision. There is no problem you will ever face, or no disaster you will ever encounter that has not been provided for in eternity past. Once you believe in Christ you are in this plan because of a relationship. Spiritual birth brought you into the plan. Now in Ephesians 2 we look at the plan from the viewpoint of man.

The plan as it existed in eternity past--that's Chapter 1.

Now Chapter 2 we see this plan in time. The plan God designed in eternity past, God has the power to put that plan into operation in time.

Now the greatest hindrance to the plan is man himself. Man is constantly getting into God's way, through what we call religion and legalism. But once you accept Christ you are in the plan.

Our State When God Found Us

This is what we are going to see here in Chapter 2. We are going to see that we were totally unlovely, totally unattractive. We had an old sin nature, we had all kinds of mental attitude sins, and we were filled with soul kinks. God looked on the inside of us and this is what he saw--

Our Soul

1. He saw our self-consciousness-----Filled with sinfulness
2. He saw our mentality-----Here were mental attitude sins
3. He saw our volition-----Here were human good decisions
4. He saw our emotion-----Desire for experience and feeling
5. He saw our conscience-----Here was pride and self pity
6. He saw our old sin nature-----Norms and standards totally opposed to
(Here called the flesh) God's plan.

Now that's what God saw when he looked inside each of us in our unsaved condition. (It reminds me of looking through the old family album at the way we looked way back then and we say "Did I really look like that?")

EPHESIANS 2:1 "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;" We need to correct this translation so we will get the exact meaning of these words--"And you, who being constantly dead in trespasses and sins" So this verse looks at believers and says "This is the way you looked when you were an unbeliever." This is the way we were when God found us. When we were born physically the Bible says the "n'shemah" hit us, which is the spark of life, and we were alive. The embryo is not a person until the "n'shemah" hits it. When this spark enters the mentality, we become a living person. Then this spark hits the old sin nature and we are spiritually dead. Does God create the soul? No, rather he creates the categories that develop into the soul. When did you become self-conscious? Probably when you were two or two½ years old. You see, you probably were called your name hundreds of times before you realized "That's me. That name means me." Now the potential was there from the genes of your parents, but mentality had to be developed. Then as you learn words, you begin to think. You have to have words for thoughts, and you can't make decisions unless you can think. So capacity has to be developed. The goal toward which we are all moving is to think objectively and get all the facts and not allow emotions to play too strong a part in decisions. You see, emotions are formed by impressions, not words.

So when you were born the only two functions were mentality and the old sin nature. Now when did you think your first thought? You thought your first thought when you began to speak. A little baby can hold to you and cling to you and you may think they love you, but they can't love you until they begin to think and form words.

Now right at that time spiritual death is there potentially and the old sin nature takes over.

So when grace found us we were physically alive but spiritually dead. Now please notice that those words "hath he quickened" (made alive) are not found until down in verse 5 and the translators have brought those words back into the first verse to try to make it clearer.

"And you" is a proleptic pronoun and means you, and only you. It is very personal. You have a relationship with God. We are here because of who and what God is. That "you" refers to any person who is in the plan of God. But this passage is going to look back and see you and what you were like before. So this is the family album so you can see what you looked like before you met Jesus Christ. So here we see what we were like in the past and what we are like today by his grace.

"Who were dead" is a present, active, participle of "eimi" and should read "who are continuously dead" it is the absolute status quo, it is the state that continues from the moment of your birth until the moment you accept Christ as Saviour. Your condition is described in one word--"DEAD". But you can't be physically born and live a certain number of years and be "physically dead". So this doesn't strain your mentality to realize that he is talking here not about physical death, but

about spiritual death. There are seven different kinds of death in the Bible, and spiritual death is one of the seven. If you were physically dead you couldn't accept Christ.

In Romans 6:23 we read "The wages of sin is death". Now that is referring to spiritual death. That's the death with which we are born. The wages of sin is not physical death, but spiritual death. When we are born we are physically alive but spiritually dead. The potential for spiritual life is there, but we are spiritually dead. Now when Adam sinned back in the Garden of Eden he died, not physically, but spiritually. God said to Adam "Dying, thou shalt die". He died spiritually and then almost a thousand years later he died physically. Christ didn't die physically for us, we have to die physically for ourselves. He died spiritually for us, and if we accept him then we will never die spiritually.

