



“Tuesdays” with Pastor Jake

Where Theology Touches Life

Tuesday, July 1st,
in the year of our Lord, 2025



Summer 2025 Edition

‘Miracle Max’ on My Favorite Passage

For many of us it’s hard to have a ‘favorite’ passage of Scripture because there are just so many to choose from. But if I were hard pressed to name one passage that take Ephesians 2:1-10. Over the years I’ve time being reminded afresh of God’s grace walk with you through this passage. I think - and comfort for you. I would encourage you the NABRE (the RC Study Bible) for my



sticks out for me among the rest, I would probably returned to this passage over and over again, each towards me. For the summer months I’d like to I pray - that it will be a great source of instruction to read through the passage each week. I’ll be using text, but I’m sure your translation would work fine.

Paul begins the passage with a rather direct and concise declaration:

“You were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you once lived....”

The first thing we need to ask to understand this passage is, ‘*who does the ‘You’ in this verse refer to?*’

He is describing the natural spiritual condition of people *before* they have been brought by grace to faith in Jesus Christ. He describes them as being ‘dead.’ He doesn’t mean they are dead *physically* for they are very much *physically* alive. He is describing their *spiritual* condition. Before a person exercises saving faith in Jesus Christ – they are dead *spiritually* – or as Paul declares, ‘*dead in their transgressions and sins.*’

But what does it mean to be *spiritually* dead?

It might help us understand what Paul means by thinking of what it means to be *physically* dead. A person who is physically dead is *separated* from the physical world around them. We could also say they are physically *unresponsive* to physical stimuli. We would all be pleasantly surprised if we spoke to a dead person and they responded! You could try talking louder or with better diction, but sadly, I don’t think there would be a response. After all, they are dead.

In the 4th chapter of Ephesians Paul explains to be dead *spiritually* encompasses the whole of our lives. It affects our *minds*; we are darkened or ignorant of spiritual truths. It affects our *hearts*; we are hard-hearted and cold towards God. It affects our *wills*; we willingly practice all sorts of selfish, sinful desires. This is what it means to be ‘dead in our trespasses and sins.’ Theologians refer to this as being ‘totally depraved.’ That doesn’t mean a person is as bad as they could possibly be, but that sin has affected the ‘totality’ of our lives – how we *think*, what we *love* and what we *do*.



In the movie, *Princess Bride*, the good guys think their Hero, Wesley, is dead. They bring him to the local witch doctor known as “Miracle Max,” played by Billy Crystal. In a pronounced Jewish/Brooklyn accent, Billy Crystal says, “*Oooo, look who knows so much?! Well, it just so happens that your friend here is only mostly dead. There’s a big difference between being mostly dead and all dead. Mostly dead is slightly alive.*”

When Paul describes the spiritual condition of someone who has not yet been touched by God’s grace he means they are *ALL* dead, there is no spiritual life in them. We are like spiritual ‘Zombies’; like the ‘Walking Dead.’ Walking, working, and waking, but there is no life in us! And we are justly guilty of this spiritual condition.

Our *only* hope is for God to do something to make us spiritually alive.

After Miracles Max’s ‘cure’ for their hero, his wife asks him if what he did would work. He responded by saying, “*It’ll take a miracle!*”

It’ll take a miracle, indeed! *Unless God does something* in a person’s life they will forever remain, willingly, spiritually dead. Jesus said it like this: “*Unless a person is born again, they cannot ‘see’ or ‘enter’ into the Kingdom of God.*” To be born-again is to be made *spiritually alive* through the Sovereignly bestowed miracle of grace. It’s where our hope is found.

SOME FURTHER THOUGHTS ON SIN BY CORNELIUS PLATINGA, JR.

Not the Way It's Supposed to Be *A Breviary of Sin*

We all deal daily with annoyances. Deeper however, than annoyances lies an array of regrets. People regret early educational decisions that locked them into particular careers. They rue youthful follies and indiscretions. Usually when it is too late, they regret long neglect of friends and family members. In fact, memories of the past sometimes hurt us just because the roads we missed back there are now barricaded.

Perhaps most poignantly thoughtful human beings suffer pangs from aging. They gain an acute sense of the one-way flow of time that carries with it treasures and opportunities and youthful agilities that seemingly will not come again. Worse, they know perfectly well how human life ends. In pondering the twenty-third psalm, Joseph Sittler once observed that though we walk through the valley of death just once, we spend our whole lives in the *shadow* of death. Middle-aged people notice that shadow more often than they used to.

But even further toward the alarm end of the trouble spectrum lie certain distresses that theologians call miseries. People feel walled in by loneliness, for example. Whether homesick or obsessively nostalgic or exiled or romantically forlorn or self-alienated so that they are not at home even in their own skin, lonely persons ache because they are separated.

People also suffer boredom, what Walker Percy called 'the self being stuffed with itself.' People suffer fear. They fear cancer and job loss and the death of love. They fear war and God and the IRS. Some must deal with anxiety, a persistent and free-floating fear. Moreover, especially at those times that naturally provoke reflection on the shape of one's life – people sometimes suffer from a sense of futility, particularly in their work.

The whole range of human miseries, from restlessness and estrangement through shame and guilt to the agonies of daytime television – all of them tell us *that things in human life are not as they ought to be*.

A Suggested Verse for Summer Memorization

[Thy Word have I hid in my heart – Psalm 119:11]

“Gracious is the LORD, and righteous.

Our God is merciful.

The LORD preserves the simple.

When I brought low, he saved me.

Return, O my soul to your rest,

for the LORD has dealt
bountifully with you.”

Psalm 116:

From the Stella Becker Collection!

Four Letter Words with “_ar_” in the middle.

1. The outside covering of a tree trunk...
2. Not light, but...
3. Three feet...
4. Giving off pleasurable heat...
5. A fresh water fish...
6. A small pie filled with fruit or jam...
7. The fat of hogs, melted down and clarified to become soft...
8. Listen carefully...
9. A song bird....
10. Money paid for a ride on a train or bus...

Movies Featuring Billy Crystal

Can you name them?



1



2



3



4



5

1. Throw Momma from the Train / 2. City Slickers / 3. Monster's Inc. / 4. When Harry Met Sally / 5. Analyze This