

Title: But God...

Theme: The Believer's testimony is that God mercifully stepped into our dead existence and brought us to life.

Text: Ephesians 2:1-10

I. Introduction - Superheroes Save the Day

- A. They have great abilities
- B. People are put into a desperate situation
- C. The superheroes come into contact with the villain
- D. The villain seems to have the superhero defeated for good
- E. The superhero overcomes a seemingly impossible situation
- F. The superhero then steps in to save those under his/her care
- G. This is how God, through Christ stepped into our hopeless situation

II. We Were Dead in Trespasses and Sins (Eph. 2:1-3)

Dead means separation

In this case separation from Gods Spirit

Trespasses means going beyond God's Law

Sins means falling short of God's Law

(Both are examples of not perfectly following God's Law)

A. Characteristics of "Dead"

1. We followed our fleshly desires (Eph. 2:3)

We did whatever our passions and desires led us to do.

2. We followed the devil (Eph. 2:2)

He blinded our minds and deceived us into believing that the god we designed in our minds was the correct god, and would allow us to do what our flesh wanted to do.

3. We followed after the world (Eph. 2:2)

The world has devised a system that is fueled by Satan's deceptions and that appeals to our desires.

4. Our fellowship was with the world (Eph. 2:2-3)

We surround ourselves with like-minded people who reinforce our beliefs and practices

B. Consequences of "Dead"

1. We were kept in darkness by the devil (Eph. 2:2)

"The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ...." (2Cor. 4:4)

2. We were destined for wrath (Eph. 2:3)

"For the wrath of God *is* revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth." (Rom 1:18)

III. God Showed Mercy and Stepped In (Eph. 2:4-7)

A. Characteristics of God

1. Great Love (Eph. 2:4)

2. Rich in Mercy (Eph. 2:4)

God's Love leads to His mercy. Mercy is withholding the punishment that is due us. Because of our sin, we should be consumed by the fires of hell and cast out from God's presence forever, with no hope of salvation. Each day God's mercy triumphs.

"Because of the LORD'S great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (Lam. 3:22-23 NIV)

3. Rich in Grace (Eph. 2:7)

God shows the riches of His grace, which is granting us benefits that we have neither earned nor deserved.

B. Results of God's Love - He changed our destiny by saving us from wrath (Eph. 2:5-6)

1. Made us alive with Christ (Eph. 2:5)
2. Saved us (Eph. 2:5)
3. Raised us up (Eph. 2:6)
4. Seated us with Christ (Eph. 2:6)
5. Will show us greater things in coming ages (Eph. 2:7)

IV. We Are Alive in Christ (Eph. 2:7-10)

- A. We are alive by God's grace (Eph. 2:8)
- B. We are alive through faith (Eph. 2:8)
- C. We are alive through a gift, not through works (Eph. 2:8-9)
- D. We are alive for good works (Eph. 2:10)
- E. He will pour out His kindness on us (Eph. 2:7)
- F. This is every believer's testimony

“And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony....” (Rev. 12:11)

V. Applying the Word

- A. Am I a child of God or a child of wrath?
- B. Am I trying to earn salvation by works?
- C. Do I remember to thank God for His gifts of mercy and grace
- D. Am I in fellowship with a local Body, or is my primary fellowship with this world?
- E. Do I look for opportunities to share my testimony?

F. Do I look at my circumstances, or do I remember, “But, God...”?

Benediction: Romans 16:25-27