

Life On The Other Side of the Water

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 February 2026

Preacher: Rev Cal Morrison

[0:00] Well, this morning I'm going to bring a message from Ephesians chapter 2. If you want to turn! If you want to turn there in a Bible, there are Bibles around the building. Don't worry if not.

Ephesians chapter 2 is, I would describe that as describing my own testimony. And perhaps many of you would look at Ephesians 2 as describing your own story as well.

And before I read, let me pray. Lord, we thank you for your word which has endured and does endure forever. And your word is light and life to us. Lord, as we open your word, please would you open our hearts and speak to us through your spirit. And be glorified and make yourself known to us through your word. In Jesus' name, amen. Well, as I read Ephesians 2, my message this morning is simply titled, Life on the Other Side of the Water. And so let me read.

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 our body and mind. And were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 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. So that in the coming ages, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God. Not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, for good works which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Amen.

[2:42] This world that we live in does not naturally flow in the direction of God. It flows in the opposite direction. Some ways are more obvious and others are more subtle. But the course of this world does not lead us to God naturally. It's not a path of light and it doesn't lead us into life and light and fullness. Some time ago I was on holiday in Anglesey with Jen and her family in North Wales and we stayed in a large house on an estuary near RAF Valley. And one day we took an inflatable boat and some bodyboards out of the estuary through this bottleneck to the open sea. There was this great big beach right on the edge of the RAF base and there were many big waves and we had a good old time. And as we were coming home, we were coming back into the estuary but the tide was going out and it was funneling thousands of litres of water through this bottleneck. Now it wasn't too deep but it was far too strong to paddle.

Some people just got out and walked on the land carrying their stuff but many of us had to get out and walk against the current pulling this boat with Jen's auntie Ruth inside the boat and we were pulling this boat against the current and against the tide through this bottleneck back into the estuary.

It was slow. It was hard going but together we got there. You see, it isn't easy to go against the flow of this world. It's actually easy to go with the flow of this world. Ephesians 2 says, living in the passion of our flesh. That's easy to do. Carry out the desires of the body and the mind.

That's so easy to do. And Paul says, like the rest of mankind. I mean, we're not alone in that. Everyone in the world finds it easier to go with the flow of the world. To think that being a Christian, a follower of Jesus, would be easy is to misunderstand that it involves denying yourself and carrying a cross, going against the flow of this world. Life doesn't suddenly become perfect.

It's actually easier to live in the lie. As the saying goes, ignorance is bliss. It's easier not knowing the difficult truth that you're a sinner. It's easier not knowing the difficult truth that by nature we are all children of wrath. Our sin is destroying us and destroying people around us. It's easier not knowing that. Ignorance is bliss. We only see this world and most people are riding the current out to the sea. And they're trying to pull everyone else along the way. Yet the world cannot see where it leads. Where it leads is worse than we can possibly imagine. Think about it. Following the course of this world and the passions of the flesh already in obvious ways make people's lives in this world like hell on earth. We can see it. Turn on the news. Look at your neighbors. Look outside.

[6:00] Following the course of this world and the passions of the flesh are making people's lives like hell on earth. So if that's what it's like here and now, where does it lead? Where does it end? But equally, the world cannot see that in the opposite direction, against the current, up the estuary, there is a home that is far greater than we could possibly imagine. Jesus came 2,000 years ago and gave us a glimpse of that. He gave us a glimpse bringing light into the world, opening blind eyes, making the lame walk, raising the dead, setting people free from oppression. But more than that, he gave us a glimpse of God. He made God known to us. The power of God, the grace of God, the love of God, the reality of God, all demonstrated in his life and how he came to bring us back to God.

Fallen Jesus might be against the flow of this world, but where it leads is glorious. It is full of light. It's full of life. It's full of grace and truth. It's full of peace and joy, full of newness and eternal life and the glory and goodness of God. Life isn't perfect when you become a Christian, but when you know who Jesus is, how he has forgiven you, lifted that weight of guilt, how he is renewing you and where he is leading you, despite it being slow and hard at times, you're not alone.

There are others wading through the water together and it's full of light and life and hope and grace. You see, life should be different on the other side of the water. It should.

I thought that I had everything I needed right up to the moment before God opened my eyes. I thought I had everything, everything I wanted in life. I had up until the moment God opened my eyes.

