

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **Coming Alive in Christ**

Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10

Code: 1908

Look with me, would you, at the second chapter of the letter to the Ephesians, Ephesians chapter 2. And we're going to discuss what it means to come alive in Christ, what it really means to be saved. What it is to be a Christian. This is one of the great sections of the Bible about salvation. And much of this is not new to us but it's so refreshing to our hearts to go over these wonderful truths.

You know, this study of Ephesians is so very vital. Understanding what you have in Jesus Christ is really essential. I was talking to a...a gentleman in our church yesterday and he was saying to me, "You know, the study of Ephesians is so very important." "Because," he said, "I was raised in a family where I was told and in a church where I was told that when you get saved, when you come to know Jesus Christ basically nothing happens. The only thing that takes place is sort of a judicial act on God's part where He forgives your past sins and that's it. There's no empowerment, there's no gift of the Holy Spirit, there's no nothing, just the matter of past sins forgiven. And then when you get the second blessing," quote "Then you get all the goodies that go with it."

And it would be a horrible thing to think of but that's the way most of those people have to exist, somewhere in the limbo between believing though they're saved they have nothing and, trying to find that second thing that you finally get that can give you the power that you need. But that is not what we learn in Ephesians, is it? What we see here in Ephesians is that when we have Christ we have everything. We are complete in Him. And the wonders of all that God gives us are here, delineated explicitly in this wonderful letter.

We ask ourselves often the question - What does it mean to be saved? What does it mean to be a Christian? What does it mean to be really born again? Well here is the definition of that. And there's a lot of confusion about it. There are a lot of people, as we know, claiming to be born again today that it's very obvious don't know the meaning of it.

I remember when I was speaking to a group of movie people, actors and actresses in Hollywood one time, and I presented Jesus Christ. There was this handsome, strikingly handsome, dark-complexion man from India who was an actor, a young actor, and I got all finished and he come up to me and he said - "I am a Muslim." But he said, "What you have said has intrigued me and I would like to have Jesus Christ." And I thought - Boy, that's fabulous.

Because you don't have Muslims do that very, very often. So we went off into a little side room at the hotel where it was happening and I presented Christ to him and he prayed a little prayer and he...he invited Jesus Christ into his life. And then he opened his eyes and looked at me and said, "And now isn't it wonderful," he said, "I have Jesus and Mohammed."

And I said - "I don't think you understand. Christianity is not going up to the shelf and saying I'll take one of those and let's see, one of those. That isn't it."

A lot of confusion about what it means to be a Christian. What it means to have Christ. What it means to be born again. But if you'll look with me at Ephesians 2:1 to 10 it ought to eliminate any doubt and any question. Cause it's here.

Now remember that the book of Ephesians is concerned with what it means to be in Christ. What it means to be one with Jesus Christ.

What it means to be a part of His body, the church of which He is the head. What it means to have been master planned into the body from before the world began. We saw in chapter 1 through verse 14 that Paul presents the master plan of God in eternity past. Then in verses 15 to 23 he prays that we would understand it, that we would really get a grip on the meaning of being in Christ. What it means to be a part of God's eternal plan. What it means to have been elected, redeemed and granted an inheritance forever with God. We've talked about the tremendous wonders of our position. All that we have in having Christ is in chapter 1.

Now Paul moves from eternity past in chapter 1 into time in chapter 2. In chapter 2 we find the Apostle Paul describing the very process of salvation, the very act of salvation, the very miracle of salvation that drew us into realizing this eternal plan. The plan is in 1, how you get in it is in chapter 2.

Now I want to tie another thing into your thinking also. The Apostle Paul is very concerned that we understand that as Christians we are possessors of the power of God. All right? It isn't just that when you're saved you get your sins forgiven plus nothing.

No, no, you receive all the power of God. It's all there at the moment of salvation. And that's the message of verse 19 of chapter one where he is praying that we would understand the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe according to the already present working of His mighty power. In other words, Paul is praying - O, God, may these Christians know...they may they know the tremendous power that is theirs in You. That's what is on his mind. He wants us to understand this power. And so he gives an illustration of it in verse 20, you'll remember we looked at it last time. It is the power with which He raised Christ from the dead and set Him at the right hand. It is resurrection power, it is exaltation power. Okay? That's his first illustration.

He's praying - O, God, may these Christians understand their resource, their reservoir, their power, their might, their energy.

May they know what they have in having Christ. And in order to illustrate that he says - It is the power that was so powerful it unlocked the chains of death and set Christ free and drew Him right up to an exalted place at the right hand of God. That's the power.

Further he says in chapter 2, it is the power that raised you from the dead and lifted you to the exaltation of the sons of God to sit you at the right hand of God with Christ. In other words, this is point two; to understand the power of God look at the resurrection of Christ and His exaltation, secondly, to understand the power of God look at your resurrection and your exaltation.

