

Ephesians 13-11-10a

This is Sunday, November the 10th, a special day for many of us who have worn green uniforms. 2013, we return to our study in the book of Ephesians, the letter Paul wrote to Laodicea and the churches and believers round about, carried in the same letter pouch with Colossians. We'll pick up our study in chapter 2 in the vicinity of verse 8. We'll take a moment to go before the Lord in prayer, dedicate our time and our attention to him and ask God's blessing on our study.

Shall we pray? Father, how grateful we are for the opportunity to gather together. We're not assembling in secret, we're not worried about neighbors or others taking a dislike to us and perpetrating violence on our persons or our property. We know that this is not the case in many, many places in the world and we know that you have designated us to live in this place and this time for a reason.

This freedom gives us opportunity to advance our understanding, to pursue a detailed knowledge of what your word says and how it affects us, how we ought to live in that light. And we pray that as we study these things together this morning, God the Holy Spirit will be our teacher, will reveal those things to us and will find in us motivated students ready to learn, to grow and to put into application the things we see from this wonderful portion of your word. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. If we were going to summarize in just a line or two what we have covered in the first chapter and a third here of this letter, in a nutshell, chapter one says, in Christ there is power. Wouldn't you think? He goes to great lengths talking about what it is to be in Christ.

There's many detailed benefits, but thinking back on it, when we're in the rush and the mix and the day-to-day turmoil of our lives, it is a hectic pace. We are assaulted on all sides by things that vie for our attention. We have responsibilities.

We have this constant fire hose like never before in human history of information being just blasted at us from everywhere. When a young lad would take the sheep out of his father's fold to graze them on the hillsides, he did not pass billboards, much less live billboards that change every 10 to 15 seconds like we have now. He did not have a phone doubling as an mp3 player, didn't have a radio that he could turn on and put in his earbuds and listen to tunes while he boogied out with the sheep to go find the greenest grass.

He wasn't jiving to the latest shofar tunes. He wasn't carrying around a little shofar of his own, practicing lead riffs that he heard from some band on his little iPod while he was going out to the field. At night, he didn't have video games that he could play.

He didn't have books that he could read. He didn't have something to watch. He didn't have a glowing blue square screen showing what was going on in Jerusalem, giving him the latest news, all of the political intrigues, all of the reporters investigating the graft and corruption between the leadership of Israel and the Roman overlords or the intrigues in the Old Testament days that went

on in the palace with people plotting to overthrow and take power or make backroom deals with surrounding nations, vice and corruption and compromise of worship and bringing in of idolatry in high places.

All of this went back to money. It went to power. It went to influence.

It went to self-indulgence. It went to pleasure. But the shepherd, going out to the fields, had nature around him, had God's sky above him and had the chance to reflect.

We typically do not have that luxury today. We are attacked. We are assaulted everywhere.

You can't get away from it. And it is a human viewpoint that attacks us in every way, in every shape and in every form. The environment around us is trying to convince us that there is no God, there is no spiritual reality.

What you see is what you get. Live fast, die young, eat, drink and be merry. Tomorrow we die.

Try to do a little good. Leave a good taste in people's mouths after you go. And the grass withers, the flower fades.

And when it does, it turns to dust. You scatter your ashes on the beach and everybody that's still around moves on. It is difficult to remember who we are and why we are here, that there is a greater reality.

It's extremely difficult. And it's unnatural. Because our flesh conspires with the testimony of the world and both of them are accessed and manipulated and encouraged by an actual malignant presence in the invisible world.

So there are three influences working against us. This is what Paul talks about in chapter 2. You who were dead in trespasses and sins, we didn't start out having any ability to climb out of this swamp, dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to what? The course of this world. Now you think these people walked in the course of the world.

They might go to the Agora or the marketplace or they might go down to the ancient markets once a month or twice a year or at the assembly feast or something in Jerusalem. They might go down and hear the latest things. Some guy standing on a... they didn't even have soap, much less soap boxes.

So he would stand on a mound of camel hides or something to proclaim his stuff. And they might hear this and come back and talk about it. Well, these are new ideas that maybe we ought to be worshipping Baal and Ashtar instead of the God of Israel.

And the people around us, they certainly seem to be doing better. We have a drought and a famine and the grass is scarce. And over there in Moab and Edom, look at how well they're

doing.

Maybe we ought to worship their gods. Maybe we ought to, you know, cover all the bases. We'll continue to worship God, but let's throw in a little bit for Baal and throw in a little bit, you know, the Philistines.

