

**Ephesians 2: 6 and 7; “Sitting Together with Christ”, Sermon # 12 in the series
– “The Exceeding Greatness of His Power”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on January 21st, 2024, in the Morning Worship Service.**

What does this phrase in verse 6 mean, exactly? He made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ. For we are not now literally physically sitting together with Christ in the heavenly places. And so what can Paul mean by his speaking in this way? I believe that it means 3 things. 1st – It means that God has literally spiritually raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly places. 2nd – It means that God will someday literally physically seat us with Christ in the day of the Resurrection and even in the Intermediate State. And then 3rd – It means that God’s seating us with Christ is the prelude for what He will do for us throughout all eternity. I pray that together we might grasp the greatness and the glory of all that God has purposed to do for those who He has had mercy upon.

1st of all – God has literally spiritually raised us up with Christ and has seated us with Him in the heavenly places.

It says here in verses 4-6 that it was the merciful God, who because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. That is, the Triune God sovereignly chose to give us spiritual life in the New Birth because He loved us with an everlasting love. In demonstrating that love in the giving of Christ, and drawing us to behold it through the preaching of the gospel, He opened our spiritual eyes to what He purposed to do for us in Christ.

His purpose was, to provide in Christ, a substitute for our sins, and a substitute in righteousness; One who would perfectly fulfill His holy law, and thus become a suitable Savior for sinners, to give them spiritual life; to be the basis of all of His elect people being spiritually raised from their death in trespasses. Turn with me over to Romans chapter 5, verse 18 – “Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting justification of life.”

Now, the one man’s offense, is speaking of Adam’s eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil at the beginning of the world. He was the representative head of our whole race. And so when he ate, he immediately spiritually died. And because he was our spiritual head, all those descended from Adam, coming into the world, are born dead in their trespasses and sins. They are children of wrath because they are sinners by nature. And they confirm their sinnership by their practicing sin and walking according to the flesh.

But through Jesus Christ’s righteous act of laying down His life for our sins, justification of life is established. God’s express purpose in giving the free offer of the gift of salvation to all who will consider it, was to bring them into spiritual union with Jesus Christ. In our spiritual union to Christ, we are therefore presently spiritually seated with Him in the heavenly places.

Look with me over at Romans chapter 6, verses 3-5. “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” “For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.” What does it mean to us when we believe in Jesus Christ? It means that we die together with Him to sin, and we live then to righteousness.

In other words, we become sharers of His life. His life is in our life, because we have been raised spiritually from our death in trespasses and sins. He has raised us from the dead spiritually, and now we walk in newness of life. This is the result of our having been spiritually baptized into His death and resurrection. Because of these real spiritual acts of God, which take place in our soul, we are now in God’s mind, spiritually seated together with Him in the heavenly places. We

are “in” Christ now. And we are spiritually with Him now. We are participating in His life now. We are participating in His resurrection power now. God’s whole intention in this is so that we might not live to sin, but that we might live to Him. And we know that in His doing this, He is presently paving the way for us to be with Him forever.

Our position of being spiritually seated with Christ now in the heavenlies, is meant to cause us to seek Him more and more for everything that we need for life and godliness, until we see Him face to face. Turn with me over to Colossians chapter 3, verses 1-3. “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.” “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” “For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

So you see here, that in connection with what we have already studied in Romans 6, that when Christ died, we died to sin. And when Christ was raised from the dead, we who would believe in Him for eternal life, were also raised with Him. Therefore, in His ascension to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, we are presently spiritually seated with Him there. And since this is so, since this is the reality of our spiritual life, Paul exhorts us to keep seeking those things which are above where Christ is.

What are those things that he is referring to? To keep seeking those things above, is to pray and to hold fellowship and communion with the Lord Jesus in your heart. The things that you seek are the things which He alone can give you. They are things which you cannot provide for yourself. They are – His giving you grace in order to live a life focused upon Him and what He would have you to do, to obey Him. Your life as a Christian is “hidden with Christ in God”, it says here. These things are listed for us in the rest of this chapter.