You say - What do you mean? Have I been raised from the dead?

Have I been exalted? Yes, spiritually that's already happened. Physically, it will happen in the future. Someday you'll be raised out of this world physically. The redemption of the body, Romans 8 talks about it, and you'll be with Christ. And you'll be in His image. Someday the resurrection and exaltation of the body, but already past tense, if you're a Christian, God has accomplished the resurrection and exaltation of your soul, of your spirit. And that's the miracle Paul wants to talk about in chapter 2. And in so discussing it presents to us a great picture of the doctrine of salvation. But really this presentation is an illustration of the power of God granted to the believer.

Now let's look at it, and as we examine this, verses 1 to 10, I want you to see six aspects of salvation. Now the general outline of this text is that he presents salvation in three tenses; past, verses 1 to 3; present, verses 4 to 6 and 8 and 9; and future, verse 7 and 10. He sees the past, the present and the future of the Christian. What he was, what he is, what he will be as salvation takes place. And so we're looking at that.

But under that general thrust I want you to see six aspects of salvation. And these are the six, salvation is: colon: from sin, by love, into life, with purpose, through faith, unto good works. Now we'll give those one at a time.

First, salvation is from sin...from sin. And this deals with the past. The past...from sin. Look at verse 1. "And you," and we'll skip the part that's italicized, if in your Bible it's italicized that's meaning it's added and it's all right there but we'll skip it because it picks up later in the ...in the text.

"And you who were dead in trespasses and sins; in which in time past," now you see, we're in the time past of the Christian life, "You walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom

also we all had our manner of life," it's past tense again, "In times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." We'll stop right there.

Now there is probably no clearer statement on the sinfulness of man in the New Testament than that. That really delineates it.

And it makes Paul's first point...you are a sinner and you are dead. Now if he's going to tell us about God's power, God's power is best demonstrated in resurrection. And the resurrection of Christ was demonstration number one, and your resurrection from sin is demonstration number two. If you're a Christian you've already been raised from the deadness of sin. And maybe that's a greater miracle than physical resurrection.

Look with me at verse one again, "And you who were dead." Now this describes the condition of every individual. You were dead.

Now listen to me, if you're a Christian this is your past. If you're not a Christian this is your present. This is where you are right now, you're dead.

You see, man's trouble is not that he's out of harmony with his environment. Man's trouble is not that he can't make meaningful relationships. Man's trouble is he is dead. In 4:18 of Ephesians it says he is alienated from the life of God. So that his deadness is not deadness in the physical, it is deadness in the spiritual. He is dead to God. His body is alive but his inner man, spiritually speaking, is dead.

You say - What does it mean to be alienated from the life of God?

Dead to God? The best way to see it is in reference to physical death. Physical death is an inability to respond, no matter what the stimulus is. Physical death means you can't react. You've been to enough funerals and so have I to know what physical death is. It doesn't matter what the stimulus is, no...no physically dead individual ever reacts to any stimulus.

I remember one time I was sitting in my office over here, some years back. And a little boy came banging on the door. And he was crying. And he said - Are you the Reverend, are you the Reverend?

And I said - yes. He said, - Come, please, come please, quickly, quickly. And so he took off running and I ran after him. We ran down Roscoe Boulevard half way down this block and crossed the street into a house. And I got in the house and the lady was standing there, a young lady and she was weeping and the tears were running down her face. And...And I said - Well, what is it?

What's wrong? And she said - My baby is dead, my baby is dead, my baby's dead. And she pointed to the bedroom and I walked in and lying on the bed was a little lifeless baby of about 3 months. It

was turning a funny kind of a blue color and there was absolutely no breath at all.

And I asked her if she tried to revive the baby and she said yes, yes. And she picked up the baby and she caressed the baby to her breast and loved it and kissed it and cried tears all over its little head but there was absolutely no response. And soon the ambulance arrived and they were unable to do anything, the baby was dead.

And I thought to myself, you know, I'm sure that in terms of human relationships, the very strongest stimulus there is...is the love of a mother for a little infant. If that mother can't get a response out of that little infant, that's death, physical death, the inability to respond.

Spiritual death is the same thing. All the caresses and all of the affection and all the tears and the love of God draw out absolutely nothing. Because a spiritually dead person is alienated from the life of God. There is no capacity for a response. And it isn't just a question of...of being dead and inanimate, it's like John Eadie, the great Scotch commentator said; "It's a case of death walking." They are literal spiritual zombies, because they don't know they're dead, they're still going through some motions. Death walking.