They seem to be doing well. They've got more power than us. Why don't we, you know, throw a few shekels toward Dagon, see if he can help us out.

The latest trends would come along, but not nearly to the extent that they do now. Even in the Greco-Roman world, with commerce and travel and trade, and you had so much more communication. It was modern.

It was trendy. You could get news from afar in just a matter of months. It was like lightning compared to the years that it used to take when you had to wait for a caravan to work its way from Ur of the Chaldees all the way down to Egypt or to the Holy Land, as we call it.

Now, in a matter of days, a ship sailed just eight or nine days ago from Rome and here's what's happening. They thought, wow, this is just so modern. Well, now you know about stuff instantaneously.

Somebody will tweet it. Somebody will message it. Somebody will put it on your news feed.

We thought news was getting current when it started coming on our pagers. We used to carry a pager, you know, and instead of just getting phone numbers, you could get little three lines of text and they started sending me little news feeds on there. I could find out on my pager what was going on.

I thought, wow, you know, what's this world coming to? Here's news happening right on my belt loop. Well, little did we know. The course of this world.

The course of this world is a water course. It is a river. It is a flood tide washing us.

Which way does water flow? Up or down? Down, right? The course of this world is a water course and it flows downhill like all water courses do. And it will wash us downhill, downstream, away from the high ground that we are supposed to be trying to take and hold. The course of this world.

According to the prince of the power of the air, this is an active malignant presence and it's not so much the air, the nitrogen, carbon dioxide, oxygen mix that we breathe. When you talk about the air in the ancient world, it's kind of like Jesus talking to Nicodemus in John chapter 3. You see the effect of the wind, but you don't know where it comes from and you don't know where it's going. So it is with everyone who is born of the spirit.

And he makes a play on words there with pneuma. Pneuma means spirit, and he's largely talking about the spirit and the things of the spirit to this teacher in Israel who ought to know these things and doesn't in John 3. But he alludes to the invisible. You don't see the source.

You don't see the destination. You see the effect. It's invisible.

The prince of the power of the invisible. We are quick to react to visible threats. I was driving along one time behind a truck that had a load of stuff and something fell off the truck and bounced down the highway and hit my windshield, even though I swerved three lanes over to avoid it.

I could see that there was debris coming off of this truck and I thought, I don't want to be behind him. I will suffer damage. And I just had a brand new windshield.

Just had a brand new windshield put in a couple of days earlier. And here's chunks. This is not just gravel.

These are rocks that are coming off of this overloaded truck falling onto the highway, and it's a five-lane thing, one of the biggest highways in Oklahoma. So I thought, well, this is danger on a stick. I'm going to go over here.

And so he's in the right-hand lane. I go all the way over to the far left-hand lane, as close to the median as I can get. And a rock about the size of a small tomato falls off the truck, bounces on the highway across four lanes, jumps up and hits my brand new windshield.

And you can walk out in the driveway right now, about 30 feet from where you are sitting, and you can see the pockmark that is still there in my brand new windshield that was done back in 1994. You see it coming, but you can't always avoid it. There are certain things you see coming, and it's just you see the coming economic crash in this country.

Don't know if it's going to be near or far, but it's coming. You can't do what our government is doing and not have an economic crash. It isn't a matter of if, it's a matter of when.

How long will everybody agree to fantasize that everything is healthy? How long will everybody agree to honor paper money that has no actual value? How long will people continue to play the charade among nations, well, you know, too big to fail, let's all just agree to keep going. But it's all a bubble. This is what happened in Silicon Valley, you know, decade, decade and a half ago.

This is what happened with real estate five, six years ago. And it's what's happening in the global economy now. Everybody is just sort of pretending that there is worth and value in the system of exchange because if they admit that there isn't, all of them are no longer rich.

But there will come a time when they cannot sustain the fantasy anymore. There's going to be a run. There's going to be a panic.

There's going to be a collapse. It is coming. We see it coming.

You can't always avoid what you can see, much less the things you cannot see, those that partake of the invisible. We once walked according to the course of this world, Paul says, the things that are in the world, the circumstances, the machinations that go on among people. Also, secondly, according to the prince of the power of the invisible, there are invisible forces at work.

We get just glimpses of this in Scripture. Remember the angel coming and talking to Daniel and saying, I would have been here sooner, but I was opposed by the prince of Persia, another invisible, angelic being. I was opposed.