They are asking and seeking for grace to put to death your sinful members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry. They are your asking and seeking for grace to put off the old man, and to put on the new. They are your putting on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering, so that you can bear with other Christians, and forgive them when they sin against you.

They are your having regular fellowship with Christ in relation to the word of God. In your fellowship with Christ over the word, you will daily pray that His word will dwell richly in you in all wisdom. This becomes very practical. There will be wives who will be praying for grace to submit to their husbands. And husbands who will be praying to be able to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. They will pray not be bitter toward them but to give themselves for them. There will be children who will be asking for grace to obey their parents in all things, for this is right.

There will be Fathers who will be asking for grace so that they will not provoke their children, but rather learn to encourage them. All who are Christians will be seeking Christ for the wisdom and grace that you need, so that peace will rule in your hearts. You will seek to promote unity in the church, and you will be thankful. You can be thankful in everything because you have Christ with you always; Christ who is the hope of glory.

2nd – God will someday literally physically seat us with Christ in the day of the Resurrection and even spiritually in the Intermediate State.

Verse 7 says – “He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” I want you to see from this verse that since we are seated together with Christ in the heavenly places, we can expect that He will be showing us the riches of His grace and kindness all during this age, and in all the successive ages to come. In all the ages of time, those chosen by God have known the benefits of Christ’s grace, leading them on to eternal glory.

All of Christ's Church together, in every generation have beheld Him by faith, even though they have not seen His physical Person, during all the time they lived upon the earth. Those in Old Testament times, they looked forward to His first coming in His Incarnation. We in New Testament times look forward to His 2nd Coming to complete the redemption of His Church. We look forward to that time when He will return, and we will physically be raised from the dead. And in that day we will take our place with Him on His throne and reign together with Him. We will sit down on Christ's throne with Him. And we will reign with Him all through eternity.

Look with me at Revelation chapter 3, verses 20-21 – “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” “If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” Christ is here giving us instruction on how you can overcome temptations to sin and lukewarmness. He is knocking. But you must open the door to have greater fellowship with Him.

He knocks at the door of your heart, dear Christian. He is seeking entrance to your heart and mind, to have fellowship with you. It is having fellowship with Him that will strengthen you and refresh you by His presence in your life. Having that, you can overcome the lukewarmness in your walk with Him. He will reward your greater faith in Him. He will reward your obedience to Him, by His granting you to sit down with Him on His throne. And just as He overcame the world, and sat down with His Father on His throne, so the promise is given to you, that you will sit down with Him on His throne.

But do you see Him in your mind's eye now, as having gone before you into heaven? He has gone there to prepare a place for you so that He might receive you to Himself. Will you press on to know the reality of this? He is seated in heaven at the right hand of the Father. And there He intercedes for you. This glorious truth of His Ascension and His Session is not meant to trouble you. It is meant to encourage you, and strengthen your faith. He wants you to behold the great things that God is doing for you in mercy and grace. He wants you to be thinking about what He will do for you in the future, because you are spiritually united together with Him, in His life.

Look at John chapter 13: 36 – 14: 6 – “Simon Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, where are You going?’” “Jesus answered him, ‘Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.’” “Peter said to Him, ‘Lord why can I not follow You now?’” “I will lay down my life for Your sake.” “Jesus answered him, ‘Will you lay down your life for My sake?’” “Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.” “Let not Your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.” “In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.”

“I go to prepare a place for you.” “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” “And where I go you know, and the way you know.” “Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life.’” “No one comes to the Father except through Me.” I want you to notice that Jesus tells Peter, that even though he cannot follow Him to heaven at that time, that he would in the future.

Peter wanted to lay down his life for His Lord, there and then. But he did not realize that the Lord Jesus was actually on a mission that He could only accomplish by Himself. His mission was to die to save Peter, and all those believing in Him, so that He could bring them all to heaven. And so, He had to tell Peter that where He was going, that Peter could not come with Him at that time. But he would follow Him later on. He prophesied Peter's denial of Him. But then He gently and graciously followed it up with the statement that Peter and the other disciples should not let their hearts be troubled.

