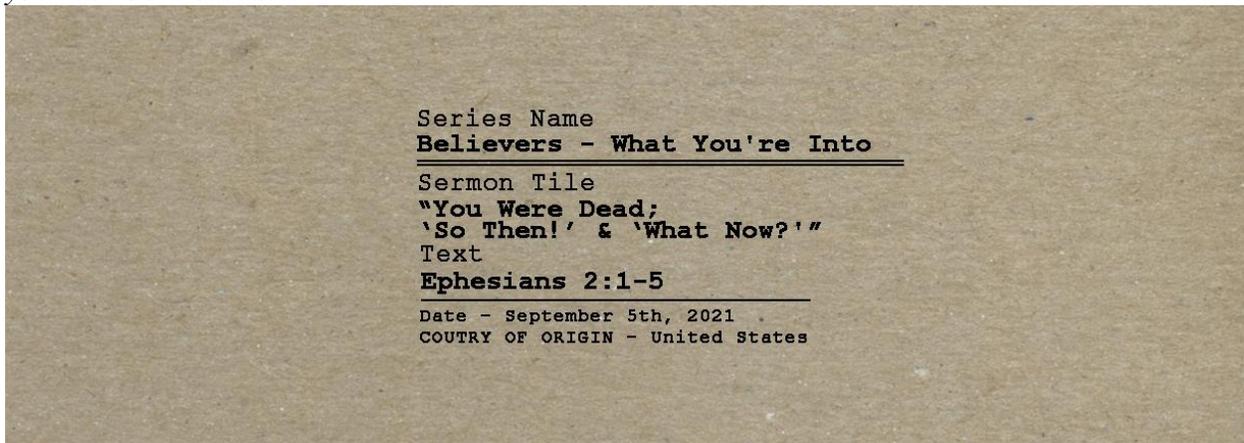


# You Were Dead; "So Then?" & "What Now?"

## [Ephesians 2:1-5](#)

*"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body<sup>u</sup> and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.<sup>u</sup> <sup>4</sup> But<sup>u</sup> God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved"*



Sermon Outline is available [HERE](#).

Video of Sermon is available [HERE](#).

Transcript of sermon:

Pastor Thom Rittichier

Well, this morning, I am going to talk about something that has been in the works for a while. I want to talk about it very thoughtfully this morning with you and yet very clearly and distinctly, because it is a clear and distinct passage. So, if you were told this, "we're dead in the water here". What would you take that to mean? What would you take that as being said? We're at a standstill. Yeah. We're not going anywhere. And that would be especially true if you are on one of these. These are two different cruise ships from the Carnival Cruise Line. And these two ships, the Splendour and the Triumph, both experienced being dead in the water. Here is the picture of the Splendour being approached, as it's dead in the water. And that's the one of the Triumph being towed in to San Diego Harbor. This one went to Mobile, Alabama. And that one was towed into San Diego. A fire in the engine room of the Triumph caused it to be dead in the water. As a matter of fact, I have the articles of this on my phone. And it talked about them being stranded Sunday through Thursday. And it is a frightening experience to be going nowhere, dead in the water. Here are a couple other illustrations of that happening. Here's another cruise ship.

And it's capsized there. As a matter of fact, when I did this I came up with several pictures from a Google of Carnival Cruise ships, with fires and things of that nature. And you recognize this one, right? We've talked about this one before. This is the iceberg with the Titanic that caused it to be dead in the water. And it is quite frightening and horrifying what that really turned out to be. Now these people up here on these two ships were all fine and got to land. But these, on the Titanic, weren't fine and didn't get to land. You know the story of the Titanic, it's been made into a film several times describing that story. Let me tell you another one that came really close to home and it happened here, in this waterway. This is the waterway of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where it's called Three Rivers and that is because there are three rivers that come together there. This one is the Allegheny and this one is the Monongahela and this one is the Ohio River. And for you who are aware, on these three rivers sits this stadium right there. This is where the Steelers will be playing the Raiders today, at that very stadium. And on that waterway, where there were some folks boating on that. You can see from this picture, there were a lot of folks boating there. As a matter of fact, in one was my brother's brother in law, who is boating on that water. His wife's brother and her sister's husband were boating on this waterway, and their boat motor quit. And this waterway took them over a nearby falls and they did not make it.