Jesus put the two concepts together, physical death and spiritual death, in the eighth chapter of Matthew when He called a certain man to be His disciple and follow Him. And the man said - Well, I'll follow You but first let me go home and bury my father. And Jesus said in Matthew 8:22; "Let the dead bury their dead." And He put them both together. Let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead. I've got better things for you to do.

And so it is that man is in a state of death walking. First Timothy 5:6, Paul said; "She that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives." It's a case of going through a zombie-like activity.

And what is the activity of the death-walker? Look at it, verse 1; "Dead in trespasses and sins." Functioning in the area of sin, functioning in the area of trespass. Now I want you to notice something, we are not dead because of sin we are dead because we were born sinful. We are not dead because we commit sin, we don't do a sin then die, we're born dead that's why we sin. I always think of it this way, I am not a liar, I am not called a liar because I lie, I lie in the first place because in my heart...what?...I'm a liar. A man does not kill and thus he is a murderer, he kills because he is a murderer. The Bible says that it is what comes out of a man that defiles the man. And we are dead and that deadness functions in sinfulness.

The in here, in the Greek, is what is called a locative of sphere. It is talking about the sphere in which we live. It is not a because of...it is an in...it is a location, a position. And, by the way, the opposite of being in Christ is being in trespasses and sins.

The word sins is interesting, hamartia. Very familiar word, it's a hunter's word, it means to miss the target, to miss the mark. A man shoots his arrow and misses the target. The second word paraptema, the word trespass, means to slip or fall or stumble, or go the wrong direction. Both are true of man.

And I don't know, commentators through the years have tried to make distinctions between what these two words mean, there are basically two ways of looking at the same thing. And it's just that God uses two words, and both of them in the plural to show the totality of sinfulness that is the result of deadness. Being alienated from the life of God means total deadness, total sinfulness.

Now you say - But hamartia in the sense of missing the mark. What do you mean by that? Now watch, this is the real true biblical definition of sin. Sin is a failure to hit God's target.

All right?

Well, you say, - what's God's target? Here it is, listen, "For all have sinned even," kai there, "Come short of the...what?...glory of God." Sin is a failure to glorify God, Romans 1 says that. When they knew God they...what?...glorified Him not as God.

That is sin. Sin is coming short of glorifying God. It does not mean when we say a person is a sinner, it does not mean that they're all the same level of vile, rotten, degraded, corrupt, decaying sinners. You could have 20 dead corpses and they could all have varying degrees of decay, they'd all be dead but different degrees of decay. And so it is in human history and human kind, all are dead but there are variances in the decadent, in the decaying of what is left. But sin is a question of...not a question of decay ultimately, it is a question of falling short of something.

In other words, now listen to this, we all understand that a - robber is a sinner, and a murderer is a sinner and a rapist is a sinner and a liar is a sinner and so forth and so forth and so forth. We're all clued in on that. But listen to me, sin has much more to do with what you don't do than what you do do. You got that? Sin is really not an issue of what you do, but of what you fail to do. It is that you fail to come to the glory of God.

It is that you fail, Matthew 5:48, where Jesus said; "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." And that's where we fail, right? Or as it is written, I Peter 1:16, "Be ye holy for I am holy."

Glory, holiness, perfection that's the target and that's where we fail. Now there may be different levels of morality, different degrees of decadence but we all fall short. It would be as if the whole congregation from Grace all lined up on the Pacific Ocean and said we're going to have a jump-off, folks. We're going to see who can jump to Catalina. And you can have as long a run as you want. And we'll all run down to the beach and everybody jump and we'll see who gets there. Listen, we'd all end

up at different levels in the water but nobody would get to Catalina.

And the same thing is true in terms of the spiritual. There are different levels of attainment in human life, there are different levels of morality and so forth, but nobody gets to the glory of God. And nobody gets to perfection. And nobody gets to holiness, that's why we only know that in Jesus Christ, when His righteousness is given to us by God. So in...you see, it is not so much that sin is what I do, it is what I fail to do. I'm trying to jump to perfection, I don't make it and I land in the sea of sin. So my behavioral sins are simply what is left when I can't make it to God's standard.

And I say that because a lot of times we meet good people. And we say - I'm a good guy. I mean, I do civic good, humanitarian good, I'm a wonderful father, I love my wife, love my kids, take care of things, I'm very generous, very kind. Listen, nobody would ever deny that and that's very wonderful. I mean, that's a good way to be. Jesus recognized that. In Luke chapter 6 verse 33, Jesus said, "If you do good to them who do good to you what thanks do you have, sinners do the same." Jesus said, sinners do good to each other. That's right. People do good to each other but Jesus said people who do good to each other are still called...what?...sinners. Because sinning is not an issue of what you are doing to each other, it's not relational, you can't say - Well, I'm all right because I do good to people.