And when God shines his light into your heart and you come to know his grace and love through Jesus, his son, when your sins are forgiven and your life is renewed, when you're born again with this living hope through the resurrection of Jesus, and you not only see the world clearer for what it is, but God is suddenly real to you, then everything before pales in comparison. I thought I had everything in life that I needed, everything I ever wanted. And yet when God opened my eyes, nothing before mattered. None of that stuff mattered anymore. And suddenly this new reality was incredible, amazing, glorious. Life should be different on the other side of the water. And so I want to give you two pictures of what baptism is from the Bible. One is the flood, Noah's flood with the ark, and the other is the exodus going through the Red Sea. In Genesis chapter 6, it says, The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. These were terrible times, and it grieved the heart of God to see what had become of his creation. But then it says,

[9:19] But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. This one man, just one man, out of all humanity, was righteous and blameless. I mean, that's hard, even on a good day. Never mind when all of humanity is wicked. Try being righteous and blameless for one day, and yet here's this one man. Does that remind you of anything? Remember this episode of The Simpsons, when Homer, I think, is reading Ned Flanders' Bible, and he says, Talk about a preachy book. Everyone in here is a sinner, except this one guy, and you know who he is.

This one man out of all humanity. Can you imagine living in Noah's day in those times? It was so bad that God had to wipe the earth clean with a flood. Can you imagine being one of Noah's sons on the ark?

Sometimes we wonder what it would have been like on the ark. But what would it be like for Noah's family, life on the other side of the water, compared to what they had just experienced?

A new creation. That's how it's described in Genesis 9. It's like a new creation again, like the Garden of Eden restarted. Genesis 5 tells us that Noah's name actually means rest. When his father Lamech named him, he said, Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work, and from the painful toil of our hands. You see, life on the other side was a rest.

[10:58] A rest from the wickedness. A rest from the toil. A rest from the darkness. It was a world of darkness they lived in before, but life should be different on the other side of the water.

Now, fast forward nearly a thousand years, and then the people of Israel are in Egypt, and there's this baby that's placed in an ark. Moses' basket. It's literally the only other time in the Hebrew that the word ark is used.

Noah's flood and the thing that Moses has put in, in the water, is called, it's the same word for ark. He's put in the Moses' basket. For the Hebrews, it was like Genesis 6 all over again.

In Egypt, as slaves in a world of darkness, harsh work, painful toil, enslaved under the oppression of Pharaoh. Again, though, one man.

One man would bring them safely to the other side of the water. One man. Can you imagine being there on the edge of the Red Sea when God opened up? Among all the people of Israel and Moses, you see him in front of you, and he raises his staff, and he points it over the Red Sea, and suddenly the sea begins to part with a strong east wind.

[12:14] Me and Jen were there. We were in Egypt. We were looking at the Red Sea. Don't know if it was that particular point. But imagine seeing that opening up before your eyes. It'd be incredible, amazing.

But imagine that man with the staff said, let's walk through. He'd be like, no way. As soon as I go in, it's going to collapse. It would be terrifying as well.

Imagine how amazing it would be, but how much faith you would need to walk through. It would take faith to walk through. The water could come crashing down at any moment. It's like when you discuss what superpower you would have, and you think flying would be great, but I bet as soon as I'm up there in the air, it would run out, and I would just fall.

It needs a lot of faith. So the people had to have faith, even although their eyes could see. But what is the alternative? Think about this. Standing at the edge of the Red Sea, and you think, I've got to walk through there.

And the sea could come crashing in. But what's behind you? What's back there? What was life like before? It was slavery. It was oppression.

[13:24] It was darkness. It was painful toil. And the promise is, on the other side of the water, there is freedom and light and life and a land of rest, where God will be with you.

But you need to go through the water. It's only on the other side. Life should be different on the other side of the water. You see, these things, these two things did happen in history.

But they were foreshadowing something greater. That another man, one man out of all humanity, one man, righteous and blameless in all his ways, sent by God.

Not just a saint like Noah. Not just a servant like Moses. A son. The son. The son of God. Came down. John 3.17 says, He didn't come and build an ark.

He is the ark. He didn't make a way through the sea. He is the way. And the truth and the life. He didn't just find favor with God. He is God's beloved son.

[14:31] And like the ark was lifted up by the water, and Moses lifted his staff up, the son of God was lifted up on a cross to rescue us.

