



Almont Vineyard Church

Week 8 Sermon Series: The Sandals of Jesus/ Alive in Christ Pt 3

July 25, 2026

Opening Monologue

Welcome to the AVC App!

Whether you've been walking with us for years or you're joining us for the very first time, we're truly glad you're here.

You've landed in the Sermon Section — your go-to place for thoughtful commentary, spiritual reflections, discussion questions, and more. Everything here is designed to help you press deeper into Sunday's message and apply God's Word to your everyday life with Christ. As you read and reflect, we pray the Holy Spirit illuminates fresh truth and strengthens you for the journey ahead.

We're now in Week 8 of our series "The Sandals of Jesus," and we're still in our extended focus on what it means to be **Alive in Christ**. The Holy Spirit made it clear we weren't done yet, so here we are in Part 3.

If you missed the live message, here's the link <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

To Listen to this week's Sermon: "Week 8 Summer Series: The Sandals of Jesus/ Alive in Christ Pt 3" Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

Last week we learned from Ephesians 1:19 that we have been given **Dunamis** power — that's the Greek word for dynamite power — living inside of us. And Romans 8:11 tells us it's the very same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Christians, that power is alive in you right now.

But here's the real deal: You can have all the dynamite in the world, but if you never use it, what good is it doing? There is action required on our part.

Jesus didn't just say a bunch of religious things and then head back to heaven. He demonstrated the power of God in real life — and He empowered His disciples with the Holy Spirit to do the same. They didn't just talk about the power; they walked in it.

Look, we can't just sit back and get smashed in the face by the storms of life. And we know where those storms come from- Satan! I don't know about you, but I'm not going to stand by and let the enemy ransack my house, my soul, or my mind. No — I'm going to fight with the Holy Spirit power Christ has given me.

Unfortunately, for a large majority of Christians in America, that power is lying stagnant or not being used at all. Some even deny the power of God altogether. What a shame!

This week we're going to keep it real and raw about being Alive in Christ. We're going to look at the raging storm that Jesus calmed in Mark 4 and what that means for the storms we're facing. Then we're going to dive deeper into Ephesians chapter 2 and pull out some powerful truth nuggets that remind us where we came from and where we're supposed to be heading as followers of Jesus.

So let's go, church...

We are Alive in Christ.

Let's start acting like it. Let's start living like it.

Join us Sunday to be encouraging and equip by God's word!

In Christ,

Rev. Pastor Brad

Key Sermon Text

Ephesians 1:19

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%201%3A19&version=NIV>

Romans 8:11

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%208%3A11&version=NIV>

Mark 4: 35-41

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%204%3A%2035-41&version=NIV>

Mark 11:23-24

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2011%3A23-24&version=NIV>

Ephesians 2:1-5

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%202%3A1-5&version=NIV>

Ephesians 2:6-10

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%202%3A6-10&version=NIV>

Spiritual Reflections & Commentary

Won't You Use God's Gift?

Over the last several weeks in this "Alive in Christ" series, we have talked about many powerful truths the Lord reminds us of in His holy Word. We have been chosen and predestined, sealed with the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our salvation. We have been forgiven and given new life in Christ. We covered these glorious realities in great detail in Parts One and Two.

We can proclaim that we are alive in Christ. We can quote Scripture and declare all these truths... but are we living it out?

When we read the Gospel accounts, did Jesus simply come from heaven to earth, say a bunch of fancy religious things, and then return to heaven? No. Jesus lived out and walked in the power of the Holy Spirit. After the Temptation in Luke 4, following that holy season of fasting and prayer, He came out empowered — and then He demonstrated that power everywhere He went.

Luke 4:14

"Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through the whole countryside."

Guess what? He promised His followers and disciples that He would give them the same dunamis power. You can read about this promise at the Last Supper in John 14-16. And then you turn to the book of Acts and see the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The outpouring in Acts 2 was an all-inclusive outpouring. In the last days God says,

Acts 2:17-21

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.

Even on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.

I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Did you catch that? Sons *and* daughters. Young men *and* old men. Both men *and* women. Servants. No limitations. God shows no favoritism in who gets empowered.

When you read the book of Acts — the record of the early church — you see ordinary believers walking in power and authority. They prayed with power. They preached with power. They loved with power. They did the very things Jesus did. That is what *dunamis* power does.

Dunamis is not just raw force or potential energy. It is inherent, active, miracle-working strength that accomplishes God’s purposes. It is the dynamite power of the Holy Spirit living inside every believer.

Jesus did not leave us helpless and hopeless in this world. We have His Word. We have Jesus Christ. And we have the Holy Spirit — the very power of God — living inside us.

Consider just a few of the many examples where that power worked mightily through the disciples:

- In **Acts 3**, Peter spoke to the man lame from birth: “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” The man jumped up and walked.
- In **Acts 8**, Philip proclaimed Christ in Samaria and evil spirits came out with shrieks while the paralyzed and lame were healed.
- In **Acts 16**, Paul was being attacked and harassed by a spirit working through a slave girl. After days of it, he turned and commanded: “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” — and at that very moment the spirit left her.
- In **Acts 19**, God did extraordinary miracles through Paul so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him brought healing and deliverance.

The same resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you (Romans 8:11). The same *dunamis* that turned the world upside down in the book of Acts is available to you today.

Reality is, Satan and this world will push you around and bully you and your family. Storms will come — literal and figurative. Are you just going to sit back and take it? Are you just going to go through the motions and play the blues?

We have a choice to fight back — not with our own strength, but with the divine power the Lord has given us.

Jesus said:

Mark 11:23-24

“Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

There is power in praying and declaring God’s Word in faith. We must pray in the Spirit and speak to the storms coming at us or on us.

The church in Ephesus faced harassment, mockery, and intense spiritual pressure from pagan rituals and culture. Yet Paul reminded them they were no longer dead in their sins and following the ruler of the kingdom of the air. Instead,

Ephesians 2:4-6, 10

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions... And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus... For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Church, there is action required on our part.

Jesus didn’t just talk about power — He demonstrated it. The disciples didn’t just talk about it — they walked in it. Paul reminds us of the old self and the new person we are in Christ. We are no longer victims of the enemy’s bullying. We have been given *dunamis* power to stand, to speak, to pray with authority, and to live the abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10).

