

New Brith

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[0 : 00] Thank you. Okay, so, David's original intent for me was to be in the evening, although he's a typical sky fella, he doesn't realise he's got a double booked.

And so the intent was to have a bit of testimony in the evening. So what I'm going to try and do is just do a little bit leading into a little explanation of what Paul is writing to the church here at Ephesus.

It's a very important part of understanding the gospel, the beauty and the power of the gospel as he explains it. And so I just want to just give a little bit, I'm not going to do much of it to be fair, there's just two or three things that I think, well, I hope will be helpful to you before we just delve into this. So I think far too much of my past, well, I feel it's a myth, but there's one or two you guys who are hung around with.

There's been a few stories that have been embellished along the way, but one or two of them will probably be true, 90% of it at least. Now, the question really is, how can someone from Lewis, well, maybe you're a headache and you're thinking, well, no bother if they're from Lewis, but how can somebody from Lewis be such a nut job?

[1 : 31] Well, no bother, actually. And we'll find out more as to why that's the case in a few moments here from Paul's point of view. What kind of shaped my life at the very beginning was obviously my relationship with my father and mother or their relationship to each other or lack of it.

My father was an alcoholic and it wasn't very pleasant at times when it kicked off in the house. But there were other things that actually shaped me as a person, which I actually didn't recognise until several years later.

And there's one word that I think that might be able to help you figure out how I was so off my trolley back in the day.

And the word is a mistake. Mistake. Now, when my mother had me in her womb, the nurses and the doctors recommended that she abort me because she struggled in her previous birth, giving birth to my next, up the way, my sister.

So obviously the recommendation was perhaps it will be the best thing if you abort the child. Now, that's terrific in the sense that she didn't.

[2 : 57] Obviously, well, it depends on your asking, I guess. But anyway, she didn't because she didn't think it was the right thing to do, which was great. Now, because of things growing up, that word became a normal word that she used for me.

Okay. She called me you're my mistake. Now, it's a really weird thing, but it's, it actually, it was some years later I began to figure out that part of my whole life and anger and everything else probably revolved around that.

And so the violence and the fighting and the drinking and everything else that went with it. Even football. I played a lot of football and there were better players in this room than I was, but I played a lot of football and it was a way of managing myself.

And in fact, I would even say to you, I would go as far as saying, if it wasn't for football, I would have ended up in jail. There's no question. In fact, Sheriff Brooker Milburn said so. He screamed at me and he told me, if I see you and hear again, McCray, I'm putting you across the water to a young offenders institution.

So, I just didn't get caught for the next two years until I became a Christian. So, that kind of thing began to shape my life and people began to wonder, how in the world can someone be so crazy?

[4 : 36] No bother. And so words can play a big part in you as a person. Now, wouldn't it be easy for me to blame the fact that that word was used and it affected me?

And it did affect me. But you see, there is a greater reason which Paul explains here in chapter 2 as to why I was the way I was. A much more important reason and I can blame my mother or anybody else for how I ended up.

But ultimately, most of the time, I've got to say, I think I made my own choices and most of them weren't done with wisdom because I didn't have much of that.

I've been improving along the years but it's taken a while. Alright, now, but I want to just finish this part and I don't want to, we can always ask questions later and we can do it another time, but, you know, I want to get on with the most important thing here and it's to proclaim the name of Jesus. I want to just show you for, in a second, in that moment when I'm wild and how God can interrupt that moment.

[5 : 52] so I'm sharing a flat with someone in Glasgow who's here today and an event happened that was the beginning of the chain. So let me explain.

We've been out all day, drinking all day. He had. We went home later that night, it was still only about 8 o'clock, intended to go out again and that's what we did at the end of the day.

But I did something which is rather strange. for someone who was very drunk. I got ready quickly, being from Lewis, I didn't need to wash and I just changed my shirt because I was good enough and so I'm waiting for the other guys and they're doing their hair and did we have gel then?

I don't know. But anyway, they were taking ages. So I remember going to the window and I'm looking out the window, the guys are playing music in the background and I'm looking out the window and I see this girl walking up the street that I recognised and as I opened the window and I tried to start speaking to her and the noise of the traffic, buses and stuff and the music playing in the background and I thought hang on a second.

So I jumped out onto the window ledge it's a two story high and I'm higher than this building by a good bit and I shut the window and I'm now on the outside of the window and I'm talking well I'm thinking I'm talking to this person.

[7 : 17] She's terrified and I'm looking I can still see her face and she's kind of going right Rory I'm going for the bus now okay you go back inside and of course I can't because I'm locked.

Anyway the said individual walks into the city room and he goes there's someone in our garden we don't have a garden so he ran to the window opened the window grabbed me and pulled me in.

