

EPHESIANS 2:1
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 34
Sept. 4/11

INTRO: It was recommended at a brotherhood meeting that I should, once a month, do an evening expository message. We will see how that will go. I am certainly honored by that request and had no difficulty knowing what I would preach. You see, twelve years ago, on September 6, 1998, I began a series on the book of Ephesians. On February of 2000, I finished chapter 1. It had taken 33 messages to get there. I then felt I must give it a break. That was 12 years ago. For some time now, I have been contemplating chapter 2 of this great book and now I want to begin. This morning I only want to introduce this chapter, but I want to add something extra on a particular style of preaching called expository preaching.

I might add here that we are in the process of training several men for the ministry. We will be beginning again this coming week, Saturday, 5:00 a.m. Our summer break is over and it is time to get back to it. And these students will be taught the major types of messages and how to prepare those. These major types are the topical message, the textual message and the expository message.

Most preachers preach topically. And for much of church life that is very important because the pastor must deal with specific issues that currently need to be addressed. Now the messages I will be doing on Ephesians are close to what is called the expository message. James Braga, in his book on this subject says that an expository message is, and I quote, "...one in which a more or less extended portion of Scripture is interpreted in relation to one theme or central idea. The bulk of the material for the sermon is drawn directly from the passage and the outline consists of a series of progressive ideas centered around that one main idea."

Now, personally, I hold a slightly different view as to what expository preaching is. The root idea of the word 'expository' is to expose. As I see it, the main task of expository preaching is to expose God's intended meaning of any given passage of Scripture to the hearers. I think it also could be called 'exegetical' preaching. And I would define it like this, "Exegetical preaching is the preaching

that is derived from a careful setting out of a passage of Scripture in its context following the grammatical structure and thought flow of the passage, giving account for every word in the passage grammatically, and syntactically. From this kind of work, the passage is outlined to determine the theme and its parts and title. Every part is then researched for important historical and cultural information with a careful research on the important words in the text."

This is a tremendously demanding kind of preaching done by very, very few preachers. And partly, very few do it because it is very time consuming, both in study and delivery, so that the preacher can cover very little Scripture in one message. Listen to John MacArthur and you will hear true expository preaching. And the second reason why very few do it is because very few are capable of doing it and very few are capable of doing it because very few schools place any emphasis on this kind of learning any more. As I see it, that is true all over America and it is rapidly deteriorating from those places that stressed this in the past. I recently spoke with a pastor with five years of Bible school and I think he received almost no training in this kind of preaching. I would be very pleased if in our ministerial elections we would find at least one who would have the God given desire to pursue this kind of preaching. I would also be very pleased if God would grant us one true theologian. Good theologians are very scarce, and I would say that is true especially among Mennonites. The church of the future is desperately in need of this kind of preachers.

We now want to introduce chapter 2 and its relationship to chapter 1. This introduction will much of our time tonight, but it will set the stage for all of chapter 2. So after this message, we will always just be right into the text without long introductions. Few messages will be as complicated as this one is, and if you don't follow it all that is OK. But this may be important to some of you and to some who listen to our messages on internet. So, as to the book of Ephesians, as I divide the book, it falls into two major sections. The first is the doctrinal section. That is chapters 1-3. The second is the duties section and that is chapters 4-6. That is how many of Paul's letters are structured.

Now chapters 1-3 I have titled, "The Wonderful Work of

Salvation." After introducing the letter in 1:1-2, in verse 3 Paul begins this section I have called, "The Wonderful Work of Salvation." We have looked at the blessed source of this salvation in 1:3-14. Then in 1:15-23 we looked at the thankful messenger of this salvation as he shares how he prays for the Ephesian Christians.

Now I would have liked to give you an assignment before we begin chapter 2. Here is what your assignment would be. Find the end of Paul's prayer. Give the reference like this: 1:15 -?? Now in the Greek, 1:3-14 is one sentence. The next sentence is either from 1:15-23, or as some have it, from 1:15-2:10. It is my position that 1:15-2:10 is correct. So 1:15 is the beginning of Paul's prayer, but where does it end?

