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Sermon Notes

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Spiritually Dead Even While We Lived

Ephesians 2:1-3

C.S. Lovett's 1950s booklet trains people on evangelism using sales techniques from the business world... it includes careful instructions on the moment of clinching the sale with a soul:

The title of the booklet is remarkable: "Soul-winning made easy"

Friends, soul-winning—the genuine conversion of a soul from spiritual death to spiritual life is a staggering miracle of God's grace... not only is no soul-winning ever "easy"—it is actually IMPOSSIBLE for us to do! We have no power whatsoever to give eternal life where a moment ago, there was spiritual death! Every single genuine conversion is a spiritual RESURRECTION... and no evangelist, no parent, no pastor, no missionary, no neighbor or coworker or VBS instructor or revivalist or Sunday school teacher... no human being can effect this miracle... only God can! So soul-winning can never be made EASY by some memorized technique

On the other hand, though, no soul-winning is ever difficult to God! It is a resurrection from death to life... and God can do that any time He chooses! As a matter of fact, imagine Jesus saying that Lazarus's resurrection from the dead was harder after four days than it would have been after three... but it was easier than it would have been after five days! NO WAY!!

When it comes to the resurrection of a single soul from spiritual death to spiritual life:

Matthew 19:26 But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

As we come to Ephesians 2:1-3, we come to one of the clearest depictions in the Bible of the true spiritual state of people apart from Christ... and one of the clearest depictions of God's awesome power in our lives

Perhaps Jesus' most astounding miracle in the days of His ministry in Palestine was his resurrection of Lazarus from the dead

Lazarus had been dead for four days; Jesus made this astounding claim:

John 11:25-26 "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Then he called to the tomb in a loud voice:

Lazarus... Come forth!!

The dead man was instantly raised to life physically; he stood up, wrapped in grave clothes; he came out of the tomb and showed himself alive!

Everyone was stunned and filled with amazement, wonder, and fear!

It was his greatest miracle!

But John's Gospel asserts again and again that genuine salvation in Christ is really the same thing: a resurrection!!

John 5:24-25 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵ ¶ I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

If you are a Christian today, God has RAISED YOU FROM THE DEAD spiritually! Ephesians 2:1-3 asserts this plainly. Today, we are going to look back at what you were before you were saved, and understand it properly. And we're going to look around at the unbelieving world through the lens of these three verses and see all its wickedness and depravity in a new and clearer light.

Context: Continuity and flow from Ephesians 1

Paul deeply desires the Ephesian Christians to KNOW what is true about them and about God's work in their lives

Paul's prayer for them... as we've seen

Ephesians 1:15-23

That they would know things by the Spirit... the "spirit of wisdom and revelation..."

What does Paul want them to know?

That they would know God better

That they would know three things: hope, riches, power

Analogy with Christ... God raised Him up and seated Him at His right hand

WE ALSO were dead... God raised us up with Him and seated us...

Paul wants us to know what kind of power has already been at work in our lives!!

Paul wants this so that the Ephesian Christians, looking back would know that they were saved only by God's grace and power, not by their own works... so that they won't boast

Paul wants this also so that the Ephesian Christians, looking ahead to the rest of their lives will be filled with HOPE and POWER to do the good works that are absolutely essential to the finalization of God's sovereign plan for the church

I. We Were Dead in Sins

Ephesians 2:1-2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live...

A. Christians Need to Know What We Were

1. Paul here opens up and makes plain the stunningly desperate situation every single one of us was in apart from Christ
2. We need to know this so we can give God ALL THE GLORY for our salvation!
3. We need to know this so we do not boast about all that we did, all the choices we made, the good works, the steps we took in our own salvation
4. This section is addressed to the Ephesian Christians to tell them what kind of astonishing power has ALREADY BEEN AT WORK in them to get them to change their way of life so radically... this could only have happened by the power of Almighty God!
5. In Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul doesn't make a single command... no imperatives at all! He just tells them what was true of them, and what God has done for them in Christ
6. We need to know how desperately lost we were!

