

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## ***God's Glorious Intervention***

***Ephesians 2:1-7***

**Keywords:** Total Depravity, Sin, Hopelessness, Resurrection, Salvation, God's Power

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** NONE

**SermonAudio Blurb:**

### **I. Introduction.**

- A. Last week we received a primer on prayer from the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:15ff.
  - 1. Unlike many of our prayers, Paul's flows fully from the revelation in the Word of God.
  - 2. It was intrinsically God-centered rather than self-centered.
  - 3. But that does not make it not beneficial to each of us for at the core of it was that we might better know God.
    - a. The assumption behind it is that as we properly know God and what He is doing we grow in hope, steadfastness, and joy.
    - b. We become a people who truly praise God and proclaim Him to others.
  - 4. The prayer wonderfully wove the truths of vss 3-14 into both praise and supplication/request.
    - a. We need hearts and minds in which the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see and grasp the hope that is found in God's calling.
    - b. The riches of what it means to be God's inheritance and possession.
    - c. And, possibly the most important of all, to know— really know— His power that is already working in and among us.
      - (1) It is not a power we need to ask for because it is already present.
      - (2) Even more important is that this power of God is accomplished in Jesus Christ. This is the realm in which God has chosen to reveal Himself and to express His infinite power.

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5. Let me remind you how that power is best seen.
    - a. Not in earthquakes. Not in some miracle or healing. Not in some vision.
    - b. Three ways:
      - (1) The resurrection.
      - (2) Exalting Him above all powers and authorities (the same which sought to destroy Jesus).
      - (3) Placing all things in subjection under Jesus.
  6. Remember those three because they become very important in a bit.
    - a. I say remember because I think that we can read or hear those three points and really remain unmoved.
    - b. They are abstract in many ways and this can cause us to tuck them away in our minds but not cause them to go deep into our souls and become a bedrock of unmovable, unshakable hope.
- B. Now notice the last little clause, the Father gave Him the Church of which He would be the Head.
1. Now Paul is ready to help us, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to show us this power that is working in and among us even now.
    - a. As I said last week, this power is not something we need to seek or is something lacking in our lives.
    - b. It is present and lively regardless of whether we see it or sense it. But it is for the good of our souls that we understand how it is working.
    - c. I believe that when we do that it will change how we pray. But even more importantly, it will change how we live.
  2. It is in the Church that we see God's power most clearly. And that is where Ephesians 2:1-7 comes in.
    - a. One sentence but what this one sentence does is provide commentary and illustration to what Paul declared in his prayer in 1:19ff.
    - b. The main subject of this section is found in vs 4 and the main verbs are found in vss 5-6.

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- c. So vs 1-3 serves to establish the terrible and hopeless condition those who would be the Church were in and vs 4-7 show how through God's intervening power they are transformed into something new.
- C. I will take us through this passage in a very simple manner. First we will look at why God's power is utterly necessary. Second we will see what God's power accomplished.

## **II. The Need for God's Power (1-3).**

- A. We were dead.
  - 1. The better translation of this is, "and you being in your trespasses and sins."
  - 2. It is describing our state of being, our true existence before God's power acted on our behalf. It is a state of spiritual death.
  - 3. This alone is enough to show us how desperate our need is for God's intervention.
  - 4. Dead.
    - a. Not weak or sick. Not confused or befuddled. Not wandering or reluctant.
    - b. Just dead. In life most things are negotiable and most things can in one way or another be resolved. But not death.
    - c. In death we face the reality of our helplessness. Nothing can hold it back and those who live watch it with that terrible certainty that it is coming and we are helpless.
      - (1) Some face it with terror.
      - (2) Others with anger.
      - (3) Resignation.
      - (4) Anticipation.
      - (5) Hope.
      - (6) or a mix of all.
      - (7) But regardless it is inevitable.
    - d. The bible tells us that this is already everyone's state regardless of their physical health.

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- (1) They are dead before God.
- (2) Not in some vague way but because of our sins and trespasses.
  - (a) We are lawbreakers, each person willfully violating God's law. Even for those who do not know it, their God-given conscience condemns them as they do things they know to be wrong.
  - (b) We are sinners, slaves to this power that overwhelms us.
  - (c) It gives us a heart that actively represses and suppresses what we know to be true of God.
  - (d) It gives us an inward, self-directed perspective that causes us to willfully give no thanks to our Creator and God.
  - (e) And it puts us in an infinite and eternal state of separation from God. So the bible tells us that we are objects of His righteous judgment and wrath.
  - (f) In fact it says that during this time while we think all is well and lie to ourselves that there is no God or that we can fix things in the end. Or worse yet that we are already fixing things to make us acceptable by God, what is really happening is that we are storing up more and more wrath to come.
- (3) This is what is real reality. Without the intervention of God we are in the state of deadness.
  5. And this is more than enough to cause us to throw up our hands in hopelessness but Paul is just beginning to pile it on.
- B. This state of deadness is how we conducted all of "life" before God's intervention.
  1. Walk simply speaks to our day to day life and conduct.
  2. Day in and day out each of us walked, lived, breathed, loved and hated in the realm of death.
  3. But there is more to our walk.
- C. It is in accordance to the course of this age.

