

Union With Christ

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

Your Old Identity: Rebels Without a Clue

Ephesians 2:1 – 3

Introduction: What's Our Problem?

Most people and most philosophies and most religions say that humans are good. And many of us, especially those of us who really haven't been through a lot, would like to believe that left to our own devices, we are good. The difficulty with this is that if we just asked some simple questions about things we see every day, it would be hard to believe that humanity is good. For example, one thing that has always worried me about Boston University is that the School of Management doesn't seem to have a corporate ethics class. Do you know of one? (note afterward: when I asked this in the large group meeting, no one raised their hand!!) I just picked up today's copy of the BU Daily Free Press (Feb. 3rd 2006). In it, I see that the former governor of Hong Kong came to speak at BU. And he talks about all the problems in the world. He says, 'The invasion of Iraq isn't going as well as was hoped.' He says that one billion people in the world live on less than a dollar a day. Nevertheless, he says that economic inequality is a natural outcome of the capitalist system. On and on he goes about troubled areas of the world. Why are we in so much trouble? Because we're so good? Even more disturbing to me is the fact that on page 8, BU is talking about building its new medical center in Roxbury. It's really a Level 4 highest level security disease research center. And it's being built over and above the protests of many community representatives. BU and supporters say, 'But look at the Atlanta Center of Disease Control.' No one points out that both Roxbury and Atlanta are black communities. Can you imagine putting something like that in Newton? Brookline? No way! Whatever the risks, apparently BU is very comfortable putting that thing in the midst of the black community in Roxbury.

When we try to explain things like this under the premise that humans are good, we really can't. When World War I happened, people thought it was the war to end all wars. Humanism flourished, and the Humanist Manifesto was written. We are good! it said. However, after World War II, the leaders of the Humanist movement scrapped their Manifesto and started over. They couldn't be as confident about humanity's goodness.

Christianity says that human began good, but became infected with evil. So we have incredible dignity and worth on the one hand, but we've got a lot of problems on the other. So many, in fact, that it's appropriate to say that on balance, we're not actually good; we're now evil. It's kind of like the story of Anakin Skywalker. He began good, but became evil. The good news is that there is a new hope which Dominic will actually talk about next week. But for now, we have to swim around in the rather depressing reality of human flawedness. One person has said that out of all the ideas that come out of the Christian tradition and worldview, the idea of the evil of humanity is completely verifiable. There's lots of proof for it. Look at the world. Look at Boston.

Context:

The passage we're looking at together is pure rocket fuel. It's called Ephesians and it's what Paul would say if you sat him down and said, 'Tell me about Jesus and your experience of him.' If you didn't come to him with a problem to solve or a question to answer, and you just let him talk, this is what you'd get: Ephesians. All the other letters he wrote were responses the problems or questions, but not this one. This is what Paul really wants everyone to know.

Our Own Bad Choices: v.1

Notice how Paul sees the world. Verse 1 is a summary statement, and from there he gives three major examples to illustrate his point: 'And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.' That really is not popular now, isn't it? How politically correct is it? What's directly implied in that is that there is some objective way Paul has of saying that. There must be some truth that he claims to have. That's not popular today.

Well, let's take the word 'dead.' What does it mean to be dead? Certainly to us it means a lot of things: Dead people are unresponsive. They're also decaying. I think fundamentally what Paul is thinking about is the idea of being corrupt, declining, or spiraling downward. That might not be new news to any of you. I'm sure that all of you have heard people say that humanity is just getting worse, kids are worse today than kids before, and so on and so on. But it's also personal. How many of us started life out wanting to be courageous, wanting to be pure. We started out with high ideals but somewhere along the line, something happened. Whether it was intentional or unintentional, we slipped up. Most of you can probably remember a time when you were horrified at the thought of doing something. But then you did it. And you were a little uneasy about it, but since you had done it, you did it again. And again. Until you didn't really care much anymore, or couldn't care anymore. That's the dying nature of human life. That comes from the warning from God to Adam and Eve, 'If you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, dying you will die.' Humanity apart from God is in a process of decline.