B. "You" and "We"

1. In verses 1-2, Paul addresses the Ephesians as "you"... telling them what was their natural condition apart from Christ
2. In verse 3, he includes himself in that... "All of us also..." "Like the rest, WE WERE all by nature children of wrath..."

3. So while Paul begins by addressing them directly... “YOU”, he can’t stay that way for very long
4. He knows the same was true of all Christians

C. “Dead While You Lived”

Ephesians 2:1-2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live

1. In verse 1, Paul makes an absolutely astonishing assertion, one that can only be known by faith... “YOU WERE DEAD, even while you lived...”
2. Biologically alive, but spiritually dead
 - a. They may have been quite robust in their non-Christian, pagan lives
 - b. They may have been full of energy, active in pursuing many things, laughing, playing, eating, walking, going places, seeing sights, building buildings, engaged in a great many projects
 - c. Their bodies were fearfully and wonderfully made; their hearts were energetically pumping blood moment after moment; their brains were highly active—many brain waves, many thoughts and dreams and logic and plans and intelligence; their livers were cleaning their bloodstream of toxins; their bones were strong as the structure of their bodies, and also secretly producing new blood cells in their marrow; their lungs were filling with air and passing that life-sustaining oxygen on to the rest of the cells of their bodies; their muscles were moving them through this world
 - d. The text says they were dead while they WALKED... a daily lifestyle, an active lifestyle... by a spiritually DEAD lifestyle
3. The spiritually dead don’t know they’re dead
 - a. We are surrounded by lost people every single day who are spiritual dead even while they live
 - b. AND THEY DON’T KNOW IT!!
 - c. The first step of regeneration for them is to know their condition, to see themselves as they really are in light of God’s law

D. The Nature of Spiritual Death

1. Transgressions and sins
 - a. Paul says “As for you, you were dead IN YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND SINS...”

- b. The daily wickedness, the daily transgression of God's laws, the daily rebellion was the essence of their spiritual death
 - c. But it went deeper than that
2. Unable to respond to spiritual input
- a. "unable to respond"... what does an EMT do to determine if an unconscious person is alive??
 - b. Pupils fixed and dilated... evidence of death; the EMT pushes back the person's eyelids, shines a penlight in their eyes and watches closely; the pupils do not respond to the light... they are FIXED and DILATED
 - c. So it is with the non-Christian
 - d. NO POSITIVE RESPONSE TO SPIRITUAL STIMULAE
 - i) In other verses, the language is that of HARDNESS of heart... like the seed sown along the path; no PENETRATION at all; they are HARDENED, determined to follow their own ways
 - ii) Like a seared conscience... no FEELING at all as they sin
 - e. They are surrounded every single day with clear evidence of the existence and nature of a Creator God as they look at the blue sky, the golden sunlight, the tall trees swaying in a firm breeze; the lazy flight of a hawk overhead; the face of a friend smiling at them... CLEAR EVIDENCE of God at every moment... but they

Romans 1:18 suppress the truth by their wickedness

- f. They hear the word of God and rebel against it:

Romans 8:7 the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

- g. Even worse: They hear the gospel and they don't understand it... they hate it... they have no attraction to its truths... the person and work of Christ is foreign to them and they cannot understand Him; His death is utterly repulsive to them; they DO NOT RESPOND to the gospel... indeed, they are dead to its message

E. The Origin of Spiritual Death

1. In Adam, the entire human race sinned
2. When the Law or the conscience pushes the person to do right, they violate it and die spiritually

Romans 7:9-10 *Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.*

F. The Desperation of Spiritual Death... Utter Powerlessness

Romans 5:6 *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

1. How can a dead person raise himself to life?
 - a. This is a picture of absolute helplessness... “dead”
 - b. Therefore every genuine conversion is a miracle of God’s grace!!
 - c. No sinner can raise himself from the dead
 - d. The person’s “free will” cannot achieve this...