Now if I you were in a class on Ephesians I would give you a further assignment. Look at 2:1 (read). Now notice that the clause, *'...He made alive...'* or KJV, *'...hath He quickened...'* is italicized which means that the words contained in this clause are not in the original text. The translators have supplied them because they think that these have been left out by ellipsis which happens thousands of times in Scripture. When this happens it is the translators task to determine what has been left out. And here would be your assignment. What do you think should be the verb in this text and give evidence for your conclusion. And as a student you would probably complain about your teacher's assignment being too difficult. I do not want you to complain, so I will give you what I think the answer is.

If I gave a title to this message, I would call it, "The Mystery of the Missing Verb!" There is something very, very interesting that happens in this long, long sentence. As you see, in the KJV the sentence begins at 1:15 and ends at 1:23. A chapter break is made, and a new sentence begins at 2:1. But, the subject and verb of this next clause are in italics, indicating that they have been supplied. These words are not in the original text.

This is what creates the mystery of the missing verb. What verb belongs in here? Or should there even be one? Well, for all translators the sentence got too long and cumbersome and they added a verb. But no verb wants to make sense. Now usually in the Greek, when the verb is missing, you can find the intended verb from the near context. You

can verify that by looking at all the italicized verbs in the KJV or NKJV.

So, we have the mystery of the missing verb. You might ask, "Well, how did they ever come to this verb 'quicken' or 'made alive'? Well, they searched in the context for a verb going backward and forward until they came to one they thought fit. That is what you usually do when you have words left out. They went forward all the way to verse 5 before they found what they thought was the solution to the mystery of the missing verb (read). So note that it talks about being 'dead in trespasses and sins' just like verse 1. And in verse 5 it says He made us alive even when we were dead in trespasses and sins. That must be it. That must be the verb the writer understood we would naturally supply. This is the solution to the mystery of the missing verb according to most translators.

But I struggled with that. It is an exceptionally long distance to go for a missing verb. Usually the near context readily supplies the missing verb (give an example here). So look at Ephesians 1:13 (read). Now you will note that the word 'trusted' is in italics. It is not in the original text. The original text did not need it because the readers understood that from the context. This is how they spoke. But for us English readers it doesn't make sense without the verb. Listen to it without the verb, "In Him you also, after you heard the word of truth..." There is something missing. But what verb needs to be supplied. Now look at verse 12 (read). That word 'trusted' in the near context tells us what the missing verb is here. Usually when the meaning will not be readily apparent, the verb is given. When it is readily apparent, it is left out. We do this very often in English. We don't notice but we are used to it. And in Ephesians 1:13, what is missing is readily apparent. In 2:1, however, what is missing is not readily apparent. And not only must you supply a missing verb in this case, but a subject as well. That is the word "He", referring to God. It too has been supplied.

Now this may all mean very little to you. I take time with this for a purpose. I do not know of a text I have ever spent more time on than this one, both in finding the solution to this mystery and in outlining the passage. In good exegetical work you have to give account for every word in a text. It is a lot of work but it pays off with incredible riches in understanding in some cases. And now I

want to propose an answer and I welcome any response from any listeners on internet or otherwise regarding this solution. Here is the solution to the missing verb: There is no missing verb! No verb was left out! No word needs to be supplied!

And for anyone listening with translation abilities from Greek to English you will challenge me and say, "OK preacher, then explain this mystery and satisfy the grammar of the text." OK, here we go. We will begin reading from verse 22, and remember this is not really the beginning of the sentence. We are going to begin here to get the flow of thought. I will read right through verse 1 of chapter 2. Here we go, "...and He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all, even you who were dead in trespasses and sins..." etc, etc... Now I did not change the text at all or add or take anything away and it makes perfect sense. But if you were very sharp you would say, "Hey, just a minute. You read 'even you' instead of 'and you' at the beginning of verse 1." And so I did. The word that starts 2:1 is the Greek word 'kai' and can carry the meaning of 'and' or 'even' or 'also'. So how I read the passage is perfectly legitimate.