Being dead in the water can be a frightening thing, a horrifying thing. And this, being dead in the water, and more is what God describes to us in the passage we are looking at this morning, Ephesians 2:1-6. I'm going to ask you to turn there. We are in a series called "Believes/What You're Into". And like no other passage in Ephesians, though Ephesians frequently and amazingly points out what you're into as a believer, this passage, like no other, makes it very clear and distinct to us. There is no note of uncertainty here. This is what you're into. This is it. And here's how it plays out. So if you are with me in Ephesians chapter two, I'd like to start at verses 1-3 and see what God has to tell us. He says very clearly, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even like the rest of mankind." That passage, though there's more to it, that passage is in very stark colors. A man named Alexander MacLaren, who was pastor during the time that Moody and Spurgeon were around, says this, "Scripture paints man as he is, in darker tints, and man as he may become, in brighter ones, than are elsewhere found. The range of this portrait painter's palette"...Now you know what a portrait painter's palette is? It's that thing that a painter always has, they put their thumb through a hole and it's kind of like circular and they've got all the paints on this. That's the palette. And they take their brush and they construct amazing things. When my girls had their break from college, we went to the Indianapolis Art Museum. And I actually, you can do this now, took photos of some of those pictures and have kept them because with dabs of paint, they make amazing things. One picture that I took a picture of was two girls standing by a bureau that when you get up close, it looks just like a bunch of random dabs of paint, but when you look at it at a distance, it's amazing. I'm gonna just stop there talking about my art experience. It's what they did with the palette....And as he describes this, he says the "range of this portrait painter's palette is from pitchiest black to most dazzling white". "Nowhere else are there such sad, stern words about the actualities of human nature; nowhere else are such glowing and wonderful ones about its possibilities." This can be for you.

Let's look at the rest of these possibilities. We've seen the dark clouds. Now the sunlight, verses four through six, "But God being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-by grace you have been saved-and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus". And there's a purpose, which he goes on to say. Now, I want you to know that, by the inspiration from God, what the Apostle Paul wrote, he wrote as one long sentence, that's just one sentence. All of that, verses one through seven. If I were having an English teacher, look at this, they would probably say, looks like a run on. But the Apostle Paul is in Greek, and he is pouring out this very bleak picture of a frightening hard circumstance and a very bright picture of what is the possibility. And I want you to know, as we do this this morning, that this is the Bible we're dealing with. It's the Bible. The title that I have for this morning's message is, You Were Dead. This is the Bible. And it's a quote of the first words of the sentence, "And you were dead". This is the Bible. This is not the fermenting imagination of Stephen King, as he unfolds for you some "thing", some "it", that we're to get. We are to get it. And I'm not talking about Stephen King's "It". We are to get "it", but it's what God unfolds to us here, we are to get it. And in order to get it, we're going to see it in this regard: Once dead with the world. So then what was that. He describes what it was here, once dead with the world, he describes what that was. And he goes on to say: Now alive with Christ. What now? And he tells us what now.

Now, you've probably noticed, sometimes I use some books, some books that look pretty old, to quote some things to you from. And I want you to know why I do this. I want you to know that this is not my dreaming this up. This is what the Bible has said. And this is what others, who have given their time, have seen that it says. In this book by Curtis Vaughan, he tells us that this "whole paragraph", this whole sentence, in the Greek, "is a sort of spiritual biography describing what believers once were apart from Christ", once dead with the world. And so then what was that? And "what they, believers, have become in Christ", now alive with Christ. What is this now? That's what we're going to talk about this morning, what we were and what we are now, most pitched darkness-most brilliant light.