I didn't get here when I planned to because there was opposition that you can't see. Fulfilling, thirdly, the desires of the flesh and of the mind. It isn't enough that the world has got this Mississippi River of influence washing us downstream.

It isn't enough that we've got Satan and his minions actively operating in the invisible realm to trip us up, to divert us, to deflect us, to lie to us. And every lie that he tells is attractive. Go back to the first archetypal lie that was ever told by Satan to humanity.

What is it? The fruit is desirable to make you wise. Don't be a fool, be wise. If you believe what God says, you're a fool.

If you believe that God created the heavens and the earth, that He flung the stars in space and created the galaxies, He's behind the Big Bang. He's behind quarks and all the particles they find in the collider. If you think that biological life didn't just form from algae and molds and primitive things, they just are touting something.

This was actually done a couple of years ago, but for some reason they keep wanting to repopularize or reemphasize small little things that happen in scientific research. A couple of years ago they said, you know, one of the things that our evolution theory cannot explain is how unicellular life became multicellular. How do you go from a single cell to something that's multiple cells? Because all of our unicellular life forms, our algae and our molds and things like this, bacteria, they just don't aggregate.

They don't form communities and start to diversify and specialize and become multicellular organisms. Well, they've sort of given up on figuring out how the unicellular cell came into being. That's just been a dead end.

So they're saying, well, we'll skip that for now. We'll come back to that. Let's figure out how the unicellulars came together.

So what do they do? A guy said, well, I'm going to take this particular kind of an algae and I'm going to put them all in a test tube and I'm going to centrifuge it gently so that they kind of

separate out. Then I'm going to take off the top 80% and just keep the bottom 10%. And I'm going to find, what I'm looking for are sticky ones.

The stickier ones, they're going to sink and the other ones will wash away. So I'll bust them into levels. I'll centrifuge them into levels.

Then I'll wash away the ones that don't stick together. Well, down at the bottom, you've got ones that are ever so slightly more adherent. Well, now I'm going to grow those.

Then I'm going to centrifuge them and I'm going to wash off the top ones and just keep the stickiest ones in the bottom. Well, he does this, I don't know how many times, 15, 20, 25 times, keeps doing this, keeps doing this, keeps doing this. What is he doing? He's artificially selecting for an algae that has some slightly more sticky attribute.

Well, after he does this a couple dozen times, he turns them loose and puts them in water and they stick together. They don't separate out until they're ready to reproduce. Then they split off, but he says, Aha, see, this is the beginning of multicellular.

So now there are headlines in the scientific journals, we have figured out how unicellular life became multicellular because if there was some stream flowing by and they were in some little pocket and they, over time, became more sticky and they started sticking together, voila, now you have animal life, you know, zebras and giraffes because these things stick together. How do they make this stick? They redefine multicellular to mean any aggregation. They don't communicate, they don't know of each other's presence, they're just sticky enough to not separate in a jar.

But they tout this as multicellularity. Well, what does this do? People who don't research, who don't understand, this is more of the world, more of the unseen forces arguing, convincing, trying to compel people to think you're not smart unless you know science. If you know science, you know that it's absolutely possible for life to create itself.

And here's another piece of evidence. It's false evidence. This is not multicellular life.

It's sticky unicellular life artificially created in the same way that Miller-Urey was amino acids that were artificially created and that immediately broke down, were incapable of joining and linking and becoming anything more. It's a one-step. They say, look, I throw sand into a volcano and when it blows back out and lands on a flat rock, it's glass, hence automobiles.

This is the level of argument. Well, why does it appeal? What is the hook? It's this third thing in verse 3. We conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh. The third appeal is to the enemy within.

It's our pride. I don't want people thinking I'm dumb. I don't want people thinking I'm uninformed.

I'm unscientific. I'm mystical. I'm easily fooled.

I'm some sort of a backwoods yokel. I'm no better than some hillbilly that just came down from the creek. And I still believe in God and believe in special creation.

Come on, join the rest of us who have knowledge. It appeals to our flesh to be thought of as smart. This is how Satan did it in the garden.

It is desirable to make one wise. She saw that it was good to look upon. The fruit was pretty.

And you love to be intellectual and it makes sense. And to be thought of as wise. To think of ourselves as wise.

And that's the motivation that Satan encouraged within her. Found the flaw in the flesh. Encouraged it.

Warmed it up. Helped it to grow and expand until she violated God's command. So we've got three strikes against us and Paul details them here.

The course of this world. The prince of the power of the air. That spirit which now works in the sons of disobedience.