Living empowered lives means more than believing the right things. It means:

- Walking daily in dependence on the Holy Spirit
- Praying and declaring God's Word with faith and authority
- Using the name of Jesus against the attacks and storms that come
- Overcoming strongholds and fear by the Spirit's power, not willpower alone
- Keeping our spiritual fire hot and fervent (Romans 12:11)
- Refusing to drift like the prodigal but running back to the Father's embrace and walking in the new life He has given us

The question the Lord is asking His church right now is this: **Won't you use God's gift?**

The Holy Spirit is not just a doctrine to affirm. He is a Person to walk with and a Power to live by. The gift has already been given. The dunamis is already inside you.

So don't just talk about being alive in Christ.

Live it. Walk in it. Use the gift.

Declare it out loud into this atmosphere or in your mind: **I AM Alive in Christ!**

The outpouring is for you. The power is for you. The promise is for you and your children and all whom the Lord our God will call.

Won't you use God's gift?

Let's go live it out.

Citations / References: 1-2 (1) Rev. Brad Standfest, (2) Logos Bible Commentaries

Come Holy Spirit

The early followers of Christ wielded the Holy Spirit's power through bold proclamation, supernatural guidance, and transformed character. Jesus promised His disciples they would "receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This was not a promise of mere influence or emotional experience — it was the promise of dunamis, dynamic, miracle-working power from God Himself.

This power manifested in multiple ways throughout the book of Acts. On the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit filled the believers gathered in Jerusalem, they began speaking in other languages "as the Spirit enabled them" (Acts 2:1–4). The Holy Spirit supernaturally equipped them to proclaim the gospel in the native tongues of people from every nation, breaking through language barriers so the message of Christ could be understood immediately.

When Peter and John were arrested and then released, the church prayed, and "all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (Acts 4:31). The same Spirit who had filled Peter earlier enabled him to stand before the religious authorities with courage and clarity, as Scripture records that Peter was "filled with the Holy Spirit" when he addressed them (Acts 4:8). The Holy Spirit gave supernatural boldness and prophetic insight in the face of opposition.

Paul exercised similar spiritual authority. While ministering in Cyprus, he was "filled with the Holy Spirit" when he confronted a sorcerer who was opposing the gospel. He spoke a word of judgment, and the man was struck blind (Acts 13:9–11). The Spirit empowered Paul to exercise divine authority over demonic interference.

The Holy Spirit also provided strategic guidance and direction for the mission. During a time of worship and fasting in Antioch, the Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2). The Spirit initiated and directed missionary strategy. Later, the Spirit prevented Paul from preaching in Asia and redirected him toward Macedonia through a vision (Acts 16:6–7). In the account of Cornelius, the Spirit spoke directly to Peter, instructing him about visitors who had arrived and commanding him to go with them without hesitation (Acts 10:19; 11:12).

The Holy Spirit gave both supernatural revelation and practical direction for the advance of the gospel.

Beyond proclamation and guidance, the Spirit empowered signs, wonders, and deliverance. In Jerusalem, “many signs and wonders” were performed among the people through the apostles, and the sick were healed while evil spirits came out of many (Acts 5:12–16). Stephen, full of the Spirit, spoke with such wisdom and power that his opponents “could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke” (Acts 6:10). The Holy Spirit enabled effective witness, supernatural healings, and spiritual victory over darkness.

The New Testament epistles expand on this reality and teach believers how to live empowered by the Spirit in everyday life. The Spirit’s work does not end at conversion. As Paul taught the Galatians, after we begin with the Spirit, we must continue the process by the Spirit (Galatians 3:3). Living the victorious Christian life requires ongoing dependence on the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Paul commands believers in Rome to live according to the Spirit rather than the flesh. The Spirit gives life to our mortal bodies, helps us put to death the misdeeds of the body, and leads us as true children of God (Romans 8:4–6, 13–14). When we do not know what to pray, “the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans” (Romans 8:26). The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in us and empowers us to overcome sin and walk in newness of life.

In Galatians, Paul contrasts living by the flesh with walking by the Spirit. He writes, “Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). Those who are led by the Spirit are not under the law (Galatians 5:18). The evidence of this empowered life is the fruit the Spirit produces: “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22–23). The Spirit transforms character from the inside out.

Paul also urges the Ephesians to “be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18) — an ongoing, continual experience rather than a one-time event. This filling produces worship, gratitude, and mutual submission in the body of Christ. In spiritual warfare, believers are told to “take... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). The weapons we fight with “have divine power to demolish strongholds” that set themselves up against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:4). The Spirit supplies both the weapon and the power to use it effectively.

Other passages reinforce this theme of Spirit-empowered living. Paul told Timothy that God has given us “a spirit of power, love and sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). In Corinth, Paul reminded the believers that his message came “with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power” so that their faith might rest on God’s power rather than human wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:4–5). The Spirit also distributes gifts “for the common good” of the church (1 Corinthians 12:7), equipping every believer to serve and build up the body.

How can everyday, ordinary Christians stay in tune with the Holy Spirit and walk in His power today?

Getting in tune with the Spirit involves intentional practices that align your mind, heart, and actions with God’s direction. The foundation is realigning your thinking and body with God’s will through the Holy Spirit’s teaching, leading, and empowering work in your life.

Start with Scripture and prayer. When reading the Bible, invite the Holy Spirit to reveal both spiritual truths and practical life applications, since the Spirit illuminates realities we’re often too blind to perceive. You can strengthen your ability to hear God by spending time in His Word, worship, and meditation. Before you open your Bible or begin your day, simply pray, “Holy Spirit, teach me and show me how to live this today.”

Develop spiritual receptivity. The Holy Spirit enhances your intuition as the fountain of wisdom and understanding, offering God’s perspective on life decisions when you “walk in the Spirit.” This requires intentionally tuning into the Spirit’s guidance and strengthening this ability through regular

practice and attentiveness to His warnings. As you go through your day, pause and ask, “Lord, what are You saying here?” The more you practice listening, the more sensitive you become to His gentle leading.

Monitor your thoughts continuously. Acknowledge God in all your ways by directing your mind to the Spirit at the beginning of each day and activity, regularly reminding yourself to listen, depend on, and obey Him. Deliberately turn your attention to the Lord and monitor your thoughts as you go, making course corrections when you drift toward fleshly attitudes like judgment, anger, or selfishness. When you notice your mind heading in the wrong direction, stop and say, “Holy Spirit, realign my thoughts with Yours.”

