

Sermon Title: Before

Sermon Series: Ephesians: Who We Are

Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-3

Speaker: Pastor Mike Barnhart



Predominant mindset in our world today: Life Transformation

Self-Transformation vs. Christ's Transformation

Self-Transformation - changing your own life, by your own means & efforts.

Christ's Transformation endures.

Ephesians 2:1–10 ESV

1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 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. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

“you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked...” = The Biblical doctrine of Total Depravity

Depravity - a corrupt nature inherent in humanity ever since the sin of Adam.

“We are not individuals in isolation. We are part of a collective whole, rather like slices of a gigantic pizza. In the Old Testament, people were seen in connection with their ancestors from the past and their tribal connections in the present; you were A the son of B the son of C of the tribe of N. Hence, when Achan sinned, all Israel sinned (Joshua 7:11, 20). Likewise, the actions of the one man Adam directly affected the man (Romans 5:12-21).”

—Robert Letham

“By this sin they [our first parents] fell from their original righteousness and fellowship with God, and so became dead in sin and completely polluted in all their faculties and parts of body and soul. Since Adam and Eve are the root of all mankind, the guilt for this sin has been imputed to all human beings, who are their natural descendants and have inherited the same death in sin and the same corrupt nature.”

—Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.2 & 6.3

“This original corruption completely disinclines, incapacitates, and turns us away from every good, while it completely inclines us to every evil.”

—Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.4

“the entire absence of holiness, not the highest intensity of sin.”

—William Shedd, Dogmatic Theology

Genesis 6:5 ESV

5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Romans 1:18–25 ESV

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Romans 3:23 ESV

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

We're blind to the gospel (2 Cor. 4:1-6).

2 Corinthians 4:4 ESV

4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

We're enemies of God

Romans 8:7 ESV

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

We're deceitful

Jeremiah 17:9 ESV

9 The heart is deceitful above all things,
and desperately sick;
who can understand it?

Ephesians 2:1–3 ESV

1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we

all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

“in which you once walked”

“Dead”...this is who you were.

“Alive”...this is who you are.

1. Life BEFORE Christ.

2. Life CHANGED by Christ’s Transforming Work

3. Life AFTER Christ’s work.

Influences on our lives before Christ:

1. The _____

What is it that we celebrate as a society?

There may be a difference between a person committing sin against God vs. celebrating sin against God.

1 Corinthians 6:9–10 ESV

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

We live in a culture, which is corrupt.

The fruit of this culture is skepticism.

Skepticism isn't from God. It's rooted in a lack of faith & trust.

2. The _____

Ephesians 2:2

you were “following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience...”

Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology – Insightful chapter about Satan and demons.

3. The _____

Ephesians 2:3 ESV

3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Galatians 5:1 ESV

1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Children of wrath – A person who isn't transformed by the grace of Christ – by believing in Him – is condemned to Hell.

“Hell will be a particular place, where those will be who are condemned to Hell or to the eternal wrath of God...no doubt it now is, and will be, far worse than anyone is able to describe, picture, or think it to be.”

—Martin Luther

Scriptures about Hell:

Psalm 1:6

Psalm 2:12

Psalm 9:5-6

Psalm 92:7-8

“The wicked in Hell shall be always dying but never dead. The smoke of the furnace ascends forever and ever.”

—Thomas Watson

Jesus taught about Hell:

- He teaches at the Sermon on the Mount that Hell should be avoided at all costs.
- Jesus regularly refers to Hell as a real place of fire, where those who do not believe go (John 15:6).
- Actually Jesus refers to Hell as a furnace of fire.
- It's the destination of false teachers, the devil, and demons (Matthew 7:19; 25:41).
- Jesus teaches that Hell is a place of excruciating agony (Luke 16:23-24).
- It's a place of haunting memories (Luke 16:25).
- It's inescapable.

Hell is our destination before Christ's Transformation in our lives.

Ephesians 2:4–7 ESV

4 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.

Will you trust Jesus to receive eternal life in Christ alone?

Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. Pray.
2. What was your life like before knowing Christ?
3. How would you describe the difference between self-transformation and Christ's transformation?
4. Read Ephesians 2:1-3 (read Ephesians 2:1-10 for greater context).

Ephesians 2:1–10 ESV

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5. Why did Paul use such resolute and vivid language?

6. After listening to the sermon, what does it mean for you to be totally depraved?

7. Which aspect of the fall—the world, the devil, or the flesh—influenced your life most before trusting Christ? Which aspect tempts you the most currently?

8. What does it mean to be “children of wrath”?

9. Why is it important to gain understanding about Hell?

10. Have you surrendered your life to Jesus? If so, why? If not, what is keeping you from doing so?

11. In what ways does remembering who you were before knowing Christ help you face life more confidently now?

12. Pray.