

Text: Eph 2.4-7

First of all, to review where we were last week:

Discussing “The Work of God in Saving Men”

- Three sentences in 2.1-10, 1-7, 8-9, 10
- Our lesson, “What You Were and What We Are”
- The work of God is operating on “you being dead”
- God is the subject of the sentence: God did the work
- The sentence has three verbs (three things God did)
 - ◆ Made us alive
 - ◆ Raised us up
 - ◆ Seated us with Him

Last week, we discussed “What We Were” — vv. 1-3, dead in our sins, subject to wrath.

This week, “What We Are” — vv. 4-7

Proposition: The grace and mercy of God, displayed forever, calls us to grace-filled living every day.

I. Contrasting God and us (4, 5)

A. A description of contrasting states of being (not an exact parallel)

1. God, being rich in mercy
2. We, being dead

We have nothing to offer in this relationship. We were dead. Everything comes from God.

B. A description of God’s riches (toward us)

1. Mercy:
 - a. “pity on the sinners who are suffering the calamity of sin”¹
 - b. “In the Septuagint ‘mercy’ (*eleos*) translates the Hebrew *hesed* (‘loyal love’). In the New Testament *eleos* means ‘undeserved

¹ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 326–27.

kindness' toward sinners."² (over 200 of the 251 appearances of *hesed*)

Ps 103.10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

2. Adjective "rich"

"This word denotes that which exists in a large amount, with the implication that it is valuable. It may be interpreted either as degree or extent [LN]."³

- a. This means an overabundant supply
- b. It also means an unplumbable depth

C. Explaining the source of God's riches

1. The repetition of "love" is called a "cognate accusative construction" — intensifies and emphasizes God's love
2. Love = regard for the need of the beloved (no regard for self)

"Just as the greatness of a giver casts an aura of greatness on his gift, so the surpassing excellence of God adds superlative luster to His love. It is greater to be loved by the mighty Sovereign of the universe, for instance, than by a fellow human being. God's love is great because of the price He paid. Love sent the Lord Jesus, God's only begotten Son, to die for us in agony at Calvary. God's love is great because of the unsearchable riches it showers on its objects."⁴

II. Outlining God's work for us

A. The work is a progression

1. Made alive with: the corpse is made alive

² Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 623.

³ Glenn H. Graham, *An Exegetical Summary of Ephesians*, 2nd ed (Dallas, Tex.: SIL International, 2008), 118.

⁴ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1917.

2. Raised up with: the resurrected man stands up
 3. Seated us with: the resurrected man sits with him
- B. All work done for us “together with Christ”
1. Each of the action words have “with” prefixed to them
 - a. The first verb has “with Christ” in the text
 - b. In the second two, “with Him” is understood from the first one
 2. Made us alive together
 - a. Paul made this word up
 - b. Main verb, to make alive, a compound used for regeneration and resurrection
 - c. Adds the prefix “with”
 - d. Word then is this compound: συν “with” + ζωη “alive” + ποιω “make” – to make alive with
- C. From the grave to the heavenlies
1. Here we need to emphasize that all these actions are spiritual
 - a. Spiritually, we are made alive
 - b. Spiritually, we are raised up
 - c. Spiritually, we are seated

All of this is seen as the whole action, a complete action, without reference to time. These actions are a “done deal.”
 2. Seated in the heavenlies
 - a. In Hebrews, we see the emphatic reference to Jesus seated at the right hand of God
 - b. This harks back to Ps 110.1

Ps 110.1 The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”
 - c. Here (and only here) Paul emphasizes that believers are seated in the throne *with him* because we are *in Christ Jesus*

“From this position the believer derives every spiritual benefit. Hence, the position of being seated with Christ in the heavenlies gives the believer a heavenly status with heavenly power to overcome the power of sin and death.”⁵

- There can be no going back from this position: if you are in Christ, you are in heaven.
- There is no doubt that you can grow in your spiritual strength to live for Christ and overcome sin.

D. A little parenthesis

1. Paul interrupts himself to celebrate the grace of God
2. He will expand this in v. 8
3. Grace = getting what you don't deserve, a free gift

III. God's great purpose in it all: the eternal display

A. The idea is to put his great kindness on display

1. “surpassing riches” – we get the word “hyperbole” (exaggeration) from the Gk for “surpassing” — but this is no hyperbole
2. Kindness:
 - a. What we were: deserving of wrath
 - b. What we are: recipients of mercy and grace, elevated to the heavenlies

B. The audience isn't specified, but

1. To all the saints, what a display it will be to see all the other saints!
2. To the angels, what a sight it will be to see the glorified saints gathered together
3. And even now, the display is evident

⁵ Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 334–35.

“The present tense of the participle supports the notion of continuous successive ages, including the present and future messianic ages. God is continually going to demonstrate his kindness in the succeeding ages.”⁶

Conclusion:

Proposition: The grace and mercy of God, displayed forever, calls us to grace-filled living every day.

“Note that verses 1–3 describe what we were in the past, verses 4–6 what we are in the present, and verse 7 what we will be in the future.”⁷

⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 338.

⁷ Constable, *Expository Notes*, Eph 2.7.