

Our Condition: DEAD

by Steve Walker

I will never forget the day I heard a Pastor say, “You will never appreciate how saved you are until you appreciate how lost you really were.” That hit me hard. Up to that day, I thought of my salvation in far less extreme ways. I had not thought I was really *that* lost or *that* dead. I figured I was just a little lost and a little dead. I wasn’t all *that* bad after all. In fact, I thought I was overall pretty good. I just needed a second chance. I just needed God to make up for my little shortcomings. I just needed God to throw open the door of heaven. I could enter in on my own.

But then I started studying the Bible. As I studied, I soon grew to realize that I was not a little lost; I was a lot lost. I was not a little dead; I was a lot dead. Therefore, I concluded, I did not need a little salvation; I needed a lot of salvation. I did not need a little life; I needed a lot of life.

But then I studied the Bible more and discovered that even this was not God’s view of my condition. According to the Bible, I was not a little dead or a little lost, nor was I even a lot dead or a lot lost. *I was entirely lost and completely dead.* And that is when it hit me like a ton of bricks! I did not need a lot of salvation or a lot of life, let alone a little salvation or a little life: I needed a complete salvation that would give eternal life as a free gift!

**The Good News is that we have a Savior
who has done just that!**

HOW DEAD IS DEAD?

The Bible explains that we are all born into the world physically alive but spiritually dead. Some think we die spiritually when we commit our first or hundredth or millionth sin. But the Bible says we are born into the world spiritually dead, and it is because of this that we commit acts of sin, not the other way around. But are there degrees of death? Are some less dead than others? Is, say, Mother Teresa, who is remembered for her good works, less spiritually dead than say Adolf Hitler or John Wayne Gacy, who are remembered for their bad?

In His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ raised several people from the dead. One time Jesus raised up a ruler’s young daughter who had just died. Her body was probably still warm (Mk. 5:35-43). Another time, Jesus arrived at the city of Nain, where He met a funeral procession and raised a widow’s dead son, whose body was on its way to the cemetery--cold and already embalmed (Lk. 7:11-18). Another time, Jesus raised a man named Lazarus, who had been dead and in the grave for four days and had begun to decay (Jn. 11).

Now here is the question: Which one of the three was the most dead? Was the young girl less dead than the young man? The young man less dead than Lazarus? No, they were all equally dead. Dead is dead. The little girl was just as dead as the young man, and the young man was just as dead as Lazarus. We can all see this as plain as the nose on our face. To be physically dead is to be physically dead. There are no gradations. Dead is dead.

Well, the Scriptures use the word ‘dead’ to describe our spiritual state as well. Just as there are no gradations with physical death, there are likewise no gradations of

spiritual death. To be spiritually dead is to be spiritually dead. A person cannot be a little or even a lot physically dead, and someone cannot be a little or even a lot spiritually dead. You are either spiritually dead, or you are spiritually alive. No grey zone lies between; it is a black and white matter. The Bible tells us that we are all born into the world spiritually dead, and we all remain dead until God saves us by grace through faith, giving us the life that makes us spiritually alive.

HOW BAD IS BAD!

This ‘making alive’ is something only God can do. It doesn’t matter that one person has done more good things by the world’s standards than others. It may matter in worldly terms but not before God. Sure, I would rather live next door to someone who has never murdered than to someone who has, and, sure, I would rather my daughter marry a moral man than a fornicator, but this is not the issue at hand. This is just a way to dodge the real issue. The real issue is whether or not we—you and I—are spiritually dead or spiritually alive.

Think about it. If we are to be judged on the basis of what we have done, on the basis of our works, then we must remember that the law does not look at what we have done right; *it judges and condemns us for what we have done wrong*. Policemen *never* pull drivers over to give them awards for obeying the street signs, and no one has ever been called into court for *not* murdering someone.

No, the law was not designed to look at what we have done right. It was designed to look at what we have done wrong, and then its job is to prosecute us vigorously on the basis of that. If you are brought into God’s court, you will not have been brought there to discuss the laws you

kept. You will have been brought there to be confronted and judged for the ones you broke.

Think about it. If you are brought before a judge for armed robbery, it is not going to much matter to the judge that you never murdered anyone or never committed adultery. All the judge will be interested in is whether or not you committed armed robbery and then sentence you accordingly. If you are brought into court for speeding, it is not going to much matter to the judge that you loaned your mower to the neighbor that morning or played ball with your kids yesterday or worked in the local food pantry last weekend. The law is not concerned with those things. It is concerned with what you do that is wrong.

This is the way God’s Law System works as well. If we are brought into God’s court of righteousness to answer before God as Judge, we must not think for a moment that it will be our opportunity to brag about what we have done right. No, it will be the Law’s opportunity to declare all the things that we have done wrong.

We may try to brag that we have never murdered anyone, for instance, but the Law will sweep that aside and thunder, “Thou hast lied!” We may try to brag that we have never committed adultery, but the Law will sweep that aside and thunder, “Thou hast coveted! Thou hast stolen! Thou hast *not* honored thy mother and father! Thou hast *not* loved God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself! You are guilty, condemned and worthy of death!”