Why are we declining? Because we make certain kinds of mistakes. Paul calls those mistakes trespasses and sins. The word 'trespass' (paraptomasin) comes from a basic Greek word that means 'to miss a step' (according to Stedman). It's when we intend to do something but we misstep in spite of our best efforts. Then there are 'sins,' which comes from the world of archery and it means 'to miss the mark.' **That's important as a definition because the Christian view is not that at every point we are as evil as we can be, but that at every point, we are not as good as we could be. And as we should be.**

Illus: For me, I remember one time where I misstepped and missed the mark with my wife Ming. She and I were on an airplane during Christmas and New Year's of 1999; we had just gotten done visiting her parents in Ohio, gotten their blessing to get married, and were flying to Los Angeles to visit my parents. We were very much in love. So we were sitting in the plane in our two seats next to the window, talking about our relationship and what kind of things we wanted to see in marriage. And we were joking around about who would balance the checkbook, do taxes, or that kind of thing. Ming would be the first to admit that she's doesn't like doing maintenance things because she's not naturally inclined to be that organized. So I was joking with her about it, and I said that that's exactly WHY I wanted her to do them! Afterwards, I thought about what I had said, and I apologized. I said, 'I'm sorry; that sounded a little...' And she finished my sentence, 'Patronizing?' I said, 'Uh, yeah,' kind of sheepishly. What's the point of that little episode? In my heart, there was this tiny sense of superiority that I had acted on. I don't know how many of you feel that way towards people around you. It's just a glimmer, but it's a dark part of me that wants to put others down, to be superior to them, and to have them recognize that. It's not at every point that I am as condescending and judgmental as I could be, but that at every point, I am not as loving as I could be. Like the groundhog, the evil in me pokes its head out. But it's there, and over time, that divergence becomes greater and greater.

And who made those choices? We all did. Paul tells us you are 'in *your* trespasses and sins.' There are certain things that I have done that I am responsible for. No one else chose them for me. They were my choices.

Something may have been done to me, but I responded in such a way that made the problem worse. And likewise there are choices that you have made that you can't blame anyone else for. They were your choices. There may have been a lot of factors, a lot of other people involved, and a lot of considerations, but fundamentally, they were *your* choices. So because of our mistakes, unintentional trespasses and intentional sins, nothing we do has permanence for good. No program or policy. Everything decays. Everything declines. Nothing works the way it should.

So what is the source of these mistakes? There are three overlapping reasons. First, the external world around us. Second, the negative spiritual forces around us. Third, the desires inside us.

Patterned After the World: v.2a

Isn't it common, though, to say that our environment shapes who we are? Paul says something like that. Look at his wording in v.2, 'in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world.' Did you know that this world had a course? Kind of like air or water currents. This world has a spiritual current.

At different times and in different places, it has a different name or looks slightly different, but at base, it's the same everywhere you go around the world and no matter what period of history you look at.

Repetitious cycles? Where it seems like you're doing something new, seeing a new sitcom, but you're really not? You get bored. Is that what life without God is like? Paul would argue, **THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT LIFE WITHOUT GOD IS.** Life becomes a process of dying. This world is against God. That is its 'course.'

Now that might sound really oversimplified to you. You might ask, 'Does that really fit the facts?' Well, look at how people want to reject everything that reminds them of God. Take the Bible for example. How many ways do people try to reject the Bible? 'Well, it's written by white males. It's two to four thousand years old. It's filled with errors.' A lot of people throw up smokescreens and do everything they can to try and discredit the Bible. Another example: saying that the church is oppressive all the time. 'I can't believe in Jesus because of the Crusades and the Inquisition.' Or, 'Religion causes war.' Well, people used Christian language to do those things, but that wasn't Christian teaching. In fact, Jesus' teaching inspired the wave of non-violent resistance movements during the twentieth century like Tolstoy in Russia, Ahn Chang-Ho in Korea, Gandhi in South Africa and India, the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S., the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, Poland and Solidarity over Soviet oppression, the Truth and Reconciliation Movement in South Africa, and the wave of Eastern European Velvet Revolutions were all inspired by teachings of Jesus and, except for Gandhi, carried out by Christians. I'm convinced that Jesus was a part of this huge movement. But the secular university doesn't point that out. Science is the product of the Judeo-Christian tradition because it demystified nature and saw the universe as the product of an intelligent Creator, and scientists like Isaac Newton and James Clerk Maxwell were Christians, but now science is very hostile to God.