Some unbelievers mock Christianity as a “crutch”... the picture is that Christians are weak and need some support to lean on; whereas they fancy themselves as self-sufficient

But Christianity is far more than a “crutch” for the lame; it is a RESURRECTION for the DEAD!

2. Ephesians 2:1-3 is a key piece of the puzzle in displaying the absolute sovereignty of God in human salvation
3. Sinners fancy themselves as being the masters of their own fates and the captains of their own souls... but they cannot be the one who raises themselves from the dead
4. Only God’s sovereign grace in Christ can save a sinner!!
5. So non-Christians were in a DESPERATE situation spiritually... as were we all

Ephesians 2:12 *without hope and without God in the world.*

6. The words that follow describe very clearly and carefully the nature of our spiritual death

II. We Were Willing Slaves of Sin

Ephesians 2:1-3 *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our*

sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

If you know what to look for, we have laid out for us quite plainly the three deadly enemies of human souls: the WORLD, the DEVIL, and the FLESH in that order

These three enemies totally dominated the lives we lived apart from Christ... and we were in effect WILLING SLAVES of Satan's dark and wicked Kingdom of sin

A. We Followed the Ways of This World (vs. 2)

1. The "living dead" are active... they are actively following the "ways of this world" and they are actively following Satan
2. Verse 2 says we walked "ACCORDING TO..." the ways of this world; there is a way of thinking and a way of living, and the crowd of non-Christians are like sheep for the slaughter, day after day, following the same patterns
3. It's amazing how independent and proud lost people are; they think they are exercising their free will, they are "masters of their fates and captains of their souls" but they are just walking every day in a well-worn path that leads to destruction
4. The "ways of this world" is literally the "age of this world"—the mentality, the outlook, the assumptions, the lifestyles, the patterns of thinking and living inherited from the previous generation and shaped by sinners in their own generation
5. Day after day, millions of people all over the world are being indoctrinated in the "ways of the world"... selfish patterns, self-indulgent thoughts leading to addictive choices
6. The world has a vast marketing machinery that persuades them in how to think, what to buy, how to dress, how to talk; it uses ridicule and bullying techniques

Matthew 11:16-17 "To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: ¹⁷ "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn."

7. Jesus spoke plainly of the path of the world... the "ways of this world" in Matthew 7

Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

The Myth of the Lemmings: a lemming is a small, furry rodent that lives in the arctic tundra; they are a byword in our culture because it is erroneously thought that lemmings regularly commit mass suicide by following the huge crowd of other lemmings in rushing over cliffs and falling to their deaths; researchers have debunked this myth in recent years... but the use of the term “lemmings” as referring to a mindless following of the rush of the crowd to a certain destruction remains in place in our culture; yet this is exactly what is described in this verse: unbelievers mindlessly follow the crowd to destruction through transgressions and sins

We are born in sin and soon follow the crowd in rushing toward certain destruction in very identifiable patterns of behavior that Paul makes plain here

8. The world system is deep and complex:

- a. It involves philosophical assumptions... religious teachings... alluring advertising
- b. It teaches a basic anti-God definition of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness... it wants to define what LIFE is, and what LIBERTY is, and what the PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS is for us

B. We Were Willingly Dominated by Satan

Ephesians 2:2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

1. Behind this amazingly complex world system with its false definitions and ideologies and overpowering inducements to conform is an intelligent power... Satan!

Revelation 12:9 The great dragon was hurled down-- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

2. Satan rebelled against God and sought to take His heavenly throne... but he was defeated and thrown down to earth
3. He is incredibly powerful, incredibly clever, extremely intelligent; he is called the “god of this age” and he focuses on blinding people to spiritual truth:

2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

4. Here he is called “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” and a “spirit who is now at work in the disobedient”
 - a. The idea of a “kingdom” is prevalent in the NT related to Satan
 - b. He will clearly be described in Ephesians 6

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

- c. He has astonishing power, and he and his demons influence every nation on earth;
- d. His kingdom is spiritual in nature... it is in the “heavenly realms” and is invisible; hence Paul says he is the “ruler of the kingdom of the air” and a “spirit”
- e. His ability to influence the minds of unbelievers is key to his power over this age; he especially blinds them to the gospel and to the glory of God in Christ
- f. Thus a great deal of our salvation is THERAPEUTIC, the removal of this Satanic BLINDNESS...