That isn't the point. The point is it's what you don't do and you don't live a holy life. And you don't live a perfect life. And you don't reach the standard which is the glory of God. That's the issue.

And in Luke 11:13, Jesus said this; "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask." In other words he says - There are people who give good gifts to their children. What kind of people are those, Lord? Evil.

What do you mean evil? Well, their evil is not manifest in the fact that they do good for their children it's manifest in what they don't do and can't do. And that is to reach the standard of the glory of God.

At the end of Matthew, chapter 28, after the ship wreck on the island of Malta or Melita, it says; "And the barbarous people showed us no small kindness." You know, those barbarous pagan, ungodly, Christ rejecting people showed great kindness to Paul.

You see, that isn't the issue. Good works isn't the issue.

Relational goodness isn't the issue. Being a good neighbor and a good father and a good mother and a good parent, that isn't the issue. The issue is the glory of God.

Let me show it to you in another way. John 16:8, John 16:8, we're going to hurry a little bit. So if you don't have it, just listen and I'll read it; "And when He is come," the Holy Spirit, "He will reprove the world of sin." Now watch, the Holy Spirit is going to convict people of sin. He's going to move into the hearts of men and convict them of sin. What sin? Verse 9; "Of sin because they believe not on Me.?" Now notice, the sin of which the Spirit will convict is the sin of not doing something. You see that? It's not the sin of doing something, it's the sin of not doing it. You are not living to the glory of God, you are not perfect, you are not holy because you are not believing on Jesus Christ. And no matter what else you do, you're just ankle deep in the sea a long way from the goal. That's the problem. So, man is dead. He is dead in his inability to reach God's standard and he falls and slips and stumbles and goes the wrong direction because of his deadness. He is a death walking zombie manifesting a total inability to accomplish God's standard. Even though, from time to time, he manifests some moral goodness. So he's a death walker.

Let's look at verse 2. You say - Well, what environment is he functioning in? This death walker who is wandering through existence, what is the sphere in which he functions? All right, verse 2; "In which in time past you walked according to the course of this kosmos, this world, this age." Stop right there.

First thing he says - You are not only dead before you were a Christian, but you are functioning as a death walker, doing sins and trespasses according to the course of the world. In other words, you are a victim of the spirit of the age. People say - Well, we do what we want.

My football coach used to say to me - I'd become a Christian but I want to do what I want. And I used to say to him - But you're not doing what you want. You're doing what the world dictates.

You are walking according to the course of the kosmos.

Now the word kosmos here doesn't speak of a physical world, it speaks more of the ideological world of sin. The conceptual world of evil. The system of Satan. The system which he generates.

In other words, the zombie, the death walker, does indulge in the sins of the times. He's right up on it. He's current. He lives according to the world's standards, the world's values in his own time. He's conducting himself in complete harmony with the spirit of the age. The Germans called it the zeitgeist, the spirit of the times. He just does what the world does. It is an age alienated from God and he has a mind alienated from God.

They're in harmony with each other, he just walks in the sphere of sin in the spirit of the age. The kosmos which Satan dominates, according to John 12:31, the prince of this world, Jesus said, he dominates it and it pressures man and man succumbs and does what the world system tells him to do. That's total depravity.



Total depravity is death walking, death walking in sin and trespass according to the spirit of the age. That's total depravity. It doesn't mean you never do a good thing, it just means you're locked into a circle that you can't escape. A death walk in the spirit of the age.

What is the spirit of the age? You can see it around you. Three things would classify it to me, three things characterize our age; humanism, materialism and sex.

Humanism, that's do your own thing, do it your way, you're the boss, you're the king, you're the ruler. You know, Burger King says - Have it your way. Grab all the gusto you can get, the beer says. It's all the same stuff. You are the one. You are the only one. McDonald's tells you that. Everybody tells you that. It is to tell you that you're it, man. That's humanism. That's humanism. Just remember that the next time you stuff in a Quarterpounder. That's humanism.

And then there is materialism. And materialism says you've got to have it, you've got to have it...more money, more goodies, more things. And we're all so victimized that we can't even help ourselves in that area.

And then it's sex. This is the sexy seventies, everything from advertising to zoos and everything in between is promoted by sex. You almost have to drive with your eyes closed. Everywhere, billboards' signboards, everywhere. It's all over the place. We're drowning in a sea of it. Better, we're drowning in a cesspool of it.

In fact, one writer said that we don't have the morals of a barnyard. And humanism, materialism and sex is the zeitgeist, it's the spirit of the age, it's the stuff the system is selling And the death walker doesn't have any place else to go so he buys whatever its selling so he does whatever the society does and it just perpetuates the society like a snowball.