I can go on to list a bunch of other things. But the basic point is that the world at large rejects God. Anything that might remotely give evidence of God, or cause us to think about Him, people push away, and violently. They stop being intellectually honest, as Blaise Pascal said, 'People are rational, except when it comes to God.' So this world is dying. Without God, it's set in a process of death and decay.

In October of 1996, I took a road trip from San Francisco to Los Angeles with two friends of mine. In the car ride back on I-5, my friends Eric, Aaron, and I were talking about books that describe human nature. He said that one of the best was William Golding's 1954 classic, *Lord of the Flies*. In this story, a group of young British schoolboys survive a shipwreck and get stranded on a jungle island. An older boy named Ralph becomes their leader. They find a conch shell on the beach, and it becomes Ralph's symbol of authority and a prized possession. At first, everything is fine. The boys build a fire as a signal to anyone searching for them. They try to keep the fire going, but some of them want to just hunt on the island, as if they could settle there forever. Another older boy named Jack challenges Ralph. He is the best hunter; so then comes a mutiny: Jack leads some of the boys away to just hunt:

He held the conch against his chest with one hand and stabbed the air with his index finger.

'Who thinks Ralph oughtn't to be chief?'

He looked expectantly at the boys ranged round, who had frozen. Under the palms there was deadly silence.

'Hands up,' said Jack strongly, 'whoever wants Ralph not to be chief?'

The silence continued, breathless and heavy and full of shame. Slowly the red drained from Jack's cheeks, then came back with a painful rush. He licked his lips and turned his head at an angle, so that his gaze avoided the embarrassment of linking with another's eye.

Scowling with jealousy, Jack runs deeper into the jungle. Some of the boys follow him. They kill a pig, do a savage dance around it while chanting this weird chant, and put its head on the top of a stick. Flies land on it, and it's called the Lord of the Flies; it symbolizes the beast they're afraid of, which they think they've mastered. Jack wins over almost all the boys and sets up another tribe where he is the chief. Then, as they get caught up in the game and the fears of the beast, they surround and kill one of their own, a boy named Simon. It was an accident; it was nighttime; there was thunder, so they couldn't hear Simon's cries. But the next victim is a chubby boy named Piggy. Piggy confronted the savage hunter boys: 'Which is better -

- to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill... Which is better, law and rescue, or hunting and breaking things up?' Then another boy named Roger dislodges a huge rock from up a hill, which strikes Piggy and knocks him off a cliff. From that point on, lone Ralph becomes the hunted prey in a life and death struggle. Roger takes a stick and sharpens it at both ends, which means that he wants to put Ralph's head on it. But British sailors from a battle cruiser appear just in time to rescue all the boys from the island, and themselves.

That story raises some puzzling questions. What went wrong with the boys in the book? Why did they become violent and deliberately evil? And what about the evil in the real world, the world that isn't on an island? The boys are rescued by a warship during wartime. Who will rescue the adult? Americans asked that question on Tuesday, April 20, 1999, when two teenage boys, high school juniors at Columbine High School in Denver, Colorado, opened fire on their schoolmates and threw pipe bombs. Every adult had their opinion on why such a horrible thing could happen. Meanwhile, America was bombing Kosovo, Yugoslavia at the time. Did that have anything to do with it? Who will rescue the adult? Is there hope?

It's not a surprise that Golding wrote his book after World War II, because that was the most devastating war in human history, and human beings couldn't blame religion like they had done before; religion had precious little to do with World War II. In fact, the twentieth century saw more war related deaths than the previous twenty centuries combined. How many war-related deaths were there in the 16th century? 1,600,000. How many in the 17th? 6,100,000. How many in the 18th? 7,000,000. The 19th? 19,400,000. The 20th? 108,000,000. People thought organized religion was bad. But organized atheism was much, much worse. Humanity's true colors came shining through, and it was not impressive.

A World of Rebellion: v.2b

And then we come to something quite scary in the latter half of v.2. There is a power at work behind the scenes. 'According to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.' Wow! That's an incredible statement. Are *The Exorcism of Emily Rose* and *The Lost* and all those TV shows right after all about the paranormal? We might have a hard time believing anything like this. Is there a spirit world? Doesn't it seem rather primitive?