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1. Humanity is walking a well-worn path that is not determined by the individual or even the whole of humanity.
  2. It is a course is a span of time and reality that we all move in. It can be translated as "age" as well.
  3. Remember Ecclesiastes? All is vanity under the sun? That is what it is saying.
  4. Run or walk in any direction. Create or destroy. Heal or kill. Laugh or cry. It really doesn't change anything for it is all done in this age.
  5. Picture a snow globe.
  6. And this age, so busy doing so much is an age that has no concern with God nor its sin.
- D. Also we walked in accordance to Satan (2b).
1. The idea of "air" is the idea of that realm of the spiritual beings, of demons and angels. Of powers and principalities.
  2. And it is Satan of who rules over it. Elsewhere in the bible he is called the god of this age.
  3. We see that Satan is not far removed from humanity. He is actively working in this age and in everything we see his fingerprints if only we can see.
  4. The result is that he is working in the lives of all humanity now described as sons of disobedience.
    - a. In that culture any intimate relationship was viewed in the terms of sonship.
    - b. Disobedience is rooted in unbelief. It is a heart that rejects faith and love toward God.
    - c. And so all of humanity walks in an intimate reality of disobedience.
- E. We walked in every way our desires, wishes and thoughts that were contrary and rebellious to God (3).
1. Two ways are described here in how we walked.
  2. First in our desires/lusts.
    - a. This term can be neutral or even good.
    - b. But that word, "flesh," shows us that this is not the case here. Flesh speaks to humanities bent and rejection of God and His ways. It is

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the essence of the course of this world and the death found in our sins.

3. The second is our wishes [desires].
  - a. Not a repetition because we could try to argue that we are mere victims. We were born in a state of rebellion and that is why we have these desires.
  - b. But this term shows that we were acting on those desires. We were indulging them.
  - c. Our thought processes and desires. The way we form thoughts and put them into action both in the mind and the body is in view here.
  - d. The flesh sets forward a lust it desires. And we would indulge it. Happily.

- F. Finally, we were simply children of wrath like the rest of the world (3c).
  1. If sonship speaks of intimacy, childhood speaks of our close relationship with whatever is the parent.
  2. To answer the question of "Who's your daddy" the bible simply looks directly into your eyes and flatly states, "Wrath."
  3. Remember that wrath is not just some anger boiling around. It is the outworking of righteous condemnation. It is the punishment for evil.
  4. And all of humanity has it for their father.
- G. So there it is, piled up in such a way that no person can wriggle free except by flat out rejection of it.
- H. But how do we really find escape? The rich power of God is how.

### **III. The Power of God Accomplished (4-7).**

- A. Finally, in a horrible, desperate reality God steps in, though in reality He always has been there.
- B. The two greatest words a sinner needs to hear, "But God. . . ."
  1. It is here now that the light comes pouring forth in the richness of God's loving, gracious power.
  2. He is the God who is rich in mercy.
    - a. It speaks of compassion and pity.

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- b. God looks upon sinners whose situation is serious and fully deserved and He extends mercy toward them.
  - c. He does it by sending forth His Son to bear our wrath and to die our death to its fullest.
  - d. That is rich. It is not merely dismissing our sin, which He cannot do and remain righteous. No, it is sending Jesus Christ to resolve the proper and right sentence of wrath for those who are rebels.
3. He is also the God of great love.
- a. Here we have what causes Him to show mercy upon us. It is His great love.
  - b. Make no mistake beloved, the greatest, fullest, grandest display of God's love is the Cross of Jesus Christ.
    - (1) Do not diminish this by speaking of how you know he loves you because you got some job or you really sensed His presence.
    - (2) Vs 5 tells us that we must always start with the Cross for it is there that God demonstrated His love for us, while we were still dead, walking as sons of disobedience, actively living out our lust and desires as children of wrath. Christ died in our place.
- C. So in rich mercy and great love God exerted His infinite power to save us. He describes this exertion in three ways:
- 1. He made us alive.
    - a. This speaks to the spiritual life that we receive now and not the resurrection that is to come.
    - b. Once we were dead in our sins, now we are made alive by God's rich mercy and love.
    - c. And this is the first exertion of His power in a very practical way in our lives. We who were dead are now alive.
    - d. And our new spiritual life is vitally connected with Jesus. We live with Jesus. It is that we are now identified with Jesus Christ rather than Satan.
    - e. So now Jesus' words are true for us, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone

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who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"  
(John 11:25-26)

2. He raised us up.
    - a. Made alive and now raised up.
    - b. Again it is not talking about the final resurrection rather it is speaking of our position and reality even now while we live in this age and time.
    - c. Again it is due to our union in Jesus Christ. Where he is we are.
    - d. Can you see what a privileged position is your if you trust in Jesus? Utterly amazing.
    - e. And quickly he states the final point:
  3. He seated us in the heavenlies.
    - a. Where are we in the mind and will of God?
    - b. In the heavenly places which is far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and any and all name that might ever be named forevermore.
    - c. And again it is because we are "with Him."
  4. What a positional change. From death to life. From wrath to grace. From this age to the age to come.
- D. Now I want here to show you how Paul is pulling all of this together.
1. Remember that the power of God is now working among us. Three ways according to Paul's prayer:
    - a. The resurrection.
    - b. Exalting Him above all powers and authorities (the same which sought to destroy Jesus).
    - c. Placing all things in subjection under Jesus. Conclusion.
  2. And what has he just described to be true of you and I because we are in Jesus Christ?
    - a. Made alive.
    - b. Raised up.
    - c. Seated with Jesus.



# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

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3.      What is His is ours because of Him.
  - E.      How and why?
  - F.      Vs 5, by grace you have been saved.
  - G.      No matter what a person thinks about his situation in life the reality is that because of our sin there is no hope except by the grace of God.
  - H.      Pure, undefiled, glorious, life-giving, sin-forgiving, soul-enlivening, heart-changing, hope-filling, age-transforming grace.