Surrender yourself as an instrument. The Spirit can use believers to accomplish His work when they give themselves into His hands to be transformed into willing instruments of His purpose. Maintain consistent obedience to biblical teaching without growing weary in doing good. This practical, daily alignment—not merely intellectual understanding—positions you to experience the Spirit’s transforming power. Each morning you can pray a simple surrender: “Holy Spirit, I give You my day, my attitudes, my words, and my actions. Use me as Your instrument.”

The same Holy Spirit who came upon the early church is still at work today. He empowers us to proclaim Christ boldly, to receive divine guidance, to live with transformed character, to overcome the flesh and the enemy, and to walk in the abundant life Jesus promised. The invitation remains the same: Come, Holy Spirit — and teach us to walk in step with You every single day.

Sources 3-8

The Fruit of the Spirit

One of the most beautiful and practical teachings in the New Testament about living empowered by the Holy Spirit is found in Galatians 5:22-23. Paul writes:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

Notice that Paul says “**the fruit**” (singular), not “fruits.” This is important. The Holy Spirit produces one unified fruit in the life of a believer — a Christlike character — that shows itself in these nine qualities. It is not nine separate fruits we try to manufacture on our own. It is the natural result of walking in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).

This stands in sharp contrast to the “acts of the flesh” listed just a few verses earlier (Galatians 5:19-21) — things like sexual immorality, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, and the like. Those are the natural outcomes of living according to our old sinful nature. But when we walk by the Spirit, the Spirit produces something entirely different and beautiful in us.

Here is a brief look at each aspect of the fruit and what the Holy Spirit enables in us:

- **Love** — This is *agape* love: selfless, sacrificial love that seeks the good of others even when it is undeserved. The Spirit empowers us to love people who are difficult, to forgive, and to serve without expecting anything in return (see also 1 Corinthians 13 and John 13:34-35).
- **Joy** — Not the same as happiness, which depends on circumstances. This is deep, Spirit-given joy that remains even in trials. It comes from knowing we are loved by God and secure in Christ (see also Philippians 4:4 and 1 Peter 1:8).
- **Peace** — Both peace *with* God (reconciliation through Christ) and the peace *of* God that guards our hearts and minds. The Spirit calms anxiety and brings supernatural peace in the middle of storms (see also John 14:27 and Philippians 4:6-7).
- **Forbearance (Patience / Longsuffering)** — The ability to endure difficult people and circumstances without lashing out. The Spirit gives us the strength to wait on God’s timing and to respond with grace instead of irritation (see also Ephesians 4:2 and Colossians 3:12-13).
- **Kindness** — Tender, compassionate action toward others. The Spirit softens our hearts so we treat people with genuine care and generosity (see also Ephesians 4:32).

- **Goodness** — Moral integrity and doing what is right, even when no one is watching. The Spirit produces a desire to do good and to be a blessing (see also Romans 12:21).
- **Faithfulness** — Reliability, loyalty, and trustworthiness. The Spirit makes us people others can count on — faithful to God, to our word, and to our relationships (see also 1 Corinthians 4:2 and Proverbs 3:3).
- **Gentleness (Meekness)** — Strength under control. Not weakness, but power that is restrained and used for good. The Spirit helps us respond with humility instead of force or pride (see also Matthew 11:29 and 1 Peter 3:15).
- **Self-control** — Mastery over our desires, emotions, words, and actions. The Spirit gives us the power to say “no” to sin and “yes” to what honors God (see also 2 Timothy 1:7 and Titus 2:11-12).

This fruit is not produced by trying harder in our own strength. It grows as we **abide in Christ** (John 15:4-5), **walk by the Spirit** (Galatians 5:16), and **keep in step with the Spirit** (Galatians 5:25). It is evidence that we are truly alive in Christ and being transformed by His power from the inside out.

In daily life, the fruit of the Spirit shows up in very practical ways:

- Choosing to speak kindly to a difficult family member instead of reacting in anger.
- Maintaining joy and trust in God even when facing financial pressure or health issues.
- Responding with patience and gentleness when someone cuts you off in traffic or criticizes you.
- Staying faithful to your commitments even when it costs you something.
- Exercising self-control with your words, your screen time, your spending, or your appetites.

The more we surrender to the Holy Spirit — through Scripture, prayer, worship, and daily obedience — the more this beautiful fruit grows in us. It is one of the clearest signs that we are not just *talking* about being alive in Christ... we are actually *living* it.

Sources 9-11

Main Scripture Commentary

Power in our words

Proverbs 18:21, Mark 11:23-24, Acts 16

The Power of Our Words: Life, Death, and Kingdom Authority Through the Spirit

Throughout Scripture we encounter a truth both ancient and urgently relevant: our words carry real and lasting power. They can nourish or poison, build up or tear down, release life or contribute to death. This is not a technique of self-help or positive confession. It is a biblical reality that begins in the wisdom literature of Israel, reaches its highest expression in the ministry of Jesus, and continues through the apostles in the power of the Holy Spirit. As we explore what Solomon, Jesus, and Paul reveal about the tongue, we discover that every word we speak either aligns with the life-giving purposes of God or works against them. And the true source of words that bring life, move mountains, and overcome darkness is always the Holy Spirit.

Solomon’s Wisdom: The Tongue That Brings Life or Death

King Solomon, gifted by God with unparalleled wisdom, addresses the power of speech with striking clarity in Proverbs 18:21: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” This proverb does not stand alone. It builds directly upon the previous verse, which returns to the theme of speech and its consequences. As Paul Koptak explains in the NIV Application Commentary, the saying in 18:20 might be paraphrased, “We’d better be able to stomach what we say.” The imagery of fruit and harvest, combined with the Hebrew word *beṭen* for stomach, links this teaching to an earlier proverb in 18:8 about “eating words.” The point is sobering: the quality of the fruit we ultimately consume depends entirely on what comes out of our mouths. Other passages in

Proverbs confirm this principle—1:31, 12:14, and 13:2 all show that people will, in the end, “eat their own words.”

