

GOD ALWAYS MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

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Ephesians 2:1

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sin.”

This section of Ephesians is showing the marvelous salvation that is found in Christ Jesus. The chapter begins with where they started, dead in sin and trespasses. By the fourth verse, we have, “But God.” That’s always the game changer. We were dead, but God made us alive. We were lost, but God found us. We were in real trouble, but God did not give up on us.

In this flow of Ephesians, there is another interesting concept, past and present. Notice:

- ◆ And you were (v. 1). That’s past tense.
- ◆ For we are (v. 10). That’s present tense.
- ◆ You were (v. 12). Past tense.
- ◆ But now (v. 13). Present.
- ◆ You are (v. 19). Present.

And, that little back and forth exchange, between past and present; is worth thinking about.

First, we all have a past. As true with the Ephesians, as true with us, that past isn’t worth bragging about. We have a history. Each of us has a story. Our past has colored us, shaped us and defined us. Some will hang on to their past and use that as an excuse for why they can’t be what they ought to. Some never forget their past. All have sinned, the Romans were told. That’s true of the Jew. That’s true of the Gentile. That’s true of folks back then and that’s true of us today.

Second, some continue to make the past their present. Nothing has changed. They’ve gotten older, but not any wiser and definitely not any closer to the Lord. They see nothing wrong with the past, so on they sail, staying the same course. Others like to hide behind cute phrases such as “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.” The problem is that we are not dogs. We are created in the image of God. That may be true of dogs, but it isn’t true of us. And, unless we change our present, the future will look just like the past. Same results. Same things. And it’s because we continue to make the same choices and continue down the same path.

Third, we all have a present, and that is now. Today has enough trouble of its own, our Lord said. Today is the day of salvation, the Corinthians were told. Now, our present can be troubled because of the past that we bring into it. Our present can be hindered because we can’t escape the consequences of our past. We shape today by the choices we make. Today doesn’t have to look like yesterday. Today can be better than yesterday.

Fourth, we all have a future. We do. Now, our future may not be here, but we will live on and on and on. Our future is determined by our present and our past. A quote we posted recently on our congregation’s Facebook page stated, “Death is just changing address. The choices you make determine what neighborhood you live in.” Our future must look beyond the horizon of this planet. Our future includes eternity. We will spend more time on that side of life than we do on this side of life. Walk through any old cemetery and you’ll notice that most of the people have been dead longer than they were alive. They have spent more time on the other side than they ever did on this side.

One constant in this past-present-future concept is that our Lord remains the same. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. The same God that Noah prayed to, is the same God that you pray to. The same God that comforted the apostle, is the same God that comforts you. The same God that gave hope to an oppressed people, is the same God that gives you hope.

We change, God doesn’t. We need to be getting better. God is always the best.

You were. You are. The difference is, "But God." He always makes the difference.