In the western world, we have a materialistic world view. So we think matter is all that matters, so we tend to poo-poo the idea of a spiritual reality. But let me tell you that every other culture in the world firmly believes in a spiritual world with spiritual beings of some sort. Well, before we go leaping into any sort of mythology, let's dissect carefully what Paul is saying. Paul refers to one person: a prince. Who is this prince? Literally in Greek, it is 'the overlord of the air' [*archonta tes exousias ton aeros*], and here in Ephesians 2:2 is the only place in the Bible that phrase appears. This prince is a spirit, meaning that he is not confined to the material world. This prince is characterized by disobedience. There is only one real spiritual being that we know of that fits the bill: Satan. Time magazine and Newsweek magazine recently did articles on what people believe about Satan, and so on.

How? Satan possesses the power of the air. Now that could mean just the air we breathe, like the oxygen and so on. And who knows? Maybe the Devil has somehow polluted the atmosphere, since he's associated with 'dust' from the fall. But it could also be a metaphor; just as air is invisible and yet all around us, so Satan and his fallen angels are invisible and all around us. What is Satan up to? He is affecting people and helping the world to be disobedient to God by subtle and powerful manipulation. That's why when we are rebellious towards God, we are actually following in the footsteps of the Archenemy, Satan. We can even be called the Devil's children, since Satan is rebellion incarnate, and Paul says that we were 'sons of disobedience' before we were children of God through Jesus.

Now that's scary, isn't it? And yet, that's basically what it means to follow in Satan's path. There is something attractive about rebellion, I'll have to admit. And not just because I was born as a part of Generation X, crying out against authority, though that might have something to do with it. It's easy to make fun of authority or reject authority because we think the person in authority is imperfect. It's also that the rebel SEEMS TO BE an attractive person. It could be James Dean, John Wayne, the person who stands aloof in a crowd and refuses to fit in, or my childhood TV idol, Fonzie on *Happy Days*. It's because there is someone who whispers that rebellion against ANY AUTHORITY means finding yourself as an

individual and proving yourself as an individual. People who become sexually active at a young age often talk about the 'traditional morality' or the 'conservative morality' they're coming out of, as if it held them in shackles. But the reality is that people have been fairly promiscuous since the 1850's!! These people are *inventing a fictitious backdrop* because it makes them seem rebellious and it adds a certain flavor to their lives. It doesn't matter what you're rebelling against. What matters is that you rebel against SOMETHING. Satan's ploy is to get all people to rebel against God. In many ways what happens on earth is part of a larger conflict that's raging all the time.

Our Internal Problems: v.3a

But it's not all external to us. Our problems are caused by internal factors, not just external ones. Look at v.3: 'Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind.'

The basic idea here is that our problems are also internal to us. They're not just external. William Golding shares his deepest insight with us in the middle of the book, when the pig's head on the stick, the Lord of the Flies, actually speaks to Simon in a hallucination. Imagine this young boy staring at a rotting pig's head, impaled on a spear, buzzing with flies. This is what the pig's head said: 'There isn't anyone to help you. Only me. And I'm the Beast...Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!' said the head. For a moment or two the forest and all the other dimly appreciated places echoed with the parody of laughter. 'You knew, didn't you? **I'M PART OF YOU? CLOSE, CLOSE, CLOSE!** [emphasis mine] I'm the reason why it's no go. Why things are what they are?'" (p.130-131) So in other words, the boys were afraid of this Beast in the jungle. And that fear makes them hate each other. They even blame this other fear for it: 'There's a beast in the jungle!' Yet, they can't get a handle on why they're acting the way they are because the problem is inside them. There is no beast external to them. The beast is internal. Golding sees no hope for the adult world because the problem is inside them, too.