Solomon intensifies the stakes in verse 21. David Guzik notes that the previous proverb spoke of speech providing for one’s stomach; here the idea expands dramatically. The tongue possesses not only the power of provision but the power of life and death itself. The ancient Jewish Midrash Tehillim captures the destructive reach of evil speech: “The evil tongue slays three: the slanderer, the slandered, and the listener.” Malicious words do not stop with their target. They corrupt the one who speaks them, damage the one about whom they are spoken, and poison everyone who hears and perhaps repeats them. John Trapp observed that Solomon deliberately varies his language throughout Proverbs—sometimes speaking of the mouth, sometimes the lips, sometimes the tongue—to show that every instrument or means of speech will receive its proper and just reward.

What does it mean, then, to “love” the tongue? Koptak helps us see that the one who loves the tongue understands its immense power and chooses to use it for good. The ambiguity left in verse 20—whether the fruit will be good or bad—is resolved in verse 21. The fruit mentioned in both verses is good fruit, produced by the person who has learned to wield words wisely. In God’s design, speech is never neutral. It either brings life that nourishes others or death that destroys. Those who grasp this reality and steward their words accordingly will “eat its fruit”—the pleasant, life-giving consequences of wise and effective speech. This is the foundational wisdom Solomon offers the people of God: guard your tongue, for death and life hang in the balance.

Jesus: The Word Made Flesh Who Speaks with Divine Authority

The wisdom of Solomon finds its fulfillment and highest demonstration in Jesus Christ, the eternal Word who became flesh. In Mark 11 we see Jesus exercising the power of His tongue in a way that both warns and instructs. After cursing a barren fig tree—a prophetic sign of judgment upon fruitless religion—Jesus turns to His disciples and says, “Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.”

The Life Application Bible Commentary on Mark explains the setting. Jesus did not immediately explain why He cursed the fig tree, and the disciples were surprised. Yet His words carried a deeper meaning. Despite the coming judgment on spiritual laxity in Israel—culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70—the disciples would remain safe if their faith rested in God alone. Their confidence was not to be placed in a political kingdom they hoped Jesus would establish, nor in strict obedience to Jewish law, nor even in their privileged position as His disciples. Faith must rest in God and God alone.

Jesus then uses the withered fig tree to teach a profound lesson about prayer and the power of spoken words. He was showing that God can help in any situation, no matter how impossible it seems. The “mountain” He mentions is likely the Mount of Olives on which they stood; the “sea” is the Dead Sea, visible in the distance. This was not an invitation to arbitrary wish-fulfillment or to move literal mountains for personal spectacle. Jesus was describing the kind of persistent, faith-filled prayer His followers would need in the face of “mountains of opposition” to the gospel in the years ahead. Such prayers for the advancement of God’s kingdom would always be answered positively—in God’s perfect timing.

C.S. Lewis captures the deeper mystery at work: “Prayers are not always granted—in the crude factual sense of the word—‘granted.’ This is not because prayer is a weaker kind of causality, but because it is a stronger kind. When it ‘works’ at all, it works unlimited by space and time. That is why God has retained a discretionary power of granting or refusing it; except on that condition prayer would destroy us.” Prayer aligned with God’s kingdom is not a weaker force but a stronger one precisely because God remains sovereign.

The commentary is careful to list the conditions that must accompany this kind of effective prayer:

- You must be a believer.
- You must not be holding a grudge against another person.
- You must not pray with selfish motives.

- Your request must be for the good of God's kingdom.
- Your request must be in line with God's will and accepting of whatever that will might be.

To pray effectively, faith must be placed in God Himself, not in the object of the request. If we focus only on what we want, we will be left with nothing if the request is refused. Helmut Thielicke warns against a false form of religion in which a person refuses to give himself and instead lets himself be represented by sacrifices or merits. Instead of being reconciled with his brother, he omits the hard work of self-giving and simply brings a gift to the altar. Jesus modeled the opposite in Gethsemane: "Everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." Our prayers may express our desires, but they must ultimately desire God's will above our own. The commentary asks the searching question: "Check to see if your prayers truly focus on God's interests, not yours."

In all of this, Jesus demonstrates that words spoken in faith and aligned with the Father's will carry divine authority. He is the perfect example of what Solomon described—the tongue that brings life because it is fully surrendered to God.

Paul: Authority in the Name of Jesus Against the Powers of Darkness

The same authority Jesus exercised was delegated to His apostles through the Holy Spirit, and we see it clearly in the ministry of Paul. In Acts 16, Luke gives us a firsthand account of events in Philippi, a Roman colony. While going to the place of prayer by the river, Paul and his companions encountered a demon-possessed slave girl who made her masters rich through fortune-telling. Fortune-telling was common in Greek and Roman culture, and this girl's evil spirit enabled her to interpret signs and predict the future for profit.

For many days she followed the missionaries, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." What she said was true, yet the source was demonic. Paul became troubled—not because the statement was false, but because accepting it would have linked the gospel with demon-related activities and the prophecy-for-profit scheme her owners had created. Such an association would have damaged the message of Christ.

Finally, "Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, 'In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!' At that moment the spirit left her." The Life Application Bible Commentary on Acts highlights Paul's Christlike response. The girl was annoying and disruptive, yet Paul resisted the urge to react in anger or frustration. Instead, he relied on the power of Christ to do something that would both glorify God and bring genuine help to the oppressed woman. This is a model for how believers should respond in vexing situations: wait on God for clear leading rather than acting in the flesh.

The owners of the slave girl were furious—not because the girl had been delivered from demonic oppression, but because "their hope of making money was gone." They seized Paul and Silas, dragged them into the marketplace, and brought them before the magistrates with the charge that these Jews were throwing the city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for Romans. The real issue was economic loss, yet it was masked as concern for Roman law and order. In a Roman colony, anti-Semitic prejudice could easily be stirred, and laws against foreign religions proselytizing citizens provided convenient cover.

The commentary calls this "Hit in the Wallet." When people care more about their own economic well-being than the glory of God and the salvation of lost souls, it is a clear sign of idolatry, greed, and worldliness. The gospel had struck at the heart of their exploitative business, and they responded with rage. Bishop Cyprian's ancient words still diagnose the human heart: "Their property held them in chains which shackled their courage and choked their faith and hampered their judgment and throttled their souls. If they had stored up their treasure in heaven, they would not be enslaved as they are to their own property. They are not the master of their money, but its slaves."