Now let me answer the other question: "Where does Paul end the prayer he began in 1:15?" Here is my answer: He ends his prayer in 3:19. But within this section, he digresses twice. Now a digression is when you leave the main topic to go on a rabbit trail for a moment. You should be used to that from preachers. It is a little difficult to tell exactly where his first digression starts, but I think it is 2:1. As he tells them about his prayers for them, when his mind is drawn to the salvation of the Ephesian Gentiles he rabbit trails and explains their salvation. So this first digression from telling them about his prayers for them is from 2:1-22.

In chapter 3, he tries once more to get back on track with the topic of his prayers. He starts like this: "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for you Gentiles..." and then he digresses a second time. When you diagram this passage, he never finishes the statement he began in verse 1. His first digression was with regard to the salvation of the Gentiles. His second digression is with regard to the mystery of the Gentiles salvation.

Paul leaves verse 1 unfinished until he comes back on track a second time in 3:14. Look at how he begins, "For this reason..." He is picking his thought of verse 1 up again and continues like this, and I want to put verse 1 together with verse 14, "For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..." He is finally on track again.

Now, to show what his prayer would have been like if he had not digressed twice, let us read 1:15-23, then 3:1, then 3:14b through 19. Here we go, starting at 1:15, "Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. 3:1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles 3:14b bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Now in this reading we left out what I view as the two digressions.

With those explanations we are ready to begin looking at the first digression. Let me tell you how these digressions happen. We may be talking about something, and as we are talking we are reminded of something else and we say, "Oh, by the way" and we give our little additional thought. That

is what these two digressions are that Paul makes, and the information is incredible. No doubt at all, these are divine digressions. The thoughts he shares in these two digressions have added so very much to my own understanding of the Gospel.

Now these two digressions both have to do with the salvation of the Gentiles. That is us. We could not get more practical than this for our own benefit. Here we will find ourselves. We, in this church, are for the most part Gentiles. We have some Jewish blood hidden among us, because our Mennonite forbears that were Jewish hid their identity for their own safety. So, we view ourselves as Gentiles.

So, this first digression is dealt with in chapter 2. Preaching through chapter 2 is my aim in this section and if we have a message once a month in the evenings, this will take a long time. So, we begin by looking at this first of the two digressions, and we start in 2:1. The subject of this digression is regarding the salvation of the Ephesian Gentiles.

In 1:15, we have the beginning of Paul's account of his prayers for these Ephesian Gentile converts. In verses 15-16 he shares his thanksgiving for them. Then in verses 17-23, he shares the twofold purpose of why he prays for them. The first purpose is that God would give to them the spirit of wisdom and revelation. You can get all that in the messages done 12 years ago. The second purpose is that they might know three things. First, that they may know the hope of their calling. Knowing this hope should give encouragement to every Christian. Second, that they would know the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. And third, that they would know the exceeding greatness of God's power. That takes us to the end of chapter 1.

Now, in chapter two, we have Paul's first digression. Having been caught up that God fills these once vile and filthy Satan followers with all His fullness draws Paul to remind them of what they were like before they got saved, and then, what great things God did for them because they were now saved.

So, you will see in your outlines under point three that these two digressions will take us from 2:1, through 3:13.

However, the first digression is chapter two, and that is the passage we want to begin now.

3. The two digressions from his prayers (2:1-3:13)

a. Re: the salvation of the Gentiles (2:1-22)

So, in my understanding, in 2:1-22, in Paul's first digression, He deals with the salvation of the Ephesian Gentiles. And so, in 2:1-3 he shows what they were like before they were saved. Let me read 1:22-2:1a, as I understand the flow of the text, "And He (i.e. God) put all things under His (Jesus') feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all, even you..." And so, 2:1 starts like this, "...even you..." And tonight we can say he fills all in all, even in you and in me! As we surrender ourselves to Him in new ways and new areas, He fills us with Himself!