After Golding wrote *Lord of the Flies*, he said in an interview, 'The theme is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature...The whole book is symbolic in nature except the rescue in the end where adult life appears, dignified and capable, but in reality enmeshed in the same evil as the symbolic life of the children on the island. The officer, having interrupted a man-hunt, prepares to take the children off the island in a cruiser which will presently be hunting its enemy in the same implacable way. And who will rescue the adult and his cruiser?' (p.186)

Hannibal Lecter, in *Silence of the Lambs*, put it forcefully. In response to the question, 'What happened to you?' Hannibal Lecter says, 'Nothing has happened *to me*, officer Starling. *I* happened. You can't reduce me to a set of influences. You've given up good and evil for behavioralism, officer Starling. You've got everybody in dignity pants. Nothing is ever anybody's fault. Look at me, officer Starling. Can you stand to say, 'I'm evil?'

The apostle Paul calls those internal problems the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. There are certain things that are somehow a part of our nature. They come from being flesh and blood creatures, and from having a rational mind--or, as some might say, a rationalizing mind! Paul calls those internal problems *lusts*.

What do you think of when you think of the word 'lust?' A sexual desire? How about any strong desire or craving that dominates us? I think what Paul is talking about here is any desire that gets out of hand. The lust of the flesh is the first kind. What is that? Well, there are certain things that should be normal to us, like eating, wearing clothes, enjoying married sex, or being appreciated, but somehow they become lusts. Something else takes over. There's nothing wrong with eating, for example. Eating is healthy! But so often we live to eat. We become gluttonous, self-indulgent, even at other peoples' expense. We become experts in knowing which restaurants serve what, we always think about FOOD, FOOD, FOOD. That's in spite of the fact that 1 billion people in the world are in poverty, and thousands die everyday. Or how about the desire for sex? That's normal; it's a God-given desire to want sex. But I don't even need to discuss how selfish and twisted our culture is in this area, how we ignore God's ideal and do whatever we want to indulge ourselves?

Illus: Part of growing up, I think, is learning how to not be indulgent. For instance, I somehow knew I was growing up when I wasn't able to eat three Big Macs any more. I wasn't able to eat a dozen donuts by myself any more. Those extremes were too much. I think that's a natural part of growing up, but in other ways, we start to want more and more sensations. When I was a teenager, I was a competitive swimmer, and I thought about taking performance enhancing drugs because I wanted the sensation of having lots of power. I pressured a girlfriend for sex because those were the sensations that I most wanted. I also wanted a lot of money; I really liked ties at that time, because I thought ties were powerful symbols for a man. Maybe for you, you live off of extremes. You feel alive only when you're having sex, or drunk, or high on something, or making a lot of money. That was when you felt most alive, and then your problem became full blown. You really started to like indulging yourself, stimulating yourself, or whatever. And even though there was always a let down, and those lusts of your flesh that promised so much delivered so little, still you jumped right back in that cycle of dying. Apart from God, we just live for ourselves, if all we live for is to gratify some desire of our flesh, if all we're doing is stimulating ourselves, then we are just doing one thing: self-stimulation. How ultimately lonely that is!

Not only are there lusts of our fleshly body, but also of our mind. Now that sound weird, doesn't it? What are the lusts of the mind? It must be similar to lusts of the flesh, but more well thought out. It has to do with your thoughts. The way this makes the most sense to me is that we pursue this mental image we have of ourselves, in our minds. What mental image of yourself do you have? How do you see yourself in your own mind? Maybe you see yourself as the one who is always right, so when people get in your car and make a recommendation ('Hey, take *that* road'), you get really defensive, you can't accept it when you're wrong, you have to know everything and say everything. And what's more, you have to preserve in your head this image that you're right, so you start believing things about other people. 'Well, you're the one who's impatient to get there. You're pushy. You're the control freak. You're the back-seat driver!' Very subtly, you make the other person the problem. This is so common that sociologists have named it the 'fundamental attribution error.' We attribute responsibility to something else. We blame someone or something else.

It's kind of like all the psychological studies that show that people who see a white person mugging a black person will remember that incident as a black person mugging a white person. Their lens on reality is completely skewed. That happens all the time, like in the movie *Memento*, where we *want* to believe something about ourselves and the world, so we eliminate memories or we choose not to see things. The way we see the world and ourselves is screwed up. That comes from the lust in your mind, because that's the image you have of yourself, even though you're really not all that.