So let's start with this one, what we once were, once dead with the world. Now I need to let you know, as we look at this, that you were is a past tense thing, you were dead. You were. But I want to say this right away, not only is it potential that this is what you were, but for some, it is potential for what you are now. Unless you are knowingly saved, unless you know beyond a shadow of a doubt, that you have trusted your life to Jesus Christ, and he has changed you from the inside out. If you don't know that, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that you have trusted Jesus Christ, with your life, Jesus Christ who died on the cross for your sin, to pay the sin debt, Jesus Christ who was buried for three days in a tomb, demonstrating beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was dead. And then rising again from the dead by the Spirit of God, the spirit of holiness, he raised himself from the dead, showing the reality of life out of the dead. If you don't know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that you have trusted your life to Jesus Christ, in his death, burial and resurrection, then you are now in what he's about to describe, your dead. Now I know that's frightening. And I know it's distinct and clear and forward. I get that. But the passage, which is God's word, and not a fruitful, fermenting imagination, is clear and forward for you. If you were saved, this is what you once were. If you're not saved, this is what you are now, you are walking dead. That's what you are.

Notice how it says, verses one and two, "And you being dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked", you are walking dead. What are such people dead to here? What are they dead to? If they're walking, they're not dead in the world. If they're committing acts such as sin and trespasses, they're not dead to activity. They're very much present in the world and active. What are they dead to? Well, you know, the apostle Paul helps us here because in the same book Ephesians, chapter four, I'm going to ask you to turn over there with me to Ephesians chapter four, he describes this. Ephesians 4:17-20, "Now this I say and I testify in the Lord", the Apostle Paul's holding up his hand and he say I'm declaring this, I say, and I testify in the Lord, "that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do." Those are people who are not introduced to Christ. They are called the Gentiles here. Don't walk as the Gentiles "in the futility of their mind". They only live in their own thinking, they are darkened, it is a dark place. "They are darkened in their understanding, alienated", they are foreigners to God, "alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance", their unawareness of what God has done for them, that is in them, "due to the hardness of their heart". Their heart is hardened and unresponsive to the appeal of God. "They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality", to live for their feelings, "greedy to practice every kind of impurity", they are interested in that. "But that is not the way that you learned Christ!" Here is what such people are dead to. They are dead to God, his life is completely alien to them. They are like living in a foreign country as an alien, not understanding the language or the customs. And we're not talking about a country here. We're talking about God, that is the way they are with God, in God's world, they are dead to God. And you were, if you're saved, you were. If you're not rescued, by the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that's what saved means, to be rescued by Christ, then this is what you are now, dead to the life of God.

Another question here. What causes this walking dead condition? What causes them to still walk on in the world being dead to God? The answer is trespasses and sin. What he's saying here, this trespasses, is taking steps that don't conform to what's real, it's losing your way. You know, sometimes, I move through my house at night, because I want to shut the lights off and I want to go somewhere. I just did this last night, I shut off my lights in my study. And then I started to leave, the lights are at the desk and the doors over there. And as I did that, of course, you know what happens when you shut the lights off, right? It's dark. And you can kind of take steps that don't conform to what's really there. For example, I took a step last night, and I stepped right on my computer cord as I moved my foot to move around the desk, and it goes flipping around on the floor, and of course that I have to adjust. And I take another step, bringing my hand down, and as I took that step, bringing my hand down, I knocked over the bicycle pump. Everybody keeps a bicycle tire pump in your study, don't you, don't you have one readily available there? I knocked my bicycle pump off onto the floor. And then I was stumbling around in the dark, trying to figure out what it was. And I found it. And then I felt where it goes and put it back. And this morning when I walked into the study, it wasn't where it goes, it was way up on some boxes that I have sitting in there. That's losing your way. That's losing your way, in the darkness. That's what trespass is. You lose your way. Because when people are born, they are not born alive to God. Because of Adam's and Eve's sin, we are born alienated from God, we are born bent away from God. And thus, we're on a lost way. It's a lost way. And we take steps, on this way, that kind of knock things over. That's trespasses. And also sins. Sin is the term that you completely miss the target that God's set up for us, because they're alienated from the life of God. They aren't living the life that God has given to man when he made him and put him in a garden, to