Despite the opposition, the gospel continued to spread powerfully. Paul's command in the name of Jesus demonstrated delegated authority over demonic forces—an authority given by Christ and exercised through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Common Source: All True Power Comes Through the Holy Spirit

When we step back and view these three biblical witnesses together, a single thread runs through them all. The power of the tongue that Solomon described, the mountain-moving authority Jesus exercised, and the command over darkness that Paul demonstrated do not originate in human wisdom, eloquence, or strength. They flow from the Holy Spirit.

Solomon's proverbs were inspired by the Spirit of God. Jesus was anointed with the Spirit without measure and spoke only what He heard from the Father. Paul and the early church were filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and thereafter, enabling them to speak with boldness, perform signs and wonders, and advance the gospel in the face of fierce opposition. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead now dwells in every believer, empowering us to speak words of life, to pray with kingdom-focused faith, and to exercise the authority of Jesus' name against every work of darkness. This is not a power we generate or manipulate. It is a power we receive as we remain filled with the Spirit, aligned with God's Word, and submitted to His will. Words spoken in the flesh—even religious words—still carry consequences, often destructive ones. But words spoken under the anointing of the Holy Spirit carry the very life of God. They can silence the accuser, strengthen the weary, release faith that overcomes obstacles, and command darkness to flee.

As we consider these passages for our own lives and for the life of the church, the invitation is clear. Let us take Solomon's warning seriously and learn to love the tongue by using it for good. Let us follow Jesus' example of faith-filled speech that seeks the Father's interests above our own. Let us walk in the boldness of Paul, who did not react in irritation but acted in the authority of Jesus' name. And let us do all of this in continual dependence upon the Holy Spirit, who alone makes our words effective for the kingdom of God.

May our speech be seasoned with grace. May our prayers move the mountains that stand against the gospel. May our declarations in the name of Jesus bring deliverance and life. For death and life are in the power of the tongue—but that power reaches its fullest and most redemptive expression when the tongue is surrendered to the Spirit of the living God.

Sources 12-15

Mark 4:35-41

The Power of Jesus' Spoken Words: Calming the Storm and Speaking Faith into the Storms of Life

In Mark 4, we witness one of the most vivid demonstrations of the power of Jesus' words. A furious squall erupts on the Sea of Galilee, waves crash over the boat, and the disciples face real peril. Yet Jesus speaks—and everything changes. His command reveals not only His authority over creation but also the pattern for how we, as His followers, are to face the storms of our own Christian lives. When Jesus speaks, things happen. The same is true when we speak words of faith, trust, and surrender in the midst of our trials.

The Sea of Galilee is a unique and treacherous body of water. Only thirteen miles long and seven miles wide, it plunges to 150 feet deep with its shoreline lying 680 feet below sea level. Surrounded by mountains, it is highly susceptible to sudden, violent storms. Winds sweep across the land, rise over the mountains, and create powerful downdrafts that churn the water into towering twenty-foot waves when combined with thunderstorms forming rapidly over the surrounding peaks. The disciples had not acted foolishly. They usually avoided storms at night and had no warning this one was coming. Even though several were expert fishermen who knew how to handle a boat, they were caught without warning. Their danger was genuine as they battled waves that nearly swamped the vessel.

This setting underscores a profound spiritual truth highlighted by J.I. Packer: "For proof of the truth that following God's guidance brings trouble, look at the life of the Lord Jesus himself. No human life has ever been so completely guided by God, and no human being has ever qualified so comprehensively for the description 'a man of sorrows.'" The Christian life often contains more stormy weather than calm seas. Problems arise in every area of life. The disciples needed rest after a long

day, yet they encountered a terrible storm. As Christ's followers, we must be prepared for the storms that will surely come. We must not surrender to stress but remain resilient, solve problems, recover from setbacks, pray, trust, and move ahead. When a squall approaches, we can praise God and lean into the wind.

Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion—likely the low bench where the steersman sat, resting on a leather cushion. His ability to sleep through the noise, violent rocking, and cold spray reveals both His complete physical exhaustion and His fully human nature. The demands of His earthly ministry had drained Him. Meanwhile, the disciples—tired themselves after sailing at His request—woke Him with words of rebuke and fear: “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” Their question was more criticism than prayer. It is easy for us to complain and accuse God of not caring when we feel overwhelmed, rather than bringing our requests to Him and trusting His answer. Scripture urges us instead to “let [our] requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6) and to “ask [God] for wisdom” (James 1:5).

Despite witnessing many miracles of compassion, the disciples panicked. They completely misunderstood their Teacher. They knew Jesus could perform great acts of power, but they did not yet grasp that He could control the forces of nature itself. Their rude words exposed deep fear and a failure to connect what they had seen with who Jesus truly is.

Then Jesus arose. Without first addressing the disciples, He spoke directly to the elements. Standing in the stern of the rocking ship, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” The Greek words are the same ones He used earlier when commanding demons to be silent (Mark 1:25). They mean “Be calm and remain calm.” Instantly the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Anyone who has experienced a terrifying storm at sea—walls of water tossing a vessel—can imagine the shocking relief of sudden, total stillness. The forces of nature, whether tornado, hurricane, earthquake, or raging waves, terrify us because we are utterly at their mercy. The disciples were stunned by their Teacher’s power to speak and control the ocean itself. They should not have been surprised. The storm was out of control, their fears were out of control, but Jesus was never out of control. He possesses power over all the forces of nature and listens to the appeals of those who love Him.

Turning to the disciples on the now-calm sea, Jesus asked, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” The Greek word for “afraid” here (*deiloi*) means “cowardly fear.” The disciples had acted like cowards when they should have responded with faith in their Teacher. They had seen incredible miracles yet had not carried their knowledge of His power to its logical conclusion. They wanted Him to do something; He wanted them to trust Him. Their rude question—“Don’t you care if we drown?”—received this fitting response. Despite believing Jesus was the Messiah, they had not yet grasped that He was God Himself, possessing God’s power and authority over all creation.

The disciples’ panic stemmed from the storm threatening to destroy them while Jesus seemed unaware and unconcerned. Theirs was a physical storm, but storms come in many forms—situations that cause great anxiety in our lives. The disciples lived with Jesus yet underestimated Him. They did not see that His power applied directly to their own desperate situation. Jesus has been with His people for twenty centuries, yet we, like the disciples, often underestimate His power to handle the crises we face. We cannot claim the same excuse of not knowing enough about Him. Whatever difficulty we encounter, we have two options: we can worry and assume Jesus no longer cares, or we can resist fear and put our trust in Him. When we feel like panicking, we are invited to confess our need for God and then trust that He cares for us.