Now he doesn't realize what an important moment that was for me because the next morning I forgot all about that next morning I woke up and I was in a sweat and I had this very vivid image very vivid image and it was God's finger right on my chest and he said I can take it away anytime and I went right I've got to sort this out there's got to be a change.

Why is all of that important? Well Paul is writing to a group of people in Ephesians called Jews and Gentiles and they're not getting on together and some of them are bringing in rubbish teaching that Paul hadn't been teaching so he wants to deal with the biggest problem that we have as human beings and that is ourselves our sin and what it is and it's really important it's interesting how the Bible speaks in different ways about this problem it calls it death and that's the irony of it it's death but you're walking you're dead but you can still flap your arms what is all that about?

well you can't be dead well you are dead spiritually I was dead spiritually and there's a term I think is an excellent term for me when I was walking and that finger finger on my chest although he was pulling me in from my shoulders I had a finger on my chest long before he got there yeah and why is that important?

[9 : 27] because I'm realizing he has done something so amazing for this guy called Roddy Barnes who was a dead man walking and the rest of life is the myth the fighter I mean how many people I had at my reunion on Friday night telling me oh I remember you remember when you I don't want to know did I?

sorry and I just have to apologize all the time to people and I don't even remember doing it sorry sorry whatever it's just so hard and there's loads of myths but this guy oh such a miracle that he became a Christian it's so amazing oh really and that's so different from someone who has been listening to the word 30, 40, 50 years of their life and have never put their faith in Jesus Christ is that more of a miracle than that person?

you see here's the truth that he's communicating there isn't one person naturally that isn't dead in sin dead towards God yes we can flap our arms we're physically alive but spiritually we are so far away from him and that is exactly what he wants to communicate and it's the realization that that's the case and part of that deadness means that we go and do stuff we try and fill our lives with

whatever idols that we think can fill it whether it's drugs booze sex rock and roll whatever we do it even religion because we think religion we're coming close enough and doing you know the kind of right thing and God grades in a curve so we need what this is telling us is that we need to go from death to life but unfortunately tells us that we're absolutely powerless to do it and that's why I love verse 4 and if you've got your Bibles open the word I absolutely love and I mean I love three little letters about that word can pretty much describe Rory Barvis and any other single person that has gone from death no relationship with God hostile to God and I think it talks about being a child of wrath or something like that towards the end of verse 3 let me get my glasses and make sure I'm in the right place can't even see the numbers in my eyesight to that poor and I'm wearing glasses by nature objects of wrath there you go that's the right term by nature objects of wrath we're dead and we're hostile to God and because of our sin we've got no relationship with him it doesn't look good but that is the whole point of the gospel but

God yes that God who is holy holy holy that same God who could have wiped the whole of the universe that same God who is rich in love stop me in my tracks with a finger on my chest how far how far do you need to go and so I think as you begin to read this passage and begin to understand that the Jews who are deeply religious thought well we're not so bad as these guys I mean they're Gentiles they're terrible people look at them with all their pagan stuff is that how it was did he say well he does say you are privileged you're very privileged to have the truth to have it in front of you for God to so love you that he gave

[13:49] Jesus Christ for you to for you to know all of that but it goes beyond knowledge doesn't it that is the very point that he's making it's knowledge of who Jesus Christ is and what he has done and for you to receive that by faith that is God's gift to you that when you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ the great exchange begins to take place it happens first of all instantly because he died and paid the price for your sin done and then the process of life change thereafter until he comes again and that's the thing sometimes because you're religious and you come religiously to church which I commend you for but do not let that become the barrier to seeing Jesus for who he is in all his majesty and his life giving love for you when he laid down his life and paid the price for the sin of the world because he was doing it for people like you and me some of you who are near and some of us who are far away and it doesn't really matter which part of the prodigal sons you are whether you're the obedient disobedient one or the one who was feeding pigs who was dead but is alive again who was dead but is alive again what is the father saying in that moment we must celebrate this because that is what's so important about the gospel and for you to understand we were all dead and that is the point he goes on to make to those who believe in the gospel whether they were Jews or Gentiles and he's revealing to them they were all far away and they've been brought to the feet of Jesus the Savior but they must believe in him so he is the one the initiator the spark the one who is the power to release us from this body of death and to transfer us into this body of life light because of