have a fruitful life to enjoy it. Oh, there's things that are enjoyed, but they missed the target of what God had in mind. The walking dead, what causes them to be walking dead? Their steps aren't conforming to reality. And they're completely missing it. They're missing it. As a matter of fact, this picture that Paul presents here is that our whole world is a graveyard of walking dead. You know how walking dead people walk? How many walking dead things are there now? I mean, there's movies and their series, there's even animations and cartoons. Wouldn't that be a funny cartoon, walking dead cartoons? And you know how they always walk and how they always look, as walking dead in the world. This is the picture, alienated from the life of God, walking dead, in ways that aren't dealing with what's there correctly, missing it.

What are they walking to? If they're alien from the life of God, that's not the drum beat they're walking to. So to what drum beat are they walking? That's another question. What is this walking about? Look at verse two. This is what they're walking to. They walk according to or following the course of this world. They walk according to or following, verse two, the prince of the power of the air. That is the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. What are they walking to? They're on a path that is the course of this world. How many walking dead things are out now? About as many as NCIS I think, right? What season is NCIS in any way? 19, I just looked it up. And how many NCIS's are there? Well, there's Los Angeles, and there's New Orleans, and there's of course the main NCIS with Gibbs, and there's a new one this year, NCIS Hawaii. Oh, that's got to be good. Surely it will be entertaining. Entertaining, with its crime and its sin and its corruption. Do you see something there about the course of this world? 19 seasons! Man, Gibbs is getting old, I'm telling ya, 19 seasons and many spawned versions. Because it's entertaining and it's popular in our world. Do you see something there about the course of our world? How good would a show be if it was about people going to church and looking to find good things that other people are doing? That wouldn't last a season in our world, would it. Because there's a course of this world. There's a course, there's a course. And that course is the prince of the power of the air. And I just did that for you to paint the picture, very vividly, of that course. It's the course, it's the prevailing course. What entertains us, trespasses and sins, and figuring them out. Wow. That's what entertains.

The course of this world, the prince of the power of the air. Do you know who that is? That term, prince of the power of the air, means that he is the chief or the one who is ruling this domain. Jesus called him, the god of this world is coming. And he was referring to the devil, and the devil having put it into Judas Iscariot's heart. Do you hear that? That's the course of this world. Satan so permeates this place that he's like the air. He is like the air, the prince, the chieftain, in the power of the air. And he so influences what takes place. He was even able to put it into Judas Iscariot's heart to betray God in the flesh. That's the darkness that this picture paints, that we once were and if you're not saved this morning, if you haven't trusted Jesus Christ with your life, this is what you are now. You are now being led around by Satan having you by the nose. You know, when I was growing up on a farm we used to have, my dad was the one who did this, we used to have a bull, because we had dairy cows. And if you're anything familiar with dairy cow farming, you have to have calves that are produced so often so the milk keeps flowing and that kind of thing. So you have a bull and you have calves born and you then have milk. Well, let me tell you that these bulls, they're pretty mean. Okay, I mean, these bulls are testosterone on the hoof. That's what they are. And when they were little, my dad would put a ring in their nose. And then he would hook them up, with that ring in the nose, to a guide wire that was stretched like a

metal cable across the top of the barn. It was hooked into the beams of the barn. And he did that so that we could lead that bull along. Because that bull wasn't real cooperative. I mean, we've had bulls that bang their way through the side of the barn. Because they were testosterone on the hoof, going boom, boom, boom against the walls of the barn. But as long as we had that guide wire and that ring in their nose, they could be somewhat controlled. Let me tell you, if you are not saved this morning, Satan is leading you with his ring in your nose. You are walking in steps that don't conform to what's real, missing the mark that God has, according to the prince of the power of the air, and what he wants, trespasses and sins that go along with him. Because you see, that's what he did with God.