He said that if they believed in God, they should also believe in Him. He wanted Peter to believe Him that in His Father's house, there were many mansions, many dwelling places. And

He was going to prepare a place for all of His disciples, that where He was, there they would be also. It is good for us to know that at the end of our earthly journey, we will someday sit together with Jesus in a more literally spiritual way. When we die our spirit will be made perfect. We will rest in the mansion of glory which He has prepared. And we will await the Day of the Resurrection, that Day in which we shall be glorified. That is what it means by our being seated with Him in the heavenly places.

And then 3rd – To be seated with Christ in the heavenly places means the prelude for what He will do for us throughout all eternity.

In verse 7 it says that in the ages to come He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. You should know that according to the Scriptures there is only one Church age. It began when Jesus Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to sit at God's right hand. And it will run on until Christ returns. Spiritually we are at the present time seated with Christ in the heavenly places. Christ is presently reigning over all people and nations from His exalted position at the right hand of the Father. And, we are told in the Scriptures in Psalm 110 and in Hebrews chapter 2, that He will remain there at God's right hand, until the Father puts all of His enemies under His feet.

Psalm 110, verse 1 – "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." In Hebrews chapter 2, verses 5-8 it says – "For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels." "But one testified in a certain place, saying: 'What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him?' "You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set Him over the works of Your hands." "You have put all things in subjection under his feet." "For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him."

"But now we do not yet see all things put under him." (that is – man) Because "him" it's not capitalized here as to refer it to Christ. It's not speaking about Jesus directly, although it does refer to Him in the first and greatest sense in terms of its fulfillment. But it is speaking of "man". It is most certainly true that the Man Christ accomplished the Father's purpose in redemption, by His righteous life and sacrificial death. And so, God has crowned Him with glory and honor in His resurrection and ascension. All things have been placed under His feet. But, when we think of these verses as redeemed men in total, Christ's Church, we do not yet see all things put under our feet yet.

What does this mean for us? It means that Christ is reigning presently over all the earth and over all things. But Christ's Church is not presently reigning and ruling spiritually on the earth. I have tried to explain this to you at numerous points in my ministry, but I will try here once again in relation to these verses. It is God's purpose that Christ's Church shall someday rule and reign on the earth. (Revelation 5: 10) Christ's kingdom is spiritual. And it is not of this world, as we know. If that was the case we would all be fighting literally to see His kingdom go forward and to see His cause advance. But we do not do that, do we? What we do is that we fight spiritual battles in order that truth and righteousness might reign through Christ's Church upon this earth.

Our battles are fought spiritually with powers in the heavenly places. So we need to understand that God Himself will have to do something very great before Christ's Church can come to spiritually reign upon the earth. Satan will have to be bound, and the Spirit will have to be poured out upon many nations. All the kings of the earth, as it says in Psalm 138 shall have to come to know the Lord. But this is what the Bible clearly teaches will someday take place. The basis for this great fulfillment of prophecy, all of this began when Christ was raised from the dead. And when He ascended, He began His Session.

Christ is presently seated at the right hand of the Father until the end of this age. And during this age, all of Christ's enemies are going to be put under His feet. Now I hope that you will notice, that this means that the Father will do this, before Christ comes again, the 2nd time. All of His

enemies and ours have been overcome by Him, by the power and purity of His life. They have all been overcome by His death and resurrection. And therefore the victory is ours now, spiritually. And this victory will continue to be applied to many people and many nations until Christ's kingdom someday comes to reign upon the earth. Christ's spiritual kingdom will reign upon the earth someday because Christ now presently sits at the right hand of the Father. And all His enemies are going to be put under His feet before He returns.