Understanding this changes everything. Our real problem is now seen clearly. It is not us trying to get enough good works to out-weigh our bad works before God. That is what most of us think naturally. Our problem is that we are spiritually dead and can do nothing that pleases God (Rom. 8:8). Therefore, if we are to have any chance of life

whatsoever, we must give up trying to approach God on the basis of a works/law system altogether, and approach Him in the only real way possible--on the basis of a grace/faith system--instead.

In a grace/faith system, Someone else does the work. Someone else provides the merit. Someone else accomplishes what is needed. Someone else, who has spiritual life, does it all. That Someone else is the Lord Jesus Christ, who accomplished all that was required for our salvation on the Cross—this is called **GRACE!** When we set aside our own doing and merit and rely solely on the doing and merit of Christ--this is called **FAITH!** When we exercise faith, God freely gives us the results of Christ's work—this is called **SALVATION!** Salvation makes us spiritually alive—and this is called **ETERNAL LIFE!**

The Apostle Paul condenses it into these words:

For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. (Eph. 2:8-9)

**If we try to stand before God
on the basis of our works,
under the scrutiny of the Law,
remember this:**

***The Law is never a DEFENSE
attorney!
It is always a PROSECUTING
attorney!***

WHAT WE REALLY NEED

So what we really need is not a second chance, not another opportunity to try our best, not more good works to out-weigh our bad ones, not more relative goodness (i.e., I am not as bad as the guy next door so I must be good enough for God). What we need is the absolute righteousness and eternal life that comes from God, having been procured for us by Jesus Christ through His work on the Cross, which He is now giving freely to all who believe.

And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). And: That you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk...having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God. (Eph. 4:17-18).

We “were dead in sins” and “alienated from the life of God.” All of us, every last one of us—Mother Teresa, John Gacy, Adolf Hitler, Me and You--entered the world dead in the sphere of sin and trespasses, completely alienated from God's life. No one is more dead or more alienated from God's life than others. We are all spiritually dead (i.e., alienated from the life of God), and spiritually dead is spiritually dead.

God's answer to our hopeless predicament is not to demand of us what we are unable to produce. His answer is to give us freely what we all need most desperately—righteousness and life—on the basis of grace and faith. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

SONSHIP “BESEECHING”

By Pastor Steve Ross

A person who lives in a country lives under the authority of that country. It could be said that they live within the sphere of that country. Because they are citizens of that country they need to follow the laws of the country in which they live. They need to function in accord with the way things work in that country. If that person were to move to another country, the laws and regulations of the country that they came from wouldn't apply to the new country that they were now residing in. They would need to learn new laws and rules.

Believers today live in the reign of Grace. We learn this from Rom 5:21:

That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Today, Grace reigns, and believers live in this reign of grace. Believers today live under the rule of grace. Since we live and function in the sphere of the grace of God, it behooves us to learn the principles of grace and begin to function in the realm of grace, in the way in which God has intended. Because we live under the reign of grace, God's approach to the believer is different than it was for Israel under the reign of the Law.

One of these differences revolves around the word 'beseech'. The word 'beseech' means to beg, or to plead, or

**But God,
who is rich in mercy,
for his great love
wherewith he loved us,
Even
when we were dead in sins,
has quickened (*made alive*) us
together with Christ...
For
by grace are ye saved
through faith;
and that not of yourselves:
it is the gift of God:
Not of works,
lest any man should boast.**

(Eph. 2:4-9, italics mine)

to pray. In all the Bible, the word beseech is always used in addressing God or another human until you get to the epistles of Paul. There we find the opposite: We find God beseeching man, and that God would beseech man is a very startling thing.

Beseeching is the approach of God to the believer in the age of Grace. It would seem that we should be the ones beseeching God. We pray to him, and no doubt we sometimes even plead with Him. But in the epistles of Paul we find God pleading with us. God has every right to command us but instead he beseeches us.

There are, of course, commands in the epistles of Paul, but the overriding attitude that God has toward us is one of beseeching--beseeching us to obey his commands. This is consistent with the age of grace in which we live and is reflective of our position in Christ because God is not treating us as children any longer. Rather, He has placed us into the Body of Christ as adult sons not as children or second class citizens.

Romans 8:16 says:

**“We have not received the spirit of bondage
again to fear
but we have received the spirit of adoption
where by we cry Abba Father”.**

The word for adoption here is not being used in the same way we use it today. It is not taking someone from outside the family and making them a member of the family. Rather, adoption as used in this verse literally means ‘son-placing’.

ADOPTION: **ADULT SON-PLACING**

There is more information about this in the book of Galatians. In Gal 4:1-2 we read:

Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. The child could be the heir of all the possessions but when he is a child he is the same as if he were a servant.

Imagine that a wealthy man has a child, and that child is the first born. He is in line to inherit all that the father has. The child is put under the authority of a servant, who has the responsibility to raise and train the child in the things that he will need to know to function in the father’s position. The child is not even allowed to leave the house without the servant, who exercises authority over him until he reaches adulthood, until the time appointed by the father. Such a relationship is very restrictive and does not allow a great deal of liberty for the child.