In these two pictures, the flood and the Red Sea, the water represents death and judgment. And yet somehow, somehow God saves people through the water.

Somehow God saves people in his grace to bring them to the other side of the water, to cross over the water from death to life.

Crossing over from death to life. That sounds familiar. In John 5.24, Jesus said, Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. Whoever believes in Jesus, and hears his word and believes in the God that sent him, has eternal life.

[15:35] He has crossed over already from death to life. Life should be different on the other side of the water. It should be the difference between death and life. Now in 1 Peter 3, it says that eight persons were brought safely through the water.

Think about that little phrase. Brought safely through the water. Now water means death and judgment. And yet here are people brought safely through death and judgment.

Don't you want to be brought safely through death and judgment? Death is not the end. And I don't know about you, but I want to be brought safely through. And then Peter says, Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you.

Not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So Peter says, Baptism corresponds to the great flood being brought safely through as you appeal to God with a good conscience.

And then in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul connects the Exodus and the Red Sea to baptism. Paul says, Our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea and all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink for they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them and the rock was Christ.

[17:04] And he's comparing He's comparing the Exodus event and all that was involved with the Corinthians having been baptized into Christ and gone through the waters and eaten communion.

And he's comparing these two events. Now in both these events, water was a symbol of death and judgment, but they show that those who trusted God were, as Peter puts it, brought safely through the water.

Now baptism not only symbolizes death and resurrection, it symbolizes the death and resurrection of Jesus, but it also symbolizes our own death and resurrection as we are united with Jesus by faith.

And so when someone is baptized in Jesus' name, they are reenacting not only Jesus' death and resurrection, but their own death and resurrection. in order that we die to our old life and we rise with Christ to new life.

Only He can bring us safely through the water. Only He can bring us into this life on the other side. You see, Jesus didn't go to the cross so that we didn't need to go through the water.

[18:18] Our old self must die. And baptism is a picture of that. Jesus dying on the cross is not simply so that we can avoid death and come into heaven as we are, carry on.

This thing about it being by faith alone and people have a problem because they think, well, is God just allowing murderers and thieves and immoral people into heaven?

No. He's not letting any of them into heaven because they must die. The only people God is allowing into heaven are renewed new creations in Christ who have no sin.

Now that doesn't mean that Christians don't sin, but that's a part of us that belongs to the old life. Paul says that our body is wasting away, but we are being renewed inside day by day.

And so His sacrifice on the cross was so that we would not be swallowed up by death and perish in judgment. It was so that we could die with Him in His righteousness rather than die and perish in our own sins.

[19:25] Because you'll either die in your own sins or you'll die in His righteousness. And when I stand before God, I know what I want to be in. I want to be in His righteousness and not in my own sins.

Do you remember back in the day if a child made a rude face, what was it their parent would say to them? If the wind changes, your face won't stay like that. But think about this.

Like, if we die in our sins, if the wind changes, if we die in our sins, rebelling against God, rejecting Christ, we won't suddenly change after death and somehow be fit and acceptable for heaven.

We won't suddenly turn around and be perfect and follow Jesus after rejecting Him for all our lives. If the wind changes, your face will stay like that. So you don't want to die in your sins.

You want to sort it out before you die. How could we expect to suddenly be saints allowed to enter into Jesus' kingdom when we've denied Him on earth?

[20:32] Why should we be brought into God's new world when we rejected and scorned God in this world? No, our old self must die. And I realized

that for myself.

Despite thinking I had everything I wanted, I knew I need to die. This version of me, even now, when I sin, when I do wrong, when I fail, I know that that version of me cannot enter into His kingdom.

It has to die. You see, our old self which belonged to the image of Adam and the sinful race must be put to death and we must be made new in the image of Jesus who was perfect and righteous. We must put our faith and allegiance in Christ as Lord. Now, this is what Paul is talking about in Romans chapter 6. He says, Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

We were buried, therefore, with Him by baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

[21:48] For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin like they were slaves in Egypt.

For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again. But the life, death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all. But the life that He lives, He lives to God.

So you also must consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. That's what it means to go through the waters. That's what life is like on the other side of the waters.

Consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Life should be different on the other side of the water. And there really is another side. You see, Ephesians 2 describes this period of us being dead in our trespasses following the course of this world.

[23:00] But then it describes this other side of being saved by grace. That He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus for the coming ages.