It's still active. Those who are disobedient are motivated by, they are led along the path by the prince of the invisible. Power of the invisible.

Power of argument. The lusts of our flesh. The desires of the flesh and of the mind.

Which makes us by nature children of wrath. Children of wrath. This is going to bring judgment upon us.

We cannot dwell with God. We cannot enjoy the presence of God when these three things are all at work in and around us. Verse 4. But God who is rich in mercy.

We saw the distinction in our Scripture reading between grace and mercy. Do you remember what it is? Remember the difference between grace and mercy? Mercy is not receiving what we deserve. Grace is receiving what we don't deserve.

God who is rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in trespasses, instead of condemning us, instead of consigning us to oblivion, to the lake of fire, to eternal punishment, what did he do? He made us alive together with Christ. In his mercy he took away the penalty and in grace he provided salvation. Notice.

By grace you have been saved. Mercy and grace. Both present in this passage.

Mercy operated first, taking away what we deserved, which is death and separation and annihilation. Grace followed by making us alive together with Christ. Raising us up together and making us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

Another one of those in Christ benefits. Now, just like we saw in chapter 1, God does a thing in Christ in order that, in order that, verse 7, in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. It's a memorial.

It is an eternal record. It is not just a short-term stopgap fix. It is an eternal testimony to God's character, to God's love, to God's grace, to God's mercy.

We will be an everlasting memorial and remembrance. Our presence day by day or whatever passes for a day in eternity, any angel, any human, any creature of God will look at us and say, what a great God. In the same way that the Lord Jesus, seated at the right hand of the Father, is a testimony right now to those same things.

But we are raised up to sit together with him to show forth the exceeding riches of his grace. Now, these things just really surpass us. When you talk about grace and glory, in the abstract it sounds wonderful, but we're all going to get up and pack up our gear and leave here and go back to living the normal quote-unquote human life, right? What difference does this make? What difference should it make? Well, think about these three things, that we were powerless to escape before Jesus Christ.

You have the course of this world. We've been delivered from it. We are no longer helpless in its grip.

We don't have to be compelled and driven and washed downstream by the course of this world. We have an option. Have you ever seen a documentary or a movie of any kind where they're showing a raging river and somebody has fallen in and they're being carried along.

They're in the middle. There's rocks. There's, of course, the inevitable waterfall downstream.

And they are trying to escape and they can't. There's people running along the bank trying to help them. Nobody can really dive in and get them and bring them to shore because they would be in the same fate.

And it's a dire extremist. They are going to die if somebody doesn't get them out of that raging course. And you think how wonderful if somebody can be downstream, throw a line, have a boat, come down with a helicopter and a guy on a hydraulically controlled lifting thing where he can go down and grab the person.

They can helicopter them to safety. But it's extraordinary. Something extraordinary has to happen.

That person has no recourse. They are going to die if some outside agency doesn't deliver them. Well, there's that possibility.

I'm sure that Native Americans fell into such raging floods at some time or other and there wasn't

any help and they washed over and they're dead and gone and nobody even knows what happened to them. But through Christ, the availability of deliverance from the course of this world is there. We choose whether or not to avail ourselves.

Somebody with some weird suicidal impulse where they say, Wow, I'm really enjoying this ride. This is the greatest ride of my life. I don't want it to end, might not grab hold of a life ring or a line extended or a guy coming down trying to say, Let me go.

I'm having a good time. I don't care what happens after this. This is so much fun.

I've never had such a thrill ride down a river as this and would refuse and fend off any attempts at rescue. But the option is there. The prince of the power of the air, the deception that so imbroglios us, so fools us that we think what is bad is good.

We think what is healthy is healthy. It's actually poisonous. Something is offered to us and it appears to us to be wonderful and uplifting and just the best, greatest thing.

And there is death in the pot. But it's invisible. We can't see it and we don't know that it is at the behest and according to the evil designs of an actual intelligent agency trying to fool us.

How do you penetrate the deception? How do you see through the disguise? Well, we have no power to do that. God does and in Christ He gives it to us. And thirdly, the desires and the lusts of our own flesh.

We're powerless in the grip of our own compelling selfishness. We want stimulation. We want pleasure.

We want gratification. We want what we want even when it doesn't make any sense. I don't even want to think about whether it makes sense or not.

I just, this is what I want. There are times when something happens. A person is standing there taunting or mocking or doing some awful injustice and you just want to plant your face, plant your fist in their face, through their face to the back of their head and you don't care about consequences.