Therefore, we can expect that the Millennium, Christ's kingdom's spiritual reign, will take place, before Christ's Second Coming. Our being seated with Christ in the heavenly places has always been a prelude of heaven and the eternal state, all through this Church age. But it will increasingly be the case as this age proceeds to its climax of Christ's return. Holiness will yet prevail among the nations. Those days of the Thousand Years will be a prelude of what it will be like in the ages of eternity, when the exceeding riches of God's grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus will be more fully revealed than ever before, and go on forever and ever!

So let us be looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Let us look forward to the time when we shall forever sit together with Him in the heavenly places in the New Heavens and walk with Him upon the New Earth.

Explanation of the Millennium: The Millennium cannot be equated with this whole Church age, for the Church is not yet reigning among the nations. Revelation 20, verses 1-4 say this: "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand." "He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished." "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them." "Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands." "And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

So the dragon is the Devil and Satan. And the one who binds him is Christ, in relation to all that He did when He went to the cross. Jesus said in John 12: 31 and 32 – "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out." "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." So, at the cross, the Devil was cast out from his ruling over all of God's elect people. They cannot be deceived by Satan any longer when Christ, who was lifted up, would draw them all to Himself.

In the words "I will draw all peoples to myself", the word "peoples" is not in the Greek, but it is supplied. It actually reads – I will draw all to myself. He means that He will effectually draw all of His elect people to Himself to be saved. They shall not be deceived because Christ has cast out the ruler of this world at the cross. Those chosen by God, and drawn to Christ, shall not be deceived by the Devil any longer. This is true during the whole Church Age. But in relation to the Devil's work of deceiving the nations, mentioned in Revelation 20, verse 3, the Devil is bound will only during the time of the Millennium, or the Thousand Years.

Christ binds the Devil in a particular sense here in Revelation 20, verse 3. It is, so that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years have ended. This clearly has reference, not to individual Christians, but to the whole cause of Christ among the nations in relation to "the thousand years" of the Millennium. The nations have been deceived all through this Church Age thus far. And they are presently being deceived by the Devil. But there will come a time when he will be bound and they will not be deceived.

Individual Christians all through this Church Age are not deceived by the Devil. This is because Satan is bound concerning their not being deceived, because of Christ's having redeemed them to God. The work of the Holy Spirit in their mind and heart insures this, that they will not

be deceived about their need of Christ, of being saved, and of His good work in redemption which is the basis of their sanctification.

But these martyrs who are mentioned in Revelation 20, verse 4, who come to life at this point in Church History are not the bodies of those martyrs who died under Pagan and Papal Rome or any other martyrs for the cause of Christ. They are their souls. These souls “come to life”, they “live” and “reign” in relation to the cause for which they died. That is, spiritually they represent the whole cause of Christ which comes to life, and conquers and reigns among the nations. The gospel will prevail and triumph among the nations during those thousand years, because the nations are no longer deceived.

So the Millennium is not the whole time of the Church Age, but it is rather a time within this age when Christ’s kingdom flourishes greatly and becomes great in all the earth. It will be a time when many nations will receive Christ; when kings and political rulers will not be deceived to think that they should persecute Christians, and suppress the truth of the gospel. But the Spirit will be poured out upon them and they will see the light of the truth of the glory of Christ, and the gospel, and they will be saved. (Psalm 138: 4 and 5, Isaiah 60: 1-12, Psalm 72: 8-19)

Whole nations of people will be saved. (That is, Christians will be the majority in those nations) The conversion of the Jews will be the introduction to this time period within this present Church age. The Millennium will be a particular time of peace among the nations (Isaiah 2: 2-4 & Psalm 46: 8-11) in the latter days of this present Church age. This time period will be a prelude to what God will do for all of His people in the eternal state.

There will be a greater holiness which will prevail among the people of many nations during that time. And the exceeding riches of God’s grace in Christ will be displayed to the whole world in that day. Many people from many nations will be saved. The Millennium will be the fulfillment of Peter’s statement that a thousand years will be as a day, and a day as a thousand years. It will be a thousand year day which will seem to many as days out of eternity, so to speak, in an earthly sense. And although it will not be a different age, it will seem to be so, to those who are living in it, in many ways.