So let me ask you this. What is the course? What is the path of this world? What's the path of this world? Here, let me let me give you a couple of quotes. And help me out here by finishing these. Okay. Here's the first one. Nice guys finish...last. You have to watch out for...number one. Who's number one? Me! Me, myself and I. Here's the last one. This one's somewhat spiritual. God helps those...who help themselves. By the way, that is not in the Bible. Do you notice something about all those statements? They're all about me. They're all about me. They're all about me. We even put God in it, about me. God helps those who? Yeah, help themselves. This is all about me. And I want you to know that biblically, that is the course of this world, that it's all about me. Now, the Bible is not describing that as the course it ought to be. It's describing that as the course of transgression and sin that's not conforming to what's real, that's completely missing the mark. But the Bible describes that as being the course this world is on, that is the course of its values. That is the course of its standards and its attitudes, and what it's going for, it's all about me, it's about me, it's about me. And what I get to have and when I get to be and what I get to do. That's 1 John 2:16 where it says that all is in the world, everything that's in the world, the course of this world, is the desires of the flesh. What I get to have, the desires of the eyes, the world's treasures, the desires of the flesh, what I get to do, what I get to experience, the world's pleasures. And finally, the sinful pride of life, the desire of pride, what I get to be, what I get to have others see me as being, the world's applause. That's all that's in the world. And it's all about self. And it's about living on that course. And we've even got statements that are wide spread and well known by you. You've got to watch out for number one. God helps those who are in it for themselves. That's a miss step. That's the transgression that we're talking about here.

Walking dead by reason of transgression and sin. You know, it's like this. It's like the whole world is a graveyard of people living for self, and on the headstone it says this: dead by reason of my transgression and sin. That leads to this, notice the end of verse two, this is what you were, you were sons of disobedience, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience, disobedience by God's Spirit, disobedience in regards to what his directions are. As a matter of fact, the Bible tells us we're not able to do this. If you're not saved this morning, you aren't able to please God. You can't do it, to please God. You can't. It's not possible. But God has a solution for you. And we're coming to it. We're coming to the solution. Satan has you by the nose following his disobedience. And by the way, here is one of the hugest things about this. This is what you once were. You were wrathfully doomed by your nature, that's what this says. "Following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience," verse three, "among whom we all once lived in the desires of our flesh" and of our mind "and were by nature children of wrath". You know, when you're a child of something, this is a child of wrath, it means you pick up the characteristics of that. For example,

the 1960s-being a child of the revolution, then the 1970s-the dawning of the age of aquarius, and then the whole new age movement. And then the children of the yuppies and the hipsters. Child means that this is what characterizes you. This is a child of wrath. God has wrath, he's got anger, which means inside he is displeased and it's raising his emotions. And he's going to act on that emotion. But I want you to know that though God has anger, the Bible always depicts God's anger as being controlled and directed towards an end, towards a purpose. The Book of Revelation is probably the biggest unveiling of his wrath, though there's others and he's told us, centuries before it happens, this is how I'm going to express my anger. This is what it's going to come against. And this is when and this is how. On the other hand, Satan has anger. And it's just not under control. I mean, it's throwing things and kicking people and cats, and that kind of thing. That's the difference. God's wrath will come against those who by nature are following the prince of the power of the air. It's coming. And this is what, as believers, we once were, we were that, that's what I was. And if you're not saved, that's what you are now.

Verse four, "But God", that's the insertion here. Now alive with Christ, it reads like this. "But God", that is one of the most wonderful insertions probably in the human language. "But God", you can and you should be on this course that he's about to lay out to us. You can and you should be on this course. Once you are saved, you can and you should be on this course because you were dead, but you've been made alive. You did walk according to the course of this world. But now there's a new course. "But God". And here's what you can and should be in on, experiencing God's great love. Notice how it says this. "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us," being in on God's love. What of God's love? What of God's love? What is expressed here? When he talks about love, God had to bring a new word into the human language to talk about love appropriately, because love has so many ideas to it. So he came up with his own word called love and it's the word Agape, which is the love of decision. It's the love to do what's best for another regardless of how you feel, and regardless of the consequences. "But God, being rich in mercy towards us" in our miserable darkness, God being rich in mercy, and great in this desire to do what's best for us, regardless of how he felt, regardless of the consequences, but God being rich in mercy.