You don't care about anything other than nothing would feel better than my fist traveling through your face and out the back of your cranium right now. And it's just an unreasoning wrath over some perceived horrible injustice and I don't care about anything except gratifying that desire. Well, there are many areas of life in which these compelling, seemingly overwhelming desires control us.

Look at people in the grip of addiction. Cannot escape crack cocaine. Cannot escape alcohol.

Cannot escape whatever it may be. Prescription painkillers. Lack the power.

This has a power of 10. I have a power of 3. And every time the two come in conflict, it's like me trying to arm wrestle, you know, The Rock. I am going to lose.

He is going to win. There is no way I can ever win in an arm wrestling match with The Rock, with this big muscular guy. He's infinitely stronger than I am.

I will simply break my arm even if I try. In the grip of the flesh, in Christ, verse 7, God shows the exceeding riches of His grace because He overcomes and delivers out of all three of these. You know what that means for you and me? You and I have no excuse for being carried downstream by the course of this world.

No excuse. Because the Lord Jesus Christ is there delivering us from it. We have no excuse for being fooled and deceived by the Prince of the Power of the Invisible because God has given us His Holy Spirit.

He has given us His Word and it penetrates. It lifts the fog. It parts the screen.

It shows you the little man behind the curtain. He's not as great and powerful. He's a little old guy with a machine.

God reveals it. You know, they used to show that movie every year and I think that tradition has died. And it's a shame because there are some good analogies.

If you understand the way literature works, that's actually a very interesting story in terms of what it means analogically in real life, the Wizard of Oz. Thirdly, the grip and the drag of our corrupt nature. We are reborn.

We are regenerated. We are given new life, a different identity, a different power source, a different driving motivation inside in Christ. All three of these things are defeated.

All three of them are neutralized. All three of them are taken out of the way in Christ. However, it's optional.

We have no choice about being in the grip of all three of these. Almost sadly, we do have a choice about whether or not to be delivered from them. God does not overrule our decider, our chooser.

He simply gives it freedom. When you know the truth, the truth makes you free. What does that mean? Free to choose.

You are free to choose to be swept away by the course of this world. You are free to choose to be fooled by Satan into eating the fruit and causing incalculable devastation to yourself and others. And you are free to indulge the lust of your flesh if you want to.

Before, we were slaves to those things and we almost couldn't be held accountable because how can you resist that which is irresistible? Now it is resistible. And with freedom comes accountability and responsibility. And are these things made distasteful? I used to cure people of smoking by hypnotizing them and telling them, when you taste tobacco smoke, it's going to taste like rotten, moldy orange peels.

It's going to taste like the bitterest piece of burning tire you've ever smelled. I am going to program your brain to associate the taste of cigarettes with vile, awful, spit-it-out, get-me-out-of-the-room stuff. And what does that do? Well, it is an attempt to get away from the element of choice.

I now can't abide the taste of a cigarette. And don't you wish sometimes that God would do that with sin versus righteousness and good versus evil and so on, that we would just be so overwhelmingly put off by anything evil or sinful that we would just be good all the time. Our instinct would just be to shudder and to turn away and to run fleeing from evil and sin.

And we would never indulge the lust of the flesh. We would never give any hearing to the ways of this world. And we would never be fooled by Satan into thinking that what is actually evil, poisonous, and destructive is good and healthy and wonderful.

That's not the way it works. The truth sets us free. God in Christ has set us free.

And now it's on you and it's on me. And you know and I know these alternate choices that are still there in the course of the world and the invisible prince and the drag and drive and lust of our flesh, it's attractive. It wouldn't be a temptation if it wasn't tempting, if it didn't appeal, if it didn't offer the illusion of pleasure and advance and progress.

If it wasn't tasty, people wouldn't be rushing to the table to try to eat it. Of course, it's desirable. That's what Eve said when she looked at the forbidden fruit.

It's desirable. It's beautiful. It'll make me wise.

Of course, it's tempting. You can't trust your instincts when it comes to making this choice because our instincts say, you know, actually, this is probably okay. We will rationalize.

We will join in the deception with the devil. We will chime in and help him out with some additional arguments. We will find ways to justify going with the course of the world because downhill's easy.

Downhill's always easier than uphill. You know, I really deserve a break. I'm tired of fighting this uphill battle.

Why don't I just float? I deserve to coast a little bit. Other people are coasting. Why can't I coast? It's always downhill.