John 9:39 Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

5. Satan actively tempts people all over the world constantly to sin
 - a. He leads the whole world astray
 - b. He tempts people to DISOBEY... he is the spirit at work in the DISOBEDIENT
 - c. He lays alluring traps for the souls of human beings... and they cannot help but be ensnared
 - d. The devil and his angels are invisibly moving rapidly all over the planet and do incalculable harm to the souls of every lost person: alluring them to addictions with drugs, alcohol, sex, materialism, pleasures of the eye and flesh, pride of the mind... always probing, testing, whispering, enticing, alluring, accusing... invisible and powerful... a KINGDOM OF THE AIR

6. Non-Christians willing WALK ACCORDING TO HIS ways...
 - a. We were his willing slaves
 - b. We willingly followed his rebellious patterns and were walking along his road to HELL
 7. The language of “kingdom” and “authority” speak of a stunning level of POWER that Satan had over his people: we were his slaves, and could not escape; he had us wrapped up in the chains of our own sinfulness and had no ability to escape
 8. A DEAD PERSON CANNOT ESCAPE THE CLUTCHES OF THE GRAVE!!
- C. We Indulged the Lusts of the Flesh

Ephesians 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.

1. The third aspect of our spiritual death was our own flesh... the lusts and drives of our flesh
2. Satan and the world pander constantly to these things as we just mentioned
3. The verse speaks of the alluring, enticing power of the lusts of the flesh
 - a. The flesh takes the natural pull for normal things—food, drink, sex, pleasure, love, beauty, possession, etc.—and pushes them beyond boundaries set up by God
 - b. The flesh is INSATIABLE... a relentless drive for gluttony, drunkenness, sexual fulfillment, pride,... always MORE, MORE, MORE
 - c. Vs. 3 says the flesh makes its pull through DESIRE, and we sinners are powerless to say no; we ACT on those desires; we eat, we drink, we commit sexual immorality; out of our mouths come all manner of filth:
4. The wickedness of our natural sinfulness extends to all areas of our being... including our MINDS
 - a. The relentless PRIDE and SELF-SEEKING of our thoughts is in view here

Psalm 10:4 In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

- b. Tremendous geniuses, brilliant men and women, are just as much slaves to their flesh as are the most uneducated fools; more education does not result in more righteousness... for the very THOUGHTS of our hearts are corrupt

- c. The “Lusts of the intellect”: the delight that many scientists have for the theory of evolution, how alluring and beautiful it seems to them

Brian Switek, wrote an article for *National Geographic*, “Evolution is Beautiful”:

“We are creatures of time and chance. How wonderful is that? Out of all the innumerable possibilities in the history of life on Earth, a string of circumstances billions of years long transpired in such a way as to allow the origin of our species.... And this unintended state of nature makes a humble bee pollinating a flower, a sunrise, the division of a cell, the jagged outline of a mountain in twilight, the petrified record of the dinosaurs, and everything else in existence all the more spectacular. ... None of that was ordained to exist, and yet evolution and other ongoing natural processes have nonetheless generated phenomena which are not only beautiful, but comprehensible to us. There is no need for the supernatural to invoke or appreciate wonder.”

This scientist is in love with the idea of evolution and thinks it’s BEAUTIFUL... an ELEGANT description of how everything came to be

This is nothing less than “gratifying the cravings of the sinful mind” that Paul is describing in verse 3!