That's just one lust of the mind. Maybe you see yourself as the center of attention, the main event, the life of the party, so you always lust for one thing more, one more achievement, one more experience, one more thing to brag about. Maybe you see yourself as the most beautiful one, thinner and more beautiful than everyone else, so you lust to have that body, for that particular ideal. Maybe you see yourself as the tragic one, the one who was never loved or understood, so you lust to find that someone who will always pursue you, so you test other people, and you get into unhealthy relationships, one after the other. Maybe you see yourself as the hero, so you lust for significance; you lust for people to pay you just one more compliment about how heroic or self-sacrificing you are, to give you that recognition, 'Wow, you're great.' Because our minds don't have a sure sense of identity apart from God, we have carefully constructed but false notions of who we are.

Children of Wrath: v.3b

Do you see how subtle this is? How inescapable? How widespread is the problem? Who can tell when we've crossed the line? Which one of us can win over this? None of us! Here's the killer question then: How did God respond to this? Paul says in v.3 that we were 'by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.' That is the condition of humanity. Now what does it mean to be under the wrath of God? Is this somehow an unfair thing we were born into? I don't think so.

In the Old Testament, whenever God became angry with human beings, He withdrew His presence and let the natural consequences of people's choices follow. That's what God's wrath is. It's not that He is looking down at us from heaven with a thunderbolt in His hand ready to zap us. Paul in Romans 1:24, 26,

and 28, defines God's wrath as God 'giving us over' to our own choices. Jeremiah said the same thing in Jeremiah 2:19, and we find this thought in other places in the Bible. So how does this work?

If I were to suddenly decide to walk right into that wall, I would hurt myself. I would suffer the wrath of God, because that is a natural consequence of my actions as God gives me over to my choice. The natural pain is meant to wake me up to the fact that I'm trying to do something wrong. If I were to jump off a 10 story building, I would suffer the wrath of God. What it means to be 'by nature children of God's wrath' is to be under this natural domain where my choices have consequences, sometimes terrible ones.

But if we can accept the wrath of God in our choices to walk into a wall and suffer for it, doesn't it make sense that we must also accept the wrath of God in other areas? Like if you choose to commit adultery, you will suffer for it. Or if we indulge a gambling addiction we will eventually suffer for it. Or if we don't look to Jesus Christ to come into us and reverse our terrible self-centeredness, then we will suffer for it! Jesus made it clear: WE'LL GET BURNED PRETTY BADLY. There are consequences to our actions. That is how God has designed this world.

Summary

So as we step back and reflect on this section, a few questions come to mind. Are we really deteriorating, spiraling downwards? Is this why 'things are just getting worse?' Is this really true? Why does no other philosophy or religious idea presents such a portrait of humanity? Nothing else paints humanity in colors that are so hopeless and bleak. Is this what human life is really like? Is this why Paul says we were 'dead?' Maybe this isn't really true. But then, on the other hand, maybe it IS true. And maybe all the other professionals and spiritualists in the world don't want to be this honest because they don't have a God powerful enough to deal with it?

So after studying these three verses, I have to ponder other questions that are even more pressing: Do we even know the half of it? Am I even attuned to how bad things might really be? Evil is so attractive because it's so easy. It takes no effort at all for me to be evil. It takes effort for me to be good. And if this is true about me, then the key question is: HOW DO I CHANGE? GOD HAS TO INTERVENE HERE AND DO SOMETHING GREAT FOR ME AND YOU. And indeed He has. Sneak a peek at v.4, 'But God' connects people with Jesus, the resurrected Jesus. That's how our next section begins. Notice what tense Paul uses in verses 1-3? He uses the past tense. 'You were...in which you formerly walked...we too formerly lived...and were...' That's because something changed for people who gave their lives to Jesus. He did change them. He didn't just make them better people. He made dead people alive, by hooking them up to the one person who has been resurrected from the dead.

I'm wondering for you what your next step is. If you are a Christian, you've got to be motivated by this to bring the goodness of Jesus more deeply into yourself and more broadly into your world. Have some compassion on the world and do some evangelism! Have some compassion on the world and allow Jesus to keep changing you. Or, if you don't know Jesus as God's great solution to our human problem, I would ask you what your next step is. Do you need to get to know him more? Do you know enough and now you need to commit your life to him? Wherever you are, I'm so glad you're here, but please think about what your next step is, too. Maybe you want to come back next week to hear about our new hope.