For the coming ages. There are ages that are coming. And in that age, God wants to show off His great mercy towards us in Christ.

Oh, it's great. There is another side to the water. There really is another side. Jesus blew that wide open when He rose from the dead. That's an absolute game changer.

There's more evidence for that than you realize. So much evidence for the resurrection. Go and look. Jesus blew that wide open.

He began a new creation. And He's been transforming people from the inside out all over the world ever since. Preparing them for His kingdom. Making ready for the new world.

[24:04] There's another side to the water. And those who have gone through the water have already begun to taste that new world. Those who follow Jesus have begun to hear music from another world begin to play as the music from this world begins to fade.

We can hear it. Not all the time. But we get glimpses, tastes. One of the reasons that Jesus commands His people to be baptized is because if anyone wants to be His disciple they must deny themselves, pick up their cross and follow Him.

Must die to sin and live to God. And so baptism shows we are united with Jesus in His death and resurrection. And if you want to show that you truly believe in Jesus He gave a simple command to be baptized in His name.

It's one of the first ways that we show to other disciples that we are submitting to Christ. That's one of the first ways we show that we want to follow Jesus to His followers is that we submit to Christ in faith and do what He commanded just like they have done.

Now if you believe in Jesus but you've never demonstrated that by going through the water in His name then you must be baptized. not because the water saves you but because Christ our Lord commands you.

[25:25] We cannot say we believe in Him if we don't obey Him. If something has ever hindered you or prevented you then let's talk about that.

But the bottom line is in some way we must all demonstrate our faith and our obedience to Christ by going through the water. We must demonstrate our dying to sin and rising to new life by baptism. We must demonstrate being united with Christ and His death and resurrection and we must demonstrate that we do indeed believe in Jesus by doing what He commanded us.

Now can you imagine can you imagine an Israelite who didn't want to cross the Red Sea? Or can you imagine one of Noah's sons who didn't want to go on the ark?

You see we must show that we are no longer following the course of this world but we are following Jesus by going through the water. Now although we may struggle with sin with old habits and temptations if you've already gone through the water consider how glorious it is on the other side. [26:29] Ephesians 2 you were once dead in your sins verse 4 but God but God what a gracious God see He didn't send His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through Him.

You were dead we were all dead in our sins rebelling against God but God but God in His great mercy sent Jesus being rich in mercy because of the great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses He made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved. Life should be different on the other side of the water and when you see someone coming up out of the water in baptism what that pictures is this next bit and He raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches!

He's of His grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. Now I want you to imagine this right? All of humanity dead in trespasses and sins fall on the course of this world all of humanity by nature children of wrath yet God takes us who were children of wrath and makes us into trophies of grace in the coming ages.

Children of wrath turned into trophies of His grace for the coming ages to see for by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing it's the free gift of God.

[28:05] It's over there on the banner where's the banner? It's outside it's out the front you've been saved by grace you have been saved through faith this is not your own doing it is the gift of God and so let me just finish following the course of this world if you want to follow the course of this world that's what the rest of mankind are doing it's easy but by doing so you're a child of wrath but following Jesus we are children of God what a privilege to be called a child of God to be made a child of God it says in Galatians chapter 3 for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ so as we celebrate this baptism today let us either consider baptism for ourselves if we need to or celebrate our own baptism if we have already been baptized and let us consider how God in his rich grace through Jesus can change any one of our directions and lead us toward a destiny that's full of light and life and all the goodness of God in Christ he can change any one of our destiny if he did it for me he can do it for you

I used to mock Christ this church that was in East Kilbride that said Jesus said I am the way I used to go by and mock it and say the way to what because I didn't see what the way was and yet now because he is so rich in mercy he has opened my eyes to see that he truly is the way the way and the truth and the life and now I can see my destiny eternal life with God when I did not deserve it God is so good what hope and glory there is in Christ on the other side of the water let me pray Lord we thank you so much for your word we thank you that despite us following the course of this world and carrying out the desires of our body and mind Lord you sent your son not to condemn the world but to save us through Christ Lord I thank you that you have saved me from my own sins from my own destiny of dying in sins and destroying myself and other people around me Lord you are so full of grace and mercy and love and you have demonstrated that through Jesus and so help us to see how amazing Jesus is help us to see the truth of these things help us to encounter you through Jesus I pray in Jesus name Amen as I said Thank you.