The disciples were filled with great awe (*phobeo*—reverential fear and wonder) and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” They realized they stood in the presence of God Himself. This was not the cowardly fear of verse 40 but holy awe before divine power. They may have recalled the psalmist’s words: “O Lord God Almighty, who is like you? ... You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them” (Psalm 89:8–9; see also Psalms 104:5–7; 106:9; 107:29). Yet their question still betrayed incomplete understanding. They should have known, for this miracle clearly displayed Jesus’ divine identity. Being with the human,

compassionate Jesus was comfortable; being with the powerful and supernatural Son of God was terrifying.

When Mark recorded this event, persecution against Christians had already begun. The story became an analogy for the trials of the early church. The disciples were surrounded by a sea threatening to sink them; the church was surrounded by enemies threatening to destroy it—first Jewish opposition, then the Roman Empire’s widespread persecution. Having Jesus with us in the boat does not mean we will avoid storms. Our peace and faith come from knowing that Jesus has power over all storms, whatever their source or strength. He can quiet them if He chooses. Often the early Christians hoped Jesus would immediately quiet the storm of persecution, but He did not. They were compelled instead to rely on faith in their Savior and the eternal rest promised to them.

When we become Christians, we enter a cosmic struggle. Satan hates people believing in Jesus and launches his limited power against believers individually and the church collectively, hoping to sink us. Yet we have the ultimate power on our side, and final victory is assured. Jesus should no longer be a mystery causing us to ask fearfully, “Who then is this?” He is our Savior, to whom we turn with all our needs and fears, knowing that He cares and will help.

When caught in the storms of life, it is easy to imagine that God has lost control and we are at the mercy of fate. In reality, God is sovereign. He controls the history of the world as well as our personal destinies. Just as Jesus calmed the waves with His spoken word, He can calm whatever storms we may face.

The power displayed here is the power of Jesus’ words. He did not merely think or feel compassion—He spoke. “Peace, be still!” And creation obeyed. In our Christian lives, when storms arise, we are called to the same pattern: resist cowardly fear, confess our need, trust the One who is in the boat with us, and speak words of faith. We can pray with confidence, declare trust in God’s care, and lean into the wind with praise. The One who commands the wind and the sea is the same One who walks with us through every squall. He is sovereign, He cares, and His word still brings peace.

Source 16

Ephesians 2:1-10

From Death to Life: God’s Transforming Grace in Ephesians 2:1–10

Ephesians 2 opens with one of the most majestic sentences in the New Testament. In the Greek, verses 1–7 form a single, lengthy sentence whose subject is God (v. 4) and whose three main verbs describe what God has done for believers: He “made us alive with Christ” (v. 5), “raised us up with Christ” (v. 6), and “seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus” (v. 6). The object of each verb is “us”—believers. Paul’s purpose is to show that the same resurrection power that raised Christ from the dead has raised us from spiritual death and placed us in a position of victory and intimacy with Him. The passage moves from the darkest diagnosis of the human condition to the brightest declaration of God’s grace, culminating in the purpose for which we have been saved.

The Bad News: Spiritually Dead in Transgressions and Sins (vv. 1–3)

Paul begins where every true gospel presentation must begin—with the bad news. “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins” (v. 1). This is not merely a future physical death or a final eternal state; it describes a present spiritual reality. Spiritually dead people are physically alive yet unresponsive to God, alienated from Him, and incapable of experiencing the full life He offers. They have no genuine communication with their Creator. As David Guzik notes, there are many kinds of life—vegetable, animal, mental, moral—but spiritual life is the most vital, and apart from Christ it is absent. The most vital part of human personality—the spirit—is dead to the most important reality—God.

The death is “in” transgressions and sins. These do not merely cause death; sinners and their sins exist together in the same sphere of death. “Transgressions” (Greek *paraptōmata*) pictures crossing a

line, rebelling against God's boundaries. "Sins" (*hamartiai*) pictures missing the mark, falling short of God's perfect standard. Together they portray humanity as both rebels and failures. The plurals emphasize our ongoing, habitual practice of sin. We are not merely sick or struggling; we are dead—unable to save or even help ourselves. Sometimes we must grasp how bad the bad news is before we can truly appreciate the good news that follows.

This spiritual death expresses itself in three directions of life before Christ. First, we "walked" (lived, conducted ourselves) "according to the course of this world"—following its accepted but immoral lifestyles and godless motives. The world system is hostile to God and to those who follow Christ. Second, we followed "the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient" (v. 2). This is Satan, the accuser and prince who exercises real influence in the present age. He is not the ultimate ruler, but he is a powerful prince whose realm includes the spiritual forces arrayed against God. His work in unbelievers rivals the work of the Holy Spirit in believers. Third, we lived "gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts" (v. 3). The "flesh" (*sarx*) refers to our fallen human nature apart from God—self-centered, enslaved to its own passions. Like addiction to a drug, sin often begins as a thrill but quickly becomes a tyrant that uses us rather than the other way around. We were enslaved to the cravings of our sinful nature, doing whatever felt natural, following its desires and thoughts without restraint.

All of us—Jews and Gentiles alike—once lived this way. By nature we were "objects [children] of wrath," deserving God's righteous judgment. This is humanity's natural state apart from redeeming grace. We were comfortable in the coffin of sin until God made us alive. As one commentator observes, a dead man feels comfortable in his coffin, but if he were made alive again he would instantly feel suffocated and desperate to escape. In the same way, when we were spiritually dead we felt comfortable in trespasses and sins; having come to new life we feel the strong urge to leave that old life behind.

The Turning Point: "But God" (v. 4)

Into this hopeless picture come two of the most glorious words in Scripture: "But God." God did not leave us in our death, rebellion, and bondage. He acted because He is "rich in mercy" and because of "his great love with which he loved us." Mercy (*eleos*) carries the Old Testament sense of *hesed*—steadfast, covenant love and compassion shown to the undeserving. God's love (*agapē*) is selfless, seeking the highest good of others even when they are unlovely. He did not love us because we were lovable; He loved us in spite of what He saw in us. Every reason for His mercy and love is found in Him, not in us. This is the grace secret of the Christian life: stop trying to make yourself lovable to God and simply receive the love He freely gives. We give Him no reason to love us, yet in the greatness of His love He loves us with that great love anyway.