You say - Who's behind it all? Verse 2; "According to the prince, the power of the air." That's whose behind it, Satan is behind it. The prince of the power of the air, the prince, the arches, we have the kephale, the head, Christ, they have the arches, they have their leader - Satan who is the leader of the demons, who...who foments the system, who breeds the influence. It doesn't mean that everybody is literally indwelt by Satan, like Judas was. But it means Satan is behind the influences, he is behind the trends.

He and his demons carry out the objectives whether they are secular or religious, he is up to his neck in religion as well.

And notice the little phrase - the prince of the power of the air. What is this air? Well some people see it as the atmosphere, the first heaven around the earth, the atmosphere. The second heaven is the

stellar heavens. The third heaven is God's domain.

And some people say well, it means Satan is around the earth, he's in that atmosphere. But there's more than that. And he may be floating around there and he may be clear up to the stars also.

And he may be up in the third heaven too, once in a while when he goes before the throne of God as in Job. And he's floating around in the atmosphere for sure, and fighting the holy angels and flying around doing his thing with his demons but there's more to it than that. The prince of the power of the air, I believe, involves also the realm of ideas.

We say there was an air of something or other in the room. There was an air...we mean more than atmosphere. We're talking about an attitude. We're talking about concepts. We talk about the world of music, the world of sports, the world of politics.

We talk about all of these things, the world of religion. Well, the world here doesn't just mean the globe. Walking according to the course of this world means according to an ideology, according to a system of ideas. And the air is the same thing.

Satan is not only functioning in atmosphere physically, he is functioning in terms of a manifest ideology. He is promoting concepts. He is breathing ideas. He is behind the whole system.

It is right from hell. The world of death walkers has an atmosphere generated by the archos of that atmosphere, none other than Satan. And the result is...he is the spirit that works in the sons of...what?...disobedience...He draws them into active disobedience to God. It is in opposition to God.

And so it's the realm of sinful thought - the air. It's the world of ideas...sinful ideas. And man is disobedient to God because he's a death walker locked into a sphere where he can't respond obediently.

Paul continues his description in verse 3, very quickly; "Among whom also we all had our manner of life in time past." We're all like this. We all operated on the lusts of our flesh. The death walker...the death walker who is meandering like a zombie through the system influenced, spawned, controlled by Satan issuing in disobedience functions in response only to his flesh, the lusts of his flesh that's epithumia and it means strong, evil passions here. And to the desires of the flesh, that's thelema, that means drives. Where you have a passion that turns to a drive. He is driven to fulfill the desires of the flesh and the mind. And, by the way, the flesh refers to his fallen nature, his humanness, his alienated soul without God. Physically in the flesh, mentally in the mind, he is drawn, he is driven into the functioning of sin and trespass.

Now that's a mess. A death walker...literally drowning in it. Totally lost in the spirit of the age which is promoted by Satan. Which influences his mind in disobedience. Disobedience which is....

Which he is drawn into by the lusts of his flesh, the lusts of his humanness which transmit into drives that compel him to fulfill what his body and his mind demand. And the end of it all is that he is a child of wrath, says verse 3, like everybody else. He's a child of wrath. In other words, he's a bull's-eye for God's guns of judgment. He's a sitting duck. He's a...he's a clay pigeon.

He is the target. He is the goal of judgment. Now that's a bad situation. Wouldn't you say? Now that's a great description of total depravity. That's man.

What are the first two words of verse 4? What are they? "But God..." Great words, huh? The first two words of verse 1, "And you."

The first two words of verse 4, "But God." And here we move to point two, and we'll hurry by these so we'll give them all to you.

Salvation is first from sin. Secondly, by love. By love...look at verse 4; "But God," oh, I love that. "But God," and here comes the power, are you ready? Here comes the power that's going to raise us out of this death, turning the zombie into a new creation, full of life, eternal life. "But God who is rich in mercy,"

Plousios, over...over abounding, loaded with mercy. Mercy for the sinner. Boy, if we got what we deserved we'd be in trouble, wouldn't we? So He gives us mercy which is holding back what we deserve.

And why? "For His great love with which He loved us." You see, salvation is based on love. God doesn't look down and say - Well, there's a good one, I think I'll pick him. Oh, there's another good one, boy, he's a terrific person.

It has nothing to do with us, it's His love. Salvation is by love. God is love and God's intrinsic, essential attribute of love manifests itself to us in grace and mercy. Love is His motive. He's rich in love, so He's rich in grace, so He's rich in mercy.

And He reaches out to love those of us who were dead in sin, we are the vilest, sinful, godless, ungrateful, unworthy, unholy, destitute, degraded, depraved humans walking around engulfed in sins and trespasses serving the prince of the power of a system of ideology that drowns us. And we are targets for God's wrath and it is to us that He comes and pours out His love. That's God. That's God.