So also a successful Corporate Raider can secretly chuckle at the clever scheme that enabled him to take over a multi-national conglomerate and sell it off piece by piece, making him over a billion dollars... he is in LOVE with the CLEVERNESS of it

- d. This is the nature of the LUSTS of the FLESH... the internal drive of pride and arrogance and GODLESSNESS... and of SELF-WORSHIP

D. Paul Specifically Mentions “The WILL of the Flesh”

1. People claim to be following their “free will”
2. But actually, they are free to follow the lusts of their hearts
3. They will always CHOOSE what they LOVE and AVOID what they HATE
4. That is how the “will of the flesh” works

E. Paul’s Summary in Romans 3

Romans 3:10-18 "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have

*together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." ¹³
 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of
 vipers is on their lips." ¹⁴ "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." ¹⁵
 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ ruin and misery mark their ways, ¹⁷ and
 the way of peace they do not know." ¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their
 eyes."*

III. We Were All By Nature Children of Wrath

A. Universal Enslavement

Ephesians 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

1. Both Romans 3 and Ephesians 2 teach the same doctrine: UNIVERSAL ENSLAVEMENT to DEPRAVITY
2. This is true of ALL OF US... Paul includes himself in this
3. Paul, the law-abiding, self-righteous Pharisee, the one who was advancing in Judaism beyond anyone else of his time, was also a slave of Satan and of the flesh... just as much a part of the world's evil system as the worst pagan idolater and fornicator on earth
4. We were all pandering to our lusts: Paul's lust was power and pride and the accolades of the religious authorities... and probably some lust for material prosperity mixed in, since all of those corrupt religionists were WEALTHY
5. Paul was ALL OF US... and LIKE THE REST... no one is an exception!!

B. By Nature Children of Wrath

1. This dire circumstance is horrible
2. Because of the corruption of our lives, because of our sins and transgressions, because of the lusts of our flesh and the way we were following the ways of this world, we were BY NATURE CHILDREN OF WRATH
3. "By nature" = this goes to the core of our being; to the very root of our personhood; everything about us ATTRACTED WRATH from God
4. Like we were BEGGING for God to strike us dead and send us to hell
5. "Children of wrath" means that we embodied everything that God hates and would like to punish with His wrath

6. Our thoughts provoked Him; our choices were repulsive to Him; our very existence corrupted the universe
7. We lived under the wrath of God daily
8. We were storing up wrath with every sinful action and inclination of our corrupt hearts

Romans 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

9. So we see the incredible PATIENCE of God in not killing us and condemning us while we were as yet unconverted

C. The Terrifying Wrath to Come

Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Jonathan Edwards, in the most famous sermon in American church history, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" talked about the terror of the wrath to come:

So, Rev. 19:15, we read of "*the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*" The words are exceeding terrible. If it had only been said, "*the wrath of God,*" the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful: but it is "*the fierceness and wrath of God.*" The fury of God! the fierceness of Jehovah! Oh, how dreadful that must be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is also "*the fierceness and wrath of **almighty** God.*" As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted...

This is what situation we WERE in... we were BY NATURE CHILDREN of wrath

IV. Next Week: "But God..."

Ephesians 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.

A. Where Man Ends in Desperation, God Works in Redemption

1. Ephesians 2:1-3 brings us to the limits of human experience
2. It shows us how weak and dead and incapable we were; how completely helpless we were to rescue ourselves
3. It shows us how great is the grace and mercy and kindness God has shown us in Christ

B. I Have to Proclaim the Good News... However Briefly

1. "But God..." stepped in and changed everything
2. "But God..." willed to save us and not to condemn us
3. "But God..." sent Christ for us, who took our punishment, our wrath, our death as our substitute
4. "But God..." motivated by the great love with which He loved us
5. "But God..." refused to give us up to our wickedness and sins
6. "But God..." RAISED Christ from the dead physically and has now raised us from the dead spiritually!!!

C. The Main Idea: Our Spiritual Resurrection by the Power of God

1. God made us alive in Christ!! (vs. 5-6)
2. God has lavished grace on us in Christ!!
3. God has expressed His incredible kindness to us in Christ!!
4. God will show it to us for all eternity!