The father decided beforehand the time when that son would move out of childhood and take his place as an adult in the family. At that age he would be placed into the family as an adult. On that day he would no longer be under the authority of the servant and tutor but would have all the rights and privileges of adulthood. That is the word translated ‘adoption’ in the verse above.

The passage in Galatians goes on to say:

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (Gal. 4:5-6)

Today, believers have been placed into a relationship with God where he treats us like adults not children. Think of the difference between how a person deals with children and adults. Children, for instance, need to be instructed in everything they do. They need to be told what to do and when to do it, where to go and when to go there. Children need supervision and need to be instructed in how to behave.

Adults, however, resent being treated as children. The way to motivate an adult is different than the way to motivate a child. You appeal to an adult based on a sense of duty and responsibility. Adults respond to entreaties based on their sense of what they know to be right or wrong, and this is how God treats believers today.

God has placed us in this relationship with Himself as adults and not children, therefore, obedience to His commands is not based on *demanding* but on *beseeking*, and beseeching is based upon our understanding of all the blessings we have in Christ because of His grace. When we come to understand our position in Christ, we are motivated to obey the things that God commands us to do.

SONSHIP LIVING

Beseech #1

The first time that God beseeches us is found in Romans 12:1-2. This is the very first time in the Bible that God beseeches man, and it is really appropriate that it is found for the first time in the epistles of Paul. Beseeching is

consistent with Grace, and Paul is the apostle of Grace. This familiar verse says, “**I beseech you by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.**” These words were written by the apostle Paul, but they are God’s words to us, establishing the basis for how God approaches us today.

I beseech you by the mercies of God.

God is pleading with believers to live in a certain way because of the mercies of God. The mercies of God are everything that has been revealed in the first 11 chapters of Romans. What do we learn in the first 11 chapters of Romans?

- We learn that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Rom. 5).
- We learn that God has imputed to us His own righteousness not based upon our performance but upon our faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary (Rom. 3).
- We learn that nothing can separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8).
- We learn that God is on our side, and that he will not condemn us as believers in Christ (Rom. 8).
- We learn that we are joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8).

- We learn that we have been identified with the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6).

This brief list only scratches the surface of all that Romans says we have because of our union with Christ.

So by the time we come to Romans 12, we should have an understanding of all these things. They should be filling us with joy and appreciation for all the blessings that God has bestowed upon us as believers in Christ. Paul says *I beseech* you by all that God has done for you. *I plead* with you because of the all the blessings that God has already provided for you. *I beg* of you because of your position in Christ as adults--live in a way that is consistent with that!

I beseech you by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

We are to present ourselves to God. This has to do with how we live. God wants us to live Godly lives that have an impact on those people we come into contact with. The basis of this godly conduct is *not* because God will bless us if we do so. Rather we live in this way because God has already blessed us with everything that he will ever give us and all that we will ever need.

When you realize this shouldn't that have an affect on your attitude and your life?



CREATION MOMENTS

Douglas A. Klumpp, Ph.D.

If you were to ask a typical Christian about God's creation and the Bible's description of His work of creation, most individuals would take you back to the first chapter of Genesis. In that first chapter of Genesis, we read of God's six days of creation, including the magnificent design of living creatures: plants, animals, and even mankind. The Bible, however, has much more to tell us about God's act of creation. In fact, some of the most exciting and informative accounts of creation occur *outside* of the book of Genesis.

When the Holy Spirit inspired the books of Scripture, he was careful to include many descriptions and perspectives of the creation events. Why is it important for us to have a thorough knowledge of God's works of creation? The answer may be found in the first chapter of Colossians where we read this: "...his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins; who (*Jesus Christ*) is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for by him (*Jesus Christ*) were all things created...all things were created by him (*Jesus Christ*) and for him (*Jesus Christ*)" (Col 1:13-16; italics mine).

It is vitally important that followers of Christ understand this clear fact of Scripture: Our Savior Jesus Christ is the same God of Genesis chapter 1, and He is described in the Bible as the Creator of "all things." The

Holy Spirit has emphasized this truth in many passages of Scripture. He wants us to appreciate the fact that it was God the Son that bore our sins upon the cross, subjected Himself to the humiliation of this death, and endured the separation from God the Father and the Holy Spirit. This was done on our behalf. By appreciating the deity of Christ (including His work in creation), we will ultimately have a greater love for our Savior.

Indeed, this is one of the most striking messages in the Bible, and it is one that will astonish the angels and saints for all eternity. The Almighty God of creation loved sinful men and women to such an extent that He (Phil. 2:8) **“...humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”** Of course as followers of Christ, we have that great hope described by the Apostle Paul of seeing our risen and glorified Savior and Lord (Phil 2:9-10) **“...highly exalted, and given a name that is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the earth.”**

As a result of these precious verses in God’s Word, we know Jesus Christ is the Creator and our prayers and worship of Him are done with this in mind.