And it's amazing, you know, when we have sinned because we've even sinned against His love. He's loved us all along. Man doesn't just break His laws, he sins against His love.

Imagine if I were driving in the neighborhood where I live and the little child was in the street and I was driving too fast or something and foolishly killed that little child. Well, first of all I would be charged with a crime. And I would be tried and perhaps found guilty. And then I would either pay a fine or be imprisoned for a period of time on manslaughter or something.

And after I had paid my fine or filled out my term in prison, I...as far as the law is concerned, would be a closed case. Nothing else matters, the law is satisfied, it has no more interest in me, has absolutely no more concern, it's over. But, that's a sin against the law.

What about the little boy's mother? That's another story, isn't it? Could I ever make up to her for the loss of that little life by paying a fine? Serving a sentence? No. You see, there's only one way I could ever have a relationship with her. I've sinned against her love not against the law. There's only one way I could ever have a relationship with her and that would be if she offered me unconditional and free...what?...forgiveness, forgiveness. That's the only way.

And that is precisely what God has done. We have not only sinned against His law, we've killed His Son. We have killed His Son and continue to do so in rejection and open defiance and not believing in Him. And yet God reaches out and says - I know you did that but I offer you unconditional and complete forgiveness. And so it is that God in His great love not only sees His law satisfied but He sees His love satisfied.

Salvation is from sin by love.

Thirdly, salvation is from sin by love, unto...into life, into life. What's the one thing a dead man needs most? Not a coffin, even more than that...life. Life...and you see, this is what Paul is trying to say here, He's going to make you alive. And he says it in verse 5; "Even when we were dead in sins He hath made us alive together with Christ by grace ye are saved." Now here's his whole point here. His point is if you are doubting the power of God in your life it is the power that raised Christ, it is the power that raised you. See that?

So when somebody comes along and says - Well, I'm sorry if you haven't had the second work, if you haven't had the special baptism, if you haven't had this little special thing, you don't have the power. I say to them - garbage. The power of God that raised Jesus from the dead has already acted in my life in raising me out of the deadness of sin. You see? That's his point.

And he's saying - Look, if you're worried about whether God can get you off to thi...off this globe and on to that pearly city, whether He can get you out of here and into there, whether He can handle you going into the grave and coming out again at the resurrection remember He already raised you once spiritually.

The physical part is easier. You see, he's trying to show you that you can have confidence in God's power. Man, Christian, get a grip on who you are, what you've got and what God's already done in your life. Salvation is into life. He made us alive.

When you became a Christian you were no longer alienated from the life of God. You came alive. You, all of a sudden, were sensitive to God. You opened the Bible and it said - Oh yeah, that's what it says. The Spirit of God was in your life. And things made sense. And you saw the meaning of history. And you had a real reason to live. And you felt God at work. And you knew Christ. And there was an immediate brotherhood with other Christians. You became the possessor of the common eternal life. That's living. That's living.

And He did it when He made Christ alive. He made us alive together with Him. We were there when He rose from the dead. We were there when He came out of the grave. We were raised with Him. And God's power already's been displayed in our behalf.

So, salvation is from sin, by love, into life. Fourth, salvation is from sin by love, into life, with a purpose. So what's a purpose? What's this purpose? Verse 8; "And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus."

Now this is so good. When God raised you from the dead He didn't leave you in the cemetery. You know, when Lazarus came out of the grave...I thought of an analogy just now...when Lazarus came out of the grave, he was alive. And then what did Jesus say? "Loose him and...what?...let him go." The guy can't live the rest of his life in those grave clothes. And when Jesus raised you from the dead it wasn't just to let you roam around the cemetery in the grave clothes, He picked you out of the grave, a miracle of resurrection.

And then He did a second miracle of ascension and exaltation. Verse 6 says He raised you up and gave you a seat in heavenly places.

Look, illustration number one of God's power - He raised Jesus and exalted Him to the right hand. Illustration number two - He raised you and exalted you into the right hand of God. You're already seated in the heavenlies. Is that super? past tense - it's already done. If you are a Christian you are already seated in the heavenlies. Your citizenship is in heaven, Philippians 3:20.

You're no longer of this world. You've been transformed out of this world. You have eternal life. And you just happen to be walking in this dead world. The very opposite of being dead in this world, you're alive. And your life is in heaven, hid with Christ and God.

He didn't just raise us and leave us in the grave yard He exalted us. He took us up into the heavenlies and we're blessed with all spiritual blessing.

Now what do you mean by being in the heavenlies? You say. Do you mean you're in heaven? No, I'm right here but I'll tell you, my mind exists in God's domain. Doesn't yours? That's what it means.