What God Has Done: Made Alive, Raised, and Seated (vv. 5–7)

God's action is described with three vivid verbs, each prefixed in Greek with *sun* ("together with"), indicating union with Christ and with all other believers. First, God "made us alive together with Christ" even when we were dead in transgressions. Spiritual resurrection life begins the moment we believe. We pass from death to life. Christ defeated sin and death through His own death and resurrection, offering spiritual life to those who were dead in sins. Second, God "raised us up with Christ." We share in Christ's resurrection life now and are assured of bodily resurrection in the future. We conduct this new life in obedience to God, and it is totally different from the life the world offers. Third, God "seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus." This is our present position. We are no longer citizens of earth only; our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). We share in Christ's victory and exaltation now, not merely in the future. We sit *in* Christ Jesus. Because our life and identity are in Him, where He is seated, we are seated as well.

The purpose of all this is "that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (v. 7). God displays His grace through the church—flawed people saved by grace—so that throughout history and into eternity the exceeding riches of His grace will be on display. We are living exhibits of His mercy. As one commentator observes, when someone asks how we can be sure God is as loving and gracious as He claims, His

answer is simply to point to the church. God will never stop dealing with us on the basis of grace; He will forever continue to unfold its riches to us through eternity.

Salvation by Grace Through Faith—Not Works (vv. 8–9)

The entire work is summarized: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” Grace is God’s unmerited favor—forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life granted despite our unworthiness. Salvation is a past accomplished fact with present and ongoing results. It comes through faith—simple acceptance and trust in Christ’s finished work. Even the faith by which we receive salvation is itself a gift; nothing in the entire process originates with us.

Works play no part in securing salvation. If they did, we would boast, compare our goodness with others, and never know when we had done enough. God casts aside all human pride by offering salvation freely. As William Temple noted, “The only thing that a man can contribute to his redemption is the sin from which he needs to be redeemed.” And as C.H. Spurgeon warned, “If there is to be in our celestial garment but one stitch of our own making we are all of us lost.” If salvation were even partly by works, we could take some credit and compare ourselves favorably with others. God eliminates every ground for boasting so that He alone receives the glory.

God’s Workmanship Created for Good Works (v. 10)

Yet salvation is not the end of the story. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” The word “workmanship” (*poiēma*) means a work of art, a masterpiece, even a poem. God is the artist; we are His beautiful creation in Christ. Just as He created the universe from nothing, He creates new spiritual beings from those who were dead in sin. The new life He gives cannot help but express itself in good works. These works do not produce salvation; they are the evidence of it. We are saved *for* good works—acts of service, kindness, and love that God has prepared in advance. The same God who planned our salvation planned that we should walk in them.

God’s love is a transforming love. It meets us right where we are, but when we receive it, it always takes us where we should be going. The love of God that saves our souls also changes our lives. We are His workmanship, His creation—something new He has made of us in Jesus Christ. Our new life is as truly created out of nothing as were the first heavens and the first earth. God’s intention is that our salvation will result in acts of service as we build up the church and serve others with kindness, love, and gentleness.

Living in the Light of This Truth

This passage calls us to remember where we came from so we never take grace for granted. It calls us to live as new creations—raised, seated with Christ, and indwelt by His Spirit—rather than returning to the coffin of sin. It calls us to do the good works God has prepared, not to earn anything but out of gratitude and as living proof of the grace that saved us. And it calls us to display God’s grace to a watching world, becoming exhibits of His mercy so that in the ages to come the riches of His kindness will be clearly seen.

We were dead. But God made us alive. We were rebels and failures. But God seated us with Christ. We could do nothing to save ourselves. But God gave us salvation as a gift. We are His workmanship—His masterpiece—created for good works that bring Him glory. This is the gospel of grace. This is the power that raised Jesus from the dead and that now raises us to new life in Him. May we walk in it with humble gratitude and joyful obedience.

Sources 17-18

Spiritual Applications – Week 8 | Alive in Christ (Part 3)

1. Start Every Day with a Declaration of Faith

Begin each morning by declaring out loud: **“I AM Alive in Christ.”** This is not just positive thinking — it is aligning your mind and spirit with the truth of who you are in Jesus. Speak it with conviction and let it set the tone for how you walk through the day.

2. Speak to the Storms in Your Life

When you face pressure, fear, anxiety, or opposition, don’t just endure it — speak to it. Following Jesus’ example in Mark 4 and His teaching in Mark 11:23-24, pray in the Spirit and declare God’s Word over the situation. Use your mouth as a weapon of faith, not just a vent for frustration.

3. Use the Name of Jesus with Authority

When you sense spiritual attack, harassment, or the enemy trying to intimidate you or your family, boldly speak the name of Jesus. Like Paul in Acts 16, command the darkness to leave in the name of Jesus Christ. Do not sit back passively — exercise the authority Christ has given you.

4. Guard and Direct Your Words

Proverbs 18:21 reminds us that death and life are in the power of the tongue. This week, pay close attention to what comes out of your mouth. Purposefully speak words of life, faith, and encouragement instead of complaining, criticizing, or speaking fear. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you use your words to build up rather than tear down.

5. Remember Where You Came From and Who You Are Now

Take time this week to reflect on Ephesians 2:1-10. Remind yourself that you were once dead in sin but God made you alive, raised you, and seated you with Christ. You are God’s workmanship — His masterpiece. Let this truth fuel gratitude and give you confidence to live as someone who has been dramatically transformed by grace.

6. Stay in Tune with the Holy Spirit Daily

Don’t let the power of the Spirit remain dormant in your life. Practice these simple habits this week:

- Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you while reading Scripture.
- Pause throughout the day and ask, “Holy Spirit, what are You saying right now?”
- Surrender your day to Him each morning with a simple prayer: “Holy Spirit, I give You my thoughts, words, and actions. Use me as Your instrument.”

