

Session Four: Separated and Reconciled (2:1-22)

1. Recall this scene:
 - a. **Ponton:** He was found dead.
 - b. **Inspector Jacques Clouseau:** Was it fatal?
 - c. **Ponton:** Yes.
 - d. **Inspector Jacques Clouseau:** How fatal?
 - e. **Ponton:** Completely.
2. What is this saying about death?
 - a.

Dead in Trespasses: Ephesians 2:1-3

2 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.

1. If we were dead in trespasses, what does this say about our ability to be reconciled to God?
 - a.
2. Consider this quote from the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord:
 - a. Rather they [human beings] are “the slave of sin” (John 8[:34*]) and prisoners of the devil, by whom they are driven (Eph. 2[:2*]; 2 Tim. 2[:26*]). Therefore, according to its own perverted character and nature, the natural free will has only the power and ability to do whatever is displeasing and hostile to God. (Book of Concord, 544)
 - i.
3. Consider also this quote from the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord:
 - a. First of all, it is true that not only should Christians regard and recognize as sin the actual violation of God’s commandments in their deeds, but they should also perceive and recognize that the horrible, dreadful, inherited disease corrupting their entire nature is above all actual sin and indeed is the “chief sin.” [6] It is the root and fountainhead of all actual sins. Luther calls this a “nature-sin” or “person-sin,” in order to indicate that even if a human being thinks, says, or does nothing evil (which is, of course, after the fall of our first parents, impossible for human nature in this life), nevertheless, our entire nature and person is sinful, that is, totally and thoroughly corrupted in God’s sight and contaminated by original sin as with a spiritual leprosy. Because of this corruption and on account of the fall of the first human beings, God’s law accuses and condemns human nature and the human person. Therefore, Luther concludes, we are “by nature children of wrath”

[Eph. 2:3*], of death, and of damnation, if we are not redeemed from them through Christ's merit.
(Book of Concord, 533)

i.

4. Have you ever had someone express gratitude to you only to say something like, "You're dead in trespass and sins."?
 - a.
5. What is Paul up to transitioning us from God's power to our alienation from him?
 - a.
6. What does the shift from second person in verse two to third person in verse three tell us?
 - a.

Alive With Christ: Ephesians 2:4-10

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.

1. What signals to us that there is a turn in 2:4?
 - a.
2. How does Paul explain why he wrote much of 2:1-3 in the past tense?
 - a.
3. Consider this quote:
 - a. As little as a corpse can make itself alive for bodily, earthly life, so little can people who through sin are spiritually dead raise themselves up to a spiritual life, as it is written, "When we were dead through our trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ" [Eph. 2:5*]. Therefore, we are not "competent of ourselves to claim anything [good] as coming from us; our competence is from God" (2 Cor. 3[:5*]). (Book of Concord, 492)
 - i.
4. Consider this quote:
 - a. For when the human being is justified through faith (which the Holy Spirit alone bestows), it is truly a rebirth, because a child of wrath becomes a child of God and is therefore brought from death to life, as it is written, "Even when we were dead through our sins, he made us alive together with Christ" (Eph. 2[:5*]). Likewise, "the one who is righteous will live by faith" (Rom. 1[:17*]) (Book of Concord, 565).
5. How is the word "because" used in 2:4? What is it explaining?
 - a.
6. How does 2:5 describe God's great love for us?
 - a.
7. What does Paul call God's great love? See 2:5.
 - a.
8. How does Paul continue describing God's great love in 2:6?

- a.
- b.
- 9. How does “so that” connect 2:4-6 to 2:7?
 - a.
- 10. How does the word “for” in 2:8 inform 2:4-7?
 - a.
- 11. How does the word “for” in 2:10 further qualify 2:8-9?
 - a.
- 12. Who is Paul primarily bringing the Gospel to? Read Acts 9:15.
 - a.

Broader Reconciliation: 2:11-16

¹¹Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹²remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

1. What does Paul say about us as Gentiles in 2:11-12?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. What signals to us that there is a turn in 2:13?
 - a.
3. In what ways does Paul say we have been reconciled to God?
 - a.
4. How does the word “for” further explain God’s reconciliation of us to himself in 2:14?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - b. Who is the “us” Paul refers to in 2:14?
 - i.
5. A note on the wall of hostility:

- a.
- 6. How is this wall of hostility broken down in Christ's own flesh? Consider 2:15-16. Also considering the division, see Matthew 27:50-51.
 - a.
- 7. What is the connection between Christ's flesh in 2:14 and the flesh mentioned in 2:11?
 - a.

A Dwelling Place for God: Ephesians 2:17-22)

- 1. How does one become a dwelling place for God? Read 2:17-22. cf. 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20.
 - a.
- 2. Did you connect us being a dwelling place for God to the wall of hostility which Christ broke down?
 - a.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, we praise you for sending Jesus to break down the wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile. Help us to see ourselves as citizens in your household being completely reconciled to you through Christ's blood. Help us to see others in this same way. In Jesus' name, amen.