1) What the Gentiles were like before salvation - dead (2:1-3)

And so, in 2:1-3 he shows how incredible it is that these Ephesian Gentiles are part of the Church! Let me read these verses now right from 1:22 through 2:3, to see this contrasting picture, "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all, even you who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as others!" This

is what they once were. But now they are part of the Church and God is filling 'even them'!

Incredible! And as they yield themselves in ever expanding ways, He is filling all in all! In these first 3 verses Paul gives them a picture of what they, the Ephesian Christians, were like before they got saved (read). In the previous chapter the last thoughts were of the Church and that God gave Christ to be the head of the Church, which is His body. And now we will see of what horrible people, God is building His beautiful Church. When I think back to the messages I did on chapter 1, I would like to go back and redo verses 22-23 on the Church. But if we ever get into chapter 3, we will have ample opportunity to do so there, in Paul's second digression. Oh, how very important is the doctrine of the Church. It is God's greatest work in the last 2000 years. It is His body. It is His fullness. It manifests the Lord Jesus Christ to the world. It is incredibly beautiful, though it is made up of sinners, such as these Ephesians and us.

And Christ fills every place in every person He possibly can. You see, when Paul finishes explaining how he prays for these Ephesians he finishes by saying that he wishes that they may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height of God's love, and that they might know this love which surpasses knowledge, IN ORDER THAT they may be filled with all the fullness of God! (3:17-19).

Now, you see, not every Christian is filled with all the fullness of God. As a matter of fact, many, many Christians have very many areas yet to be filled with God. But every area yielded to Him, He fills immediately. I was recently

given a tract on envy and jealousy. These are two of thousands of manifestations of sin. But these two work insidiously in the church. Fine looking Christians, who put forward a nice Christian complexion, operate in the background out of envy and jealousy, and it goes undetected. No, not every part in every Christian is yet filled. But God longs to do so.

So, let us begin to look at what an incredible picture we have here. These Ephesian believers were now part of the Church, the body of Christ, of which He, Christ, is the head. And in this passage we now want to see how great a miracle that is. You see, 2:1 begins the description of what they were like before they were saved. First, they were 'dead'. This death speaks of spiritual death. They were far from God and spiritually dead! They were totally separated from God by their sin. They were unholy, filthy, and dead in sins. That is the picture of all Gentile unbelievers, dead, submersed in sin and filled with sin! So, Ephesians 2:12 says they were at that time, "having no hope and without God in the world." Dead! Separated from God! No hope! No life! Just death!

And I want us to notice now in what sphere this death operates. The text tells us that they were dead *in trespasses and sins*. Not only was every area of their being filled with sin, but they were submersed *IN* trespasses and sin!

Imagine people like that dying and meeting a holy God! What chance is there of life? None whatever! No, they were without hope and without God in the world.

a) The sphere of this death (2:1b)

(1) In trespasses

So, let us take a closer look at this word 'trespasses'. The word is *paraptoma*. Now there is a large list of words that describes that which is against God. We usually use the word 'sin'. Bishop Trench says of this word 'paraptoma', that it is, and I quote, "...the falling where one should have stood upright." In Romans 1:15, Adam's sin in Eden is described as a 'paraptoma'. He fell when he should have stood upright. His wife enticed him, and he failed to stand. God had instructed him how to stand and he fell.

Now, the Ephesian people, like all the heathen nations were dead in trespasses and sins. Their lives were filled with trespasses. They were filled with darkness and were submersed in this darkness. But now that they were believers, and that wonderful God they had now come to know was filling every area they surrendered to Him with light and life! Glory! And that is true of you and it is true of me. As we surrender more and more to Him, He fills more and more in us with all the fullness of God! That is incredible!

(2) In sins

Second, they were dead in sins. This word is *hamartia*, the word we use so much and translate as sin. This word means *to miss the mark*. And I always say that the mark it misses is the perfect will and character of God. Before

these Ephesians became believers, they were dead in trespasses and sins. They were full of sin. There was no light in them. All was dark and they were dead, dead in trespasses and sins.

