



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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March 24, 2010
Midweek Lenten Worship
[Colossians 2:13-15](#)
Pastor Randy Ott

No Longer Dead, but Alive

“The day you eat of it, you will surely die” (see [Genesis 2:17](#)). That’s what God had said to Adam and Eve in the Garden about the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, right? Did you ever read that and think to yourself, “They didn’t die when they ate it. Adam lived about another 900 years. So maybe those critics of the Bible are right. Maybe the Bible isn’t quite so reliable as what we’ve always been told. Maybe it is full of air and mistakes and it can’t be trusted.”

I’ll grant you that if you would have had a bunch of the medical machines that we have today and you would have hooked it up to Adam, you would have still gotten a pulse and a blood pressure. You would have still gotten all the kinds of things we might measure to say whether a person is alive or dead. But as certain as anything in this world, Adam died and Eve died the moment they ate from that tree.

When they were created, when they came into this world, they were alive to God. They knew God’s will perfectly. They were in his image. They were spiritually alive. Think about what that means. Every night when they went to sleep, they had no guilt to contend with. They had no worry about how things were going to work out. They had no anxiety. They had no stress. They had none of the things that often cause our blood pressure to rise and our health to deteriorate. Every morning when they woke up, they didn’t have to worry about a single thing. They were walking in perfect unison with their Heavenly Father. Step for step, they were right in his footprints.

Now think about what happened the moment they ate of that fruit. They looked around and all of a sudden they are dealing with this new feeling...shame. They were naked. So they made some clothes out of fig leaves. They deal with guilt. They hear God coming and they come up with this bright idea. “Let’s hide.” Then when God reaches out to them and says, “What is it that you have done?” He tries to lead them to repentance and instead they point the finger at everyone, including God himself. “The woman you put here, she gave me some of the fruit and I ate it.” (See [Genesis 3](#).)

Now they were separated from God. They were spiritually dead, as dead as dead could be. That’s what we all are when we come into this world. When we come into this world, we are spiritually dead. We are enemies of God. We view God as the problem. Think about how often in our lives we still carry around that sinful nature that wants to

blame God for the bad things that happen in our lives. We are no different. We are carrying around the fingerprints of their death. We are walking step for step in their footprints as we carry around our sinful nature. So we are dead.

But that's why Jesus took on human flesh. That's why Jesus walked the face of this earth. He walked in footsteps that you and I can't, footsteps of perfection. That's why he was crucified on the cross. So that we who were dead might become alive.

I really believe that we don't appreciate the gift of God that is Christ Jesus until we truly appreciate just what dead means. To be spiritually dead doesn't mean to be impaired. It doesn't mean that we have to struggle harder and then we can bring ourselves back to God's love. It means that we are absolutely powerless and we have nothing we can offer up to God. God wants us to see just how clearly and absolutely certain it is that we are spiritually dead. That's why Paul talks about this written code that stands against us. The briefest summary of that written code is in the Ten Commandments, which talks about loving God and your neighbor. And if we are honest with ourselves, we don't do that. It points out just how dead we are.

Love God above all things...think of how many times you and I in our lives have thought to ourselves, "If only we could find the right doctor, if only we could find the right income, if only we could find the right person to have a relationship with, then our life would be better." I guarantee you we've thought that way more than we've thought "If only I was closer to God, then my life would be better." So it becomes clear, we haven't feared, loved and trusted in God above all things because when push comes to shove, when the rubber hits the road, we're looking in other directions for our hope and our confidence and our joy. We don't do the things the Lord has called us to do.

Even after he has given us the gift of faith and we want to serve him, our service still falls so far short, doesn't it? We come to God and we want to worship him, but before you know it, our sinful nature is whining about the melody of the hymns we are singing. "Why does it have to be so depressing? It's not like someone has died or something." Well, that's the whole point of Lent, isn't it? You and I killed Christ.

"Why do we have to sing depressing"...I love that comment during Lent. What are we supposed to be singing? We are reminded that we are wretched pitiful sinners who killed Christ. What do we want to sing? "Happy, happy, joy, joy, I just killed God?" It makes no sense. But our sinful nature just wants to whine. It becomes obvious we are so spiritually dead. We have nothing we could offer God. And even when we do by the grace of God serve him faithfully, then Satan jumps right in and our sinful nature wants some credit for it and thinks that God must love us more than he loves the other people that aren't doing these things. So sinful pride knocks us on our spiritual backside and throws us down in the dirt until we see quite clearly that we have nothing to offer God.

He also spoke about when we were dead in our sins and the uncircumcision of our sinful nature. Circumcision was this thing that God had given to Abraham and his descendants to say, "This is what you are going to do as an outward sign to show you

are a member of my family. Even though you were born away from me, now through the promise of the Savior I am drawing you close to myself. This is to show that you are a part of my family.” (See [Genesis 17.](#)) When we are born in this world, we are not a part of God’s family. We are separated from God’s family. We are completely and absolutely spiritually dead. So the uncircumcision of our sinful nature is just saying that when we were not a part of God’s family, when we wanted nothing to do with God, when we were absolutely dead in our sins, God did the unthinkable. He came and lived and loved us with a love that is absolutely perfect and that is absolutely amazing. That is what, even though we were dead, made us alive.

His Spirit works faith in our hearts that we believe that Jesus did all of this, not just for the world or the people out there, but he did it for them and he did it for me personally. We believe that Jesus took all of our sins, all the times we followed in the footsteps of Adam and Eve, and he carried them to the cross. There, all the accusations that the written code brings against us for all the times that we have failed God have been taken away. They have been carted off and dumped off someplace far away where God no longer views them. He remembers them no more.

Now he has made us alive. Think about what that means. He has given us the opportunity to see incredible spiritual truths. That the One who said, “Let there be light” and there was light ([Genesis 1:3](#)) is the One who said, “You are forgiven in Christ Jesus.” He said to us, “I have loved you with an everlasting love. You are my own. You were bought at a price.” He tells us that he loves us immensely and intensely. He tells us, “I have forgiven you here and now, and I will take you to be with me forever in eternity.”

We are alive to see this truth and then to apply it. All those times when we think that God is not there or God doesn’t love us, that’s our sinful nature trying to drag us down into the depths of spiritual death again. That’s when the new self has to stand up and say, “No! My God loves me. The proof of it is the cross. He loves me. There is no denying that. I can’t understand what good he is going to work out of this difficulty, but because I am alive in Christ Jesus, I trust and I believe what my eyes cannot see.” That’s what he has done for us.

It says in here that he disarmed the powers in authority...Satan. Satan still wants to come and make that accusation against us though to try to drive that wedge between us. But God made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. This public spectacle is an illusion to the Roman army after it conquered an enemy, parading the defeated foe in front of Rome to say “these people are no longer a threat to you.” They would strip them. They might cut off their thumbs so they couldn’t hold a sword. They might gouge their eyes out. But they would parade them through the streets and say, “This person that was an enemy is no longer a threat to you. They are no threat at all to you.” When the parade was over, they often were put to death.

Christ triumphed over Satan. So even now, in our lives when Satan tempts us to doubt God’s love or think he’s not there or any of this foolishness, when we say, “No, the Spirit lives in me. I am alive in Christ Jesus,” we are making that public spectacle of

Satan. We are making him this laughing stock because his temptation has been recognized and in Christ, it has already been defeated. So we live in this triumph. We live in this joy. We live in this certainty that we are no longer dead but alive.