Jesus Christ it's all about the Lord Jesus Christ so the scriptures are full of descriptions as to what Jesus Christ is doing and enabling to happen now I love this illustration I've bought myself a lovely Bible here it's called the Apologetic Study Bible it could do with more notes in the studies the usual study but it's got articles within it which I found very helpful and one is entitled how can Jesus death bring forgiveness and he's got a terrific image of what Jesus Christ is doing in his atoning work okay and he uses the picture of the Old Testament sacrifices and so in the Old Testament the priest would go into the Holy of Holies having sacrificed an animal and he would take the blood and he would pour it on the thing they call the mercy seat because people are barred from the presence of God and the holiness of God would kill you so this guy is an interceder he goes before them he goes on their behalf and he pours the blood over the mercy seat but under the mercy seat are the Ten Commandments the law and the idea is it's not that God won't remember your sins but it's a pictorial illustration so to speak of how he deals with sin and so in this sense the law has now been covered by the blood of the animal sacrifice and the idea of course is that God doesn't see your sin anymore when your sin is atoned for when it's forgiven that is such an awesome picture of Jesus Christ when Jesus Christ laid down his life and gave it over to judgment and wrath that he was the one who was taking wrath upon himself and as Luther calls it the great exchange when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ when we go from death to life what is happening is that Jesus Christ has made atonement he has made a payment he has made it possible for you for you to have your sins forgiven and you can be as religious as you want and that might never happen you

can be as irreligious as you want and that might never happen but the two meet together at Jesus when we realize hang on a second the one who was the creator the one who is the alpha and the omega the one the one who spoke and came into being came into this world took upon himself flesh was tempted at all points as we are and who was dying on the cross you see he wasn't dying for his own sin he had done no wrong so the death penalty wasn't for him it was for a people who were already dead for you and me so he makes atonement and he also dispels casts away the wrath of God propitiates for our sin the wrath of God for the believer is gone and I find I find when I come back to the western isles to Lewis I find that this image is so important for us to understand because when we were created in the image of God and sin came and distorted it and we were barred from the garden barred from the presence now through Jesus Christ he's bringing us back into that beautiful relationship a living relationship and the image of God is being restored through Christ Jesus what an incredible thing it is you see Jesus and Paul and others explained the point of that because of this sacrifice because the wrath has been dispelled by Jesus because of his work it was on him and it's been cast away there is now no more war between us peace between us is the reality because of Jesus Christ peace peace and that's why we can say [20 : 32] Abba Father Abba Father and we can sit in the shalom of God the peace of God that passes all understanding that's why now ain't he an awesome God but God who is rich in love God who is rich in love God who is gracious who didn't need to do this he could have been righteous and wiped the board but he didn't he's rich in love he wants to express his mercy mercy and grace are two brilliant words grace we're not we're getting something that we don't deserve mercy is we're not getting what we do deserve and that's what he's speaking about here that's the message of the gospel to you and to me today why we should be absolutely passionate about the gospel a people filled with the joy of the spirit the fruit of the spirit is love joy peace patience gentleness goodness self control and more to others at least you get the idea because there is such an incredible relationship a bond that cannot be broken because of the blood of Christ and that's why Paul writing in

Romans tells us nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus so that changes everything and so that's why a person like me can be changed and that's why a person who was brought up in the church knew the truth didn't believe it even for 50 60 70 years of their lives maybe and eventually place their faith in Jesus Christ that great transaction of the grace of God and the gift of God and faith working together beautifully the same thing is happening because there's the power of Jesus radically altering lives that are going in the wrong direction trusting in the wrong thing have their idols and the things that we trust in but God saying there is no other way I have shown you my love my rich love that I laid down my life for you faith Jesus trust in me come follow me okay let's sing

I think it was amazing grace wasn't it yeah I'll just pray first actually before me thank you thank you Lord God our heavenly father Lord I thank you for Jesus Christ I thank you for the power of salvation thank you for how you took me from one place as I was helpless and powerless to get to where I really needed to be but I thank you for what you did and I thank you for joining together with this group of people realising the same blessing what an incredible saviour we have I pray today that it will be a day of dawning realisation a day that we are blown away by the majesty of Jesus that as he explained further on in the text and referring to guys like me being an alien having no home but now in Christ

I have a home I have hope I have meaning I have grace and peace and all the blessings of what it means to be in a living relationship with you and I thank you for that and I pray that that will be the deep desire of every person here and I pray that they would trust you and follow you and know who you are and what you want for them to trust you and to receive the meanness of life Lord we thank you for being such a gracious God and Lord I pray that you would forgive us for the times when we are barriers to your work and to your grace working in the lives of other people and I pray that we would truly have a deep satisfaction today about this faith relationship we have with you and I pray that you would bless it and that we would be a blessing to others in light of what you amazing grace how sweet the sound it saved a wretch like me

I once was lost but now I'm found I was blind from there I see my hope for you is that you will not just sign this that you will sign how amazing God's grace is but that you will know how amazing His grace is that's it