I have another question here. What did God do? Let me follow this up with a question. What can a dead person do? They can't feel, can't talk, can't respond, can't think. God did what we couldn't do. God is able to do what we can't. He acted for the dead person. He acted for us. And he did this, verse five, He "made us alive together with Christ", by resurrection power. Listen to me. There is nothing, nothing that can defeat you. All power in heaven and on earth has been given unto me, Jesus said. Jesus said that, after being raised from the dead by God. A dead person cannot do anything for themselves. God has power to raise from the dead. I want you to see, turn back to Ephesians 1:19. God wants us to know the riches, and the hope of us being called to be believers. And he wants us to know "what is the in measurable greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of his great might", his great energy, God wants us to know the dynamic dynamite power of his expression to us. He wants us to know of the working, the energy, of his great might, verse 20, "that 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 rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come." This is God's power. This is God's power to raise up out of the dead, and that

power is the power you and I have access to. It is the power he included for us when he raised us up with Jesus.

Notice what it says, back to chapter 2, verse five, "even when we were dead in our trespasses, he made us alive together with Christ-by grace, you have been saved-and he raised us up with him, Christ, and he seated us with him, Christ, in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus". We are living life now with God that has a resurrection power, and there is no sin, no sin that you cannot overcome, there is no temptation that you can not defeat. You can defeat the temptation, you can overcome the sin, there is nothing to hold you bound here. There is nothing, because the resurrection power is given to us with Christ. We have that now. And we're to be living with that. Oh, it's still true. We got a fallen nature, don't we? And we still get our nose in line with that chain and that ring the Lord let Satan pull on us. But we can unhook that and escape its grip. That's the truth of the Scripture. This is not a fruitful imagination. This is what the Apostle is telling us and tells us in other places.

And we need to appreciate this, this seat in God's heavenly in Christ. Do you know what the heavenlies are? This is something I'm still in the midst of being greatly impressed by. The heavenlies are the realm where God rules. And in Ephesians, he tells us that there are principalities and powers in this heavenlies were God rules. And there seems to be there some counsel that God is the absolute head of, and there are angelic powers and there is Satan and there are other things and they're all coming in and they're interacting with God. And he is deciding and he is controlling and he is directing and he is keeping them all subservient to his purpose. And you are seated there, at that table, in that council of the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus, you're there. That's what this says, he seated us in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus, you're there. You're in on it. So how does it play out?

You know, when the United States launched its mission to land on the moon, I was a junior in high school. My friend was able to get his dad's truck that day. And he came over on a Sunday, like this Sunday, a warm, fall Sunday, and he had a truck and we went out cruising in his truck. And it was so much fun. We drove through the country, we drove to the town, we drove all over the place in his dad's truck. And I got home that Sunday night, and it was dark and was still warm. And I remember walking up to our door of the house. And just like it happened yesterday, I remember stopping in front of our metal aluminum screen door. And I remember looking up at the moon, it was a full moon that night, almost like it is now, look at the moon tonight, it's was just about like that, a full moon. And I stopped and I looked up at that moon. And I thought, we're up there. We're up there. Cool. We're up. Now what did I do to contribute to that? Absolutely zero! As a matter of fact, I was out cruising while they were doing that. That's what I was doing. But I want you to know that as an American citizen, I was up there with them.

And we are there, in Christ. We have a seat at the table. And this has to play out in our life. This has to play out in God's directions here concerning the things he's deciding, us getting with him and what he's doing, us deciding to overcome the lure and the pull and the tug of sin and temptation, and join God in what he's doing. That's how that plays out. This plays out like this. Brothers and sisters, you have heard, this is the truth. This is not the fermented imagination of a fruitful Stephen King with this darkness of a planet that has a graveyard of sin. And there are some who've been made alive. This is the revelation of God and you're seated in heaven. And our

call is to set your affection there. Colossians chapters one and two, like those who have been raised from the dead, set your affection there, set your heart there, bringing the scriptures there, use them as your direction for life there. I gotta stop. I gotta stop. Just lay your life down with him.