All my blessings are there. I talk to the Lord there. I talk to the Father there. I talk to the Holy Spirit there. I think about the Apostle Paul who is there. All the people who have gone to be with Him...that's my home, that's my dominion. All my commands come down from there. All my services go up to there. All my sacrifices are offered to there. You see, that's my world. And so He not only raised me from the dead but He raised me to His hand, His right hand.

You say - Well, why did He do all this? Why would God want to make a bunch of cruddy sinners come alive and bring them up to be with Him? Why? Verse 7, here's the purpose. "In order that in the ages to come," and you know when the ages to come begin? Immediately after you're saved. The moment you're saved the ages to come begin. And in the ages to come, "He wants to show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Do you know why God saved you? In order that He could be kind to you forever. Isn't that amazing?

You say, Why does God want to be kind to me? I don't deserve it. Yes, you're right, neither do I. But God is...what?...love. And Paul says love is kind, love is gracious. God is love. And love wants to be kind and gracious. This is the purpose, beloved.

You were saved not primarily to keep you out of hell, you were saved primarily so that God could just shower His grace and shower His blessing and shower His riches on you. Now for somebody to come along and say - Well, when you get saved you don't get anything. That's to take your fist and just give a shot to God. You're denying the whole point of salvation.

From the moment you are saved, from the rest of the ages throughout eternity, He is unloading on you the riches of His grace. It's all yours. He doesn't withhold anything...anything at all. He gives you everything through Jesus Christ. Oh, what a wonderful thing, people. You don't miss anything. It's all yours in Christ. All yours.

And then you know what He does? When He gets all done pouring out all His grace on you He just holds you up, Ephesians 3:10 says, and shows you off to the angels and says to the angels - Now do you see what a wonderful gracious God I am. And all the angels sing the Hallelujah Chorus. And in the end He gets...what?...the glory. That's the purpose.

So don't ever think you don't have any resources. God saved you for the very purpose of unloading on you every rich kind, gracious thing conceivable to the mind of God so that you might be so filled

with His riches and filled with His kindness and filled with His grace that you can be held up to the angels and that they can praise Him for being such a loving, gracious, kind and wise God. So His own glory is at stake and He will never diminish His own glory. Therefore if He gets glory by pouring out grace on you He'll do it. That's what he says.

Salvation is from sin, by love, into life, with purpose. Fifth, through faith, it is through faith. Verse 8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith." Faith is simply believing, simply believing. It's not that complicated. It's a gift of God, not of yourselves and it's not of works. Because if it was we would all do...what?...? We'd boast. And then who'd get the glory? We would. God wants the glory. It's not of works. The work is done. It's all finished. Tetelestai on the cross, it is finished.

I always think of the story I told you some years ago about the guy who came to the revival meeting the night it closed. They were taking down the tent and he came running up to one of the men working with the peg. And he said - Oh, he said, what do I do to be saved? What do I do to be saved? And the man was taking all the tent apart, the evangelist was gone, the place was dark. And he turned to him and he said - I'm sorry, it's too late. It's too late.

Oh no, he said, what do I do to be saved? What do I do to be saved? You can't mean it's too late.

Yes, it's too late, he said. You see, it's already been done.

He was right. There wasn't anything to do because it has already been done, hasn't it? Jesus did it. It's not of works, lest any man should boast. It's of faith. Faith is simply believing.

And we're all creatures of faith. You live by faith everyday of your life. Every time you pop a lid off a Coca Cola and drink it, it's an act of faith. You don't have any idea what is in there. You go into a restaurant and you eat what they give you, you don't know what's really going on behind the golden arches. You te...I'll never forget reading in Reader's Digest about a city that converted from a storage water tank system to a pipe system. And they drained the old water system and they found at the bottom of this tank, the people had been drinking out of for 45 years, dead dogs, dead rats, animals, dirt, silt, and they all got retroactive dysentery. I mean, you turn on your faucets, you don't know what's playing in your pipes, you just drink the water.

You get on a bridge, I thought about that when I was driving over the Bay Bridge in Oakland one time, wouldn't it be funny if there was an unlucky lane with a hole in it every day and you just...somebody went through, you know. You don't believe that.

You go down a highway you've never been on and you drive 60 miles an hour without any fear that there's going to be a stone wall in your lane around the next bend. You live by faith everyday of your life.

And it's that ability to live by faith that's basic to human nature. And it's that that God uses to draw you to Himself. And if you can trust the people who make hamburgers and cokes and bridges and...and...and take care of your water, you ought to be able to trust the God of the universe. And that's the essence of faith. It's believing. Just believing. Just accepting, taking the gift.

And when you take the gift you come alive in that instant. And that's a great miracle, people. And God has already released His power, if you're a Christian, in your life to do that in the past.