V. Applications

A. Behold the Stunning Level of God's Grace to Us

1. Marvel at the astonishing depravity of our former nature
2. Marvel at how corrupt we were; how much we were enslaved to our passions, how much we followed the ways of this world; how weak we were to resist the corruptions of our present age
3. Marvel at how powerful was the devil over us; how "the god of this age" had so powerfully and completely blinded our eyes to the goodness of Christ and the glory of God; marvel at how much Satan had blinded us to our grave danger, how much the wrath of God threatened us

4. Marvel at how the flesh dominated our former lives; how alluring were its enticements, and how much the flesh was pulling us to hell
5. Marvel at how HELPLESS we were... how we were DEAD in our transgressions and sins even while we lived
6. How powerless we were to raise ourselves from the dead spiritually
7. How our spiritual eyes were blind: our pupils were “fixed and dilated” in our sins; we could not see the glory of Christ; we could not see the majestic glory of God
8. Marvel at your own SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION by the power of the Holy Spirit when at last you heard and believed the gospel of Jesus Christ
9. As Charles Wesley described his own conversion:

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
 Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
 Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

10. TO GOD BE THE GLORY for all of this!

B. See Non-Christians in this Light

1. These verses are perhaps the clearest in the Bible for describing the true spiritual condition of your unsaved friends and relatives
2. Do not hate them; see them in the light of the truth that what they are now you once were yourself
3. Let your heart be moved with compassion for the lost: they are willingly enslaved to the world, the devil and the flesh
4. Don't hate them... remember that you were JUST LIKE THEM
5. That includes ISIS murderers, and gay-rights activists, and rabid racists, and abortionists and staunch atheists and anarchists and even moral people who never go to church; it includes Muslim jihadists, Hindu priests, Buddhist mystics, fanatical Communist party members, inner-city gang-bangers and Hell's Angels; it includes anti-Christian Duke officials who make evangelism very difficult on the campus... it includes EVERYONE outside of the Kingdom of God

6. Look on them in the light of this passage and pray for God to raise them from the dead spiritually JUST AS HE DID FOR YOU!!

C. Understand How Evangelism and Missions is an Act of Sovereign Power

1. Despite C.S. Lovett's training booklet, soul-winning will never be made EASY
2. We are not able to go out and raise anyone from the dead spiritually!
3. This is something only Almighty God can do!
4. We are looking for a supernatural action of God when we proclaim the true gospel of Jesus Christ
5. This should both HUMBLE us and ENCOURAGE us in evangelism and missions
6. There are no easy conversions from a human point of view; every single one of them is a miracle of spiritual resurrection!
7. AND there are no difficult conversions from God's point of view! How could one corpse be more or less difficult to resurrect??
8. So, let us go forth in this community and even to the ends of the earth to see

D. This is the Essence of Your Ongoing Struggle with Sin

1. These same enemies still oppose us: the world's alluring system, the devil with all his clever temptations, and the flesh with its relentless passions and lusts and needs
2. This is exactly what the indwelling Holy Spirit is empowering us to fight in our drive for holiness

The World:

1 John 2:15-16 Do not love the world or the things that belong to the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. Because everything that belongs to the world-- ¹⁶ the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's lifestyle-- is not from the Father, but is from the world.

The Devil:

Ephesians 6:11-13 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

The Flesh:

Galatians 5:17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

E. To the Lost Among Us: Come to Christ!!!

1. God is able to raise anyone from the dead any time He chooses
2. He does so by the clear proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ
3. God has laid bare your true condition this morning... all non-Christians are dead in sin even while they live; they are enslaved to lusts and passions; they follow the ways of this world and of Satan, the invisible ruler of this age
4. God has also told you He is able to raise spiritually dead people to life by the power of Jesus Christ
5. TRUST IN HIM! Flee to Him!! Flee the wrath to come!!
6. God will make you an adopted child of God... so flee