What about the desires of the flesh? Well, when am I going to get mine? Everybody else is getting theirs. I should get mine. And we just irrationally, unreasonably justify.

There's no excuse. In Christ, we have been set free. What is our calling? What is our obligation? Get your eyes out of subjectivity.

All of these things partake of subjectivity, don't they? What is subjectivity? Eyes on self. Eyes on circumstances. Eyes on people.

Where should our eyes be? Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him kept his eyes on that joy, endured the cross, despising the shame. Now he is seated at the right hand of the Father. That is accomplishment.

That's truth. That's genuine good. And he did that for us.

And we are supposed to be lifted up and raised up together, made to sit together in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus, verse 6, in order that in the ages to come, God's grace, God's mercy, God's glory is vindicated and shown forth. What's the future in self-gratification? Misery, pain, sorrow. You hurt yourself and you hurt others.

Always. Self-gratification always ends in pain. Why do we not learn this lesson? Because we're short-sighted.

I see the pleasure. I don't see the pain. A girl and a guy out on a date, late at night, by themselves.

They see the pleasure. They don't see the pain. They see tonight.

They do not see the cold light of dawn. They don't see pregnancy. They don't see split families.

They don't see broken hearts. They don't see lost dreams. They don't see staying home and taking care of a kid instead of opportunity for education.

They see getting irrevocably related to someone instead of waiting and meeting a person of God's design, a soul mate. There are scars. There is pain.

There is bleeding. There is suffering. There is no end of consequences, but in the moment, all you can think of is, I want, I want, I want.

We're so short-sighted. It is the drag and the deception and the course of this world all at work. The Lord Jesus Christ has given you and given me freedom from that.

We can opt out of it. We have an alternative, but we have to choose it. We have to avail ourselves.

We have to lay hold of it and use it. A fire extinguisher is of no use if you panic in a fire and stand there and go up in a big ball of self-immolating flame. The fire extinguisher was right there.

Why didn't you use it? This is our problem. We willingly allow ourselves to be fooled, to be dragged down, and we willingly conspire with our own flesh to gratify ourselves and cause ourselves and others inevitable, inordinate amounts of pain. We're just stupid.

It's just stupid. The exhortation from Paul in Ephesians 2 is don't be stupid. Be wise, knowing what the will of the Lord is.

Be not fools, but wise. Does Scripture not say this? Be not fools, but wise. Look at this.

If you can stop, if we can stop for five seconds and think about Ephesians 1. Wait a minute. I'm not in the course of this world. I'm not floating inevitably down toward the waterfall.

I am not fooled by the representation of the invisible one. And I am not a slave to my own flesh. I have been delivered.

I am set free. Why? I am in Christ. In Christ is not a theological abstract.

It is a fact of your existence. You and I are in Christ right now. And it makes us free.

And there is no excuse. You are just flat stupid. We are flat stupid.

If we do not look at the work of Jesus Christ, the sacrifice, many sacrifices He made on our behalf, and He sits at the right hand of the Father right now interceding and pleading with God the Father and with us to close that gap, to bridge the gulf, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary. The Lord Jesus Christ, if you put your eyes on Him, everything falls into perspective. Wait a minute.

I don't have to take this course of the world. I don't have to listen to this deception. And I don't have to be in the grip of my own desires.

If you look at the Lord Jesus Christ, perspective immediately resumes. Sometimes someone is inebriated and drunk, and there is a pressing need to be sober, and you wish you could just instantly sober up. You wish you could instantly get the alcohol out of your system.

You wish that the scales would instantly fall from your eyes when you are blind. You wish you could instantly be well because you need to be able to do something for someone, and, oh, I've got a broken this and a bent that. You wish you could just instantly fix it.

We can instantly fix these problems. There is instant relief. It's unlike the way of this world.

It takes time to heal up. It takes time to get over stuff. Not in the spiritual realm.

We can instantly have perspective. We can instantly have clarity. We can instantly have power because it is of God and not of us.

It doesn't partake of this world, and it's not subject to the limitations and the momentums of this world. It's instant. Instantaneously, you can see.

Instantaneously, you can stop. Instantaneously, you can move in the right direction in Christ. That's the message of these first verses of this letter.

We're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to resume at verse 8, and in context, Ephesians 2, 8, and 9, this well-worn verse is going to have some fresh traction, I think, in our souls because with this as background, understanding what it is to be saved by grace through faith makes a huge difference. It's not just a theological statement.

It is a practical tool for daily living. Let's pause here and take our break.