You don't ever need to question God's power, you've seen it. Do you realize how dead you were in verses 1 to 3? And now all of a sudden, "For by grace you are saved through faith, it isn't of you at all, it's a gift of God, there's no works involved in it."

Because if there was you would boast and God wants to boast, not you.

If you breathe spiritually it's because God slapped you on the back. If you can hear the hearing of faith it's because God unstopped your ears. No self-congratulation, no religion of human achievement, it's all of God, none of us.

Salvation didn't come to you by your confirmation, by your baptism, your church attendance, your church membership. It didn't come to you by giving money. It doesn't come to you by communion, keeping the Ten Commandments, living by the Sermon on the Mount, giving to charity, believing in God, being a good neighbor, living a respectable life, none of those things. In fact, hell will be loaded with people who did all of those. Salvation is through faith, from sin, by love, into life, with purpose, through faith.

And last, salvation is unto good works. The result is good works.

Why? Because John 15:8 says; "Herein is My Father glorified that you bear much fruit. When God saves you He wants to see in your life good works. Because that manifests His power. He had the power to save you and the manifestation of that power in your good works is to His glory.

Now the Bible talks a lot about works. There are the works of the law which can't save in Galatians 2 and 3. There are the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19 to 21. There are the works of darkness in Romans 13 and Ephesians 5. There are the dead works of Hebrews chapter 6. These are not the kind of works we're talking about. We're not talking about works that save because none do.

We're talking about the works that are the result of salvation, what happens afterwards. Look at verse 10; "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus," watch this, "Unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Listen, if God before ordained that you should walk in good works believe me, He also gave you the power to do that when you were saved. That's



Paul's point. You don't need somebody to prove to you the power of God, the exceeding greatness of His power toward us, all you have to do is look at your own resurrection, your own exaltation and your own power to do those things which are good works in the eyes of God. You are to be filled with good works, Paul said.

The word workmanship is a Greek word, the first four letters of the Greek word are p-o-e-m, poem, we're God's poem. And the word really came to mean a masterpiece. We are God's masterpiece. And He has designed from before eternity to conform us to Christ, to mold us unto good works and He does it, His power. Listen, God's power is at work in your life, shaping you molding you into the image of Jesus Christ. That power you saw it when you were saved. And you see it everyday as you live under His pressure to conform to Christ. You're His masterpiece.

You say - I'm not much of a masterpiece. Well, you're getting there. I always think of the junior teacher, had a little kid and he was teaching about the creative power of God. And God made this and God made this and God made us and so forth. And this kid was being real naughty and goofing around. And finally, in frustration, the teacher said - Who made you? And the little guy said - God did but He ain't done yet.

And none of us is done yet. But the shaping is going on. And the good works are part of it. Listen, who is the true Christian? The one who does the good works. You can have all kinds of people who claimed to be saved, and claim to be born again and claim to be Christians and you can look. And do you see in their life good works being produced by the power of God. See. To the glory of God. Because salvation is unto good works.

I hope you know more than just religion. I hope you really know this salvation. I always think about the drawing room function I read about years ago. A famous actor was there and everybody was asking him to recite famous pieces and he had an unlimited repertoire and he kept doing it. And there was an old preacher there, I don't know how he got to the party but he was an old preacher and so he yelled out to the actor - And he said, - Why don't you do the twenty-third Psalm? And the actor knew it and he said - That won't be good for this occasion.

He said - I want you to do the twenty third Psalm. And he said, All right, I'll do it if you'll do it. And the old man thinking, that's even better - that's twice. He said - I'll do it.

The actor began and his intonation was flawless and his diction was masterful and he handled the twenty-third Psalm with dignity and grace and beauty from beginning to end. And when he was finished there was applause.

And then the old preacher got up and in a gravel voice after years of shouting and preaching and not too good at diction and not such hot intonation he went through the twenty-third Psalm and when he

was finished, there wasn't any applause but there wasn't a dry eye in the room. Tears came down the cheeks of the people.

And the actor turned to him and said - Sir, I see the difference. I know the Psalm but you know the Shepherd.

And that's the difference. A lot of people who know the extremities and the externals but knowing the Christ of God means to be alive and that's the message Paul wants to give. And if you've been made alive in Jesus Christ you don't ever need to question the power of God available in your life right now. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for this morning. Draw out, Father, to yourself those that the Spirit is wooing. May all of us be more grateful and more cognizant of the tremendous power already exhibited in our lives. We'll give You the praise and ask that You would bring to Yourself those who don't know You, draw them into the prayer room, Father. And bring us back together again tonight with excitement in our hearts as we worship and share in the baptism and the communion. We'll give You the praise in Jesus' name, Amen.

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