Resources: (1) Rev. Brad Standfest, (2) Logos Bible Commentaries; [3] Tony Evans, The Tony Evans Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2019), 43. [4] Cynthia Long Westfall, “Paul’s Experience and a Pauline Theology of the Spirit,” in Defining Issues in Pentecostalism: Classical and Emergent, ed. Steven M. Studebaker, McMaster Divinity College Press Theological Studies Series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2008), 1:136–137. [5] Greg Rice, The Embracing Life, Spirit, Faith, and Adversity (gifts of Freedom, Book 1) (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2011). [6] Got Questions Ministries, Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2014–2021). [7] C. Stevens Schell, Preaching through the Book of Romans (Federal Way, WA: Northwest Church, 2016), 116. [8] Stewart Custer, Witness to Christ: A Commentary on Acts (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2000), 33. [9] Boyce W. Blackwelder, Light from the Greek New Testament (James L. Fleming, 2005), 48–49. [10] Wesley L. Gerig, “Fruit of the Spirit,” in Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1:819. [11] Douglas Mangum and Derek R. Brown, Galatians, Logos Research Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2026). (12) Guzik, David. 2017. Proverbs. David Guzik’s Commentaries on the Bible. Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik. (13) Koptak, Paul E. 2003. Proverbs. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (14) Barton, Bruce B. 1994. Mark. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. (15) Barton, Bruce B., and Grant R. Osborne. 1999. Acts. Life Application Bible

Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. (The quotations from C.S. Lewis, Helmut Thielicke, and Bishop Cyprian are drawn from the commentaries listed 12-15.) (16) Barton, Bruce B. 1994. Mark. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. (17) Barton, Bruce B., and Philip Wesley Comfort. 1996. Ephesians. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. (18) Guzik, David. 2013. Ephesians. David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible. Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik.

Sermon Notes:

Week 8 | The Sandals of Jesus

Part 3: "Alive in Christ"

Good Morning & Happy Sunday... I want to welcome everyone who may be joining us online...

We are in a Summer Sermon Series titled "**The Sandals of Jesus**"...

If you have missed any sermon or recent ones, here are the AVC Connections...

YouTube • App • Facebook/Website

[Let's Pray]

Before we hop into God's Word...

If you have been following along, then you know a few weeks ago the Holy Spirit changed my plans in this series...

We have been talking about **Being Alive In Christ**...

And today is **Part 3**...

As we did the last few weeks, let's start out by declaring the Word of God out loud...

I Am... (Repeat After Me)

I AM... Alive In Christ

As we discussed last week... The Word of God says this:

Christ has given us: "...His incomparably great power for us who believe." (Ephesians 1:19)

Understand... We have **Dunamis** (AKA Dynamite) Power living inside of us...

Romans 8:11 says... The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in us...

Here is the real deal... We can have all the dynamite in the world, but if we don't use it... what good is it doing?

Church... there is action required on our part...

Jesus didn't just say a bunch of religious things... He demonstrated the power of God in Him... and so did His disciples...

I want to draw your attention to one of my favorite Gospel accounts...

Let's read Mark 4:35-41

Mark 4:35-41

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

[Short story of Recent Storm]

- No storm showing on radar
- Radar updated & it was all red
- Veered to the left because of waves & water
- No damage

Friends, it was **only the power of Jesus** that got me in with no damage...

Look, we can't just sit back and get smashed in the face by the storms of life...

We must **pray in the Spirit**... We must **speak against the storms** coming at us or on us!!

We are Alive In Christ... Start walking like it and living like it...

The power of Proverbs says:

"The tongue has the power of life and death." (Proverbs 18:21)

Jesus says:

Mark 11:23-24

23 "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

In Acts 16 Paul was being attacked by a witch... After a couple days he turned to the witch and said: **"In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her."** (Acts 16:18)

The power of Christ calls us to action...

I want to take you back to the Book of Ephesians to the church of Ephesus...

Remember, the church in Ephesus was being harassed, mocked, and surrounded by demonic pagan rituals...

Apostle Paul sends them a word of encouragement...

We already talked about Chapter 1... Now let's get into Chapter 2.

Paul reminds them of the old self & the new person in Christ...

Let's read Ephesians 2:1-5 (Talk through)

Ephesians 2:1-5

1 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. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Let's read Ephesians 2:6-10 (Talk through)

Ephesians 2:6-10

6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Devotional Questions:

Devotional Questions – Week 8 | The Sandals of Jesus – Part 3: Alive in Christ

1. In the sermon, we saw Jesus speak to the storm in Mark 4:35-41 and calm it instantly. What “storm” (situation, fear, pressure, or attack) are you facing right now, and how can you speak to it in faith this week instead of staying silent or panicking?
2. The sermon emphasized that we have *dunamis*(dynamite) power living inside us (Ephesians 1:19 and Romans 8:11). In what area of your life have you been sitting back instead of actively using this power? What would it look like to “use the dynamite” this week?
3. Paul commanded the evil spirit in Acts 16:18 with authority in Jesus’ name. Have you been facing any spiritual harassment, fear, or opposition lately? How can you boldly speak the name of Jesus over that situation this week?
4. Proverbs 18:21 says the tongue has the power of life and death. How have your words been affecting your own life or the people around you lately? What changes can you make this week to speak life, faith, and authority instead?
5. In Mark 11:23-24, Jesus teaches us to speak to mountains with faith and belief. What “mountain” (obstacle, habit, fear, or stronghold) do you need to speak to this week? Write down a specific faith declaration you will speak out loud.
6. Ephesians 2:1-5 reminds us we were once dead in sin but God made us alive. How does remembering where you came from (your old life) help you appreciate the power you now have in Christ? What area of your “old self” still tries to pull you back?
7. Ephesians 2:6-10 says we are God’s workmanship (His masterpiece) and seated with Christ. How does seeing yourself as God’s work of art change the way you approach daily challenges or spiritual battles?
8. The sermon challenged us not to sit back during storms but to pray in the Spirit and speak against them. What practical step can you take this week to be more intentional about praying in the Spirit and declaring God’s Word over your life?
9. Living empowered by the Spirit includes producing the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Which area of the fruit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc.) do you sense the Holy Spirit wants to grow in you most right now, and what one practical action will you take to cooperate with Him?
10. The sermon ends with the challenge: “Won’t you use God’s gift?” and “We are Alive in Christ. Let’s start acting like it.” What is one specific way you will actively use the Holy Spirit’s power in your life this week (in prayer, words, relationships, or facing a storm)? Write it down and commit to it*.*