Then the Apostle Paul came with the Gospel. And these wicked sinners got a look at themselves and fell under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and they repented and believed in Christ, and God began to fill them with all the fullness of God!

And as we close this message, I wonder, did God put His finger on some area in your life? Did He remind you about something? Tonight is the time to surrender it to God by repentance. And the very moment we surrender, He will fill that area with the fullness of Jesus Christ.

CONCL: And so, as we conclude this message, if you had been in class one of the test questions would be, "According to your teacher, what is the answer to the mystery of the missing verb?" And it is this, that there is no missing verb. The text, as I see it, should read like this, "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all, even you, who were dead in trespasses and sins." In order to be saved out of our trespasses and sins, we need to be born again. When we are born again, we are baptized in the Holy Spirit and filled with the Holy Spirit. But, in order for God to fill every area in us, we need continual sanctification.

Do you remember the illustration I gave you of the small container attached to the larger container, and the larger container was full of water, but a plug separated the larger from the smaller. That plug represents the trespasses and sins that separate us from God. That is what causes spiritual death. When we repent and believe the Gospel, that pictures the pulling of the plug, and the life

giving Spirit flowing into us and filling us. And so, when I pulled the plug, immediately the smaller container filled. That is what happens when we are born again. We are both baptized in the Holy Spirit and filled with the Holy Spirit.

But do you remember that the smaller container, representing the Christian had many objects in it and those areas, the water could not fill. Those areas represent trespasses and sins that yet need to be dealt with. And when God the Holy Spirit convicts us of those sins, when we confess those sins, immediately that dark spot is thrown out and immediately the water fills that place. And as long as we leave those areas in our lives and do not deal with them, the devil has access to us through those areas.

So, tonight I ask you, is there some area in your life that the devil owns? Wherever we have un-confessed trespasses or sins, the devil still has control there. From there he can get into our lives and wreak havoc. And the way to deal with it is to confess and forsake. If you have wronged someone, then confess to that person and take care of it. I have told you several times the story of Huddersfield and how sir John bought all of Huddersfield with the exception of one little lot owned by a Quaker. And one day Sir John made an offer so generous, he thought nobody could turn it down. He would cover the lot in gold sovereigns. The Quaker thought that over and said, "If thee wilt put them edgewise, we may talk business." And as Sir John, in his disappointment, turned to go home, the Quaker with a smirk said, "Sir John, remember that Huddersfield belongs to thee and to me."

J. Oswald Sanders, from whom I have that story said that as long as we have any area of sin in our lives which we have not surrendered to God in confession and repentance, the devil can smirk and say, "Remember Lord, that soul belongs to you and to me." And there, in that sin or trespass he has access to our life, just like the Quaker could pass through Huddersfield at any time, because he owned a small plot of it. And when the devil has access to our lives, from there he has access into others. Is there something you know you need to take care of, and you know what to do, but you don't because of some reason such as pride or anything else?

Now our text says that God fills every part of every true

Christian. And I propose that the very moment we repent of some sin or trespass, God immediately fills that part of our being as well. So Paul said God fills all in all, in these Ephesian believers. And according to Paul, God fills all in all, "EVEN IN YOU, WHO WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS." And you and I were also dead in trespasses and sins. We, too, are Gentiles in the flesh. Some of you older folk grew up like I did. You grew up in a religious home but when you became a teenager you, like I, lived in sin. We were like that sheet with all manner of creepy crawlies on it that God let down for the Apostle Peter and he said, "Rise, kill and eat." And Peter said, "Never. I have never eaten something unclean and I'm not about to begin now." And God said, "Peter, don't you ever call unclean that which I have cleansed." God was talking about us, the Gentiles.

And now that we are saved God fills every part of us though we are not Jews. And when God reveals an area in us that the devil has, and we confess and repent, immediately He fills that area as well. He has saved us and cleansed us and He is filling us. Glory to God in the highest!

And so, Paul writes like this, "And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all, even you, who were dead in trespasses and sins..."