Now when Christ went to the cross he handled the old sin nature in its entirety. On the cross Christ rejected all human good. In grace there is no place for human good. That's why you can't be saved by feeling sorry for your sins, or by raising your hand, or by walking down an aisle, or by joining a church or by being baptized, or by changing your behaviour pattern. Human good was rejected at the cross, and in the end at the great white judgment throne the human good of every unbeliever will be rejected. The sins of both the believer and the unbeliever were judged at the cross, so you see it is human good that will be judged in the end and not sins. The whole last half of Ephesians shows that God despises human good. God's attitude toward human good is clearly shown in Isaiah 64:6. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Hebrews 6:1 calls human good "dead works". God's plan calls for divine good. Knowledge of doctrine plus the filling of the Holy Spirit produces divine good. Whether you produce human good or divine good depends on your attitude toward Bible Doctrine. In the end, at the great white judgment throne, unbelievers standing there on the basis of their own human good will be thrown into the lake of fire. The human good is the basis of the indictment. Spiritual death (which comes from the old sin nature) and physical death (which results from human good) result in the second death which is described in Revelation 20:12-15.

1. Physical Death:

- a. Believer: Soul and spirit leaving the body. Phil. 1:21, 2 Cor. 5:8.
- b. Unbeliever: Soul leaving the body. Luke 17:22

2. Spiritual Death: We are born spiritually dead, but physically alive. The moment the baby gasps its first breath of air--he gets his soul. The minute the soul hits the old sin nature (supplied by the father) he dies spiritually. Jesus Christ was always spiritually alive--no old sin nature. But for three hours he became spiritually dead (bearing our sins in His humanity), but it wasn't for His own sin. He had no personal sin or old sin nature. Eph. 2:1, Rom. 5:12, 6:23.

3. Second Death: Rev. 20:11-15 (Last judgment). This is the perpetuation of spiritual death into eternity.

4. Positional death: Romans 6:1-14, Col. 2:13, 3:13. This is identification with Christ in His deaths.

5. Temporal Death: A believer out of fellowship. Romans 8:6, 13; Eph. 5:14, 1 Tim. 5:6. James 1:15, Rev. 3:1, 1 John 3:14, Luke 15:24, 32.

6. Operational Death: James 2:26, No production

7. Sexual Death: Romans 4:17-21, Heb. 11:12. The inability to procreate.

But here in our passage in Ephesians, only one of these deaths is mentioned. "You being constantly dead" and this is referring to spiritual death. Then the verse says "In the sphere of trespasses and sins". The words trespasses and sins are both in the locative case. We were dead in two areas, trespasses and sins. Now what is the difference?

A trespass is a deviation from an established norm, a divine norm, like the ten commandments. This is God's moral standard. So between the time of our life, from physical birth to conversion, we are dead in these trespasses. The word "sin" means to "miss the mark". And what is the mark? It is the ten essence characteristics of God, his perfect righteousness, and justice, and love, and etc. We have violated God's character and that is a sin. So Ephesians 2 says to us that we need to recognize what our condition was when God found us. We can't come to God with the idea that I am so great and wonderful that God should be complimented that he ever was fortunate enough to save me.

Illustration: A testimony of a beauty queen or football star which goes something like this. "I am a great Christian. I was an all-American football player and captain of the football team or beauty queen and God found me. Isn't God fortunate that I let him win someone as wonderful as I am. But God has a place also for peons like you, so he will accept you if you will come to him." Now they don't actually say those words, but in substance that is what they mean.

Now Christianity does need football heroes and beauty queens, but far more important is the idea that Christianity needs people who understand the meaning of grace, that I am nothing and God is everything. So many times testimonies are nothing more than "bragamonies". There is no place for this in grace.

Once you really know what you were when grace found you, you will keep your mouth shut about what you were before. It isn't what we do for Christ that is important, but it is what he does for us that counts. Christ does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We were dead when he found us, some of us were "respectably dead" but dead just the same. God also finds those who are "religiously dead" and those who are "immorally dead" but they are all dead just the same. That's why Paul says "For all have sinned".