

EPHESIANS 2:5
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 5
Dec. 8/2012

INTRO: What a wonderful book Ephesians is! When I was a Prairie Bible Institute, my boss, Erik Bjorn, did a correspondence course on this book. And on the cover he had a picture of a treasure chest with all kinds of treasures. That picture of Ephesians is most appropriate. Almost every verse is a gem or a jewel. So the series of messages I did on chapter one has a treasure chest with jewels and gems. This second chapter is no different, though the gems and jewels are different. And in our verses tonight, when we have dug enough, we will find some more great gems of truth. The digging will be a bit tough though, so you must put on your thinking caps.

We are in what I view as Paul's first digression from sharing about his prayers for them. This is a side trail loaded with gems as I mentioned already. He will pick the theme of his prayers for them up later. But here he is in his first digression. He has told them how God is filling every place in every part of them, which is as I understand it, those areas they are yielding to Him. And then his thought makes him marvel at what wicked people God does such wonderful things for. And so 2:1 says that He is filling "even you, who were dead in trespasses and sins." And so in 2:1-3 he shows them why this is so miraculous. So look at what kind of people God fills (read 1-3).

And then we came to one of the greatest contrasting conjunctions ever given, "BUT God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us..." And that was our text last message as we looked at His mercy, His feelings of compassion, and then at His great love with which He loved us.

And tonight we want to go on from there. So, let me give you the main clause of verses 4 and 5. Listen to it without all the fillers, "But God made us alive together with Christ." Now last message we looked at these fillers or describers. It says, "But God..." and then we have describers of this God. Which God? The One who is rich in mercy. That cuts out every other god ever imagined by people. That is the God of the Bible. Second, it is the One who worked on

our behalf because of His great love with which He loved us. We covered that in the last message.

So, in 2:4-6, we have, in my words, the release from the death we were in, as described in verses 1-3. In the last message we began to look at that, but our time was taken up by describing the God of mercy and love who delivers us from this great death. Now we will look at the main clause of verses 4-5..

c) The release from this death (2:4-10) cont'd

(1) How God released us from this death (4-6) cont'd

Let us read once more, verses 4-6 (read). So, in our text, God's mercy has been aroused to activity by seeing our plight in sin. And now His love seeks to do something about those compassionate feelings that have been aroused. If something can be done about the situation, His mercy will not be satisfied until He does it. And when He does something about it, His mercy will be satisfied and His love will be fulfilled. And so, according to our text, He does three wonderful things for us. The first thing Paul mentions is that even while we were dead in sins, He made us alive together with Christ!

So, here is our question: How does God release us from this death we were in? First, He does so by giving us new life as described in verses 4-5.

Paul does not show here all the details of how God does that. He does not explain here that in order for this to happen we must

repent and believe. He does not explain all that since these Ephesians he is writing to are already saved. According to 1:1 they are saints, so they are already saved and they know how that happened to them. So, let me show you from the first letter to the Thessalonians what had already happened to these Ephesians as well. We find it in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 (read). For the Gospel, the good news to take effect, man is required to do two things. Neither of these is meritorious as we will see soon enough in Ephesians 2. The first of these two is repentance. For the Thessalonians, this repentance is shown when they turned from idols. The sins that have separated us from God must be repented of. Repentance is extremely hard for sinners, but it is absolutely essential to salvation. Second, they turned to God. That is the faith part. Repentance and faith are the two requirements for salvation.

And when we repent and believe, the words of our text go into effect and He makes us alive together with Christ. We call this the new birth, or regeneration. In regeneration, we come to new life (read Rom. 6:3-6). In baptism we picture what happened in the spiritual realm when we repented and believed. We were buried with Christ into death. His death counts for us. And then, just as He was raised from the dead, we are raised together with Him. All of this happens by faith!

D. Martin Lloyd Jones says on Ephesians 2:4-7, "We must therefore all admit as we read the first seven verses of this chapter that most of our troubles are due to the fact that we are guilty of a double failure; we fail on the one hand to realize the depth of sin, and on the other we fail to realize the greatness and the height and the glory of our salvation. Oftentimes we are content to think of our salvation merely in terms of the forgiveness of sins. Not that one wants to depreciate that, for there is nothing more wonderful or more glorious. My point is that to stop at that is surely tragic. And I verily believe that the whole condition and state of the Church today is largely due to the fact that we fail at both points. It is because we never realize the depth of the pit out of which we have been brought by the grace of God that we do not thank God as we ought. And then there is the failure to realize the great heights to which He has raised us. That is what the apostle is dealing with now" (Vol. II:82, underlined by myself).

So, what he is saying is that in verses 1-3 we have been shown the deep depths of sin to which we had fallen. But in verses 4-6 we will now see the great heights of glory to which we have been raised in Christ. And I say the BUT of verse 4 is one of the greatest of 'buts' in the Bible.

Let me try to draw a picture of verses 1-3, and then one of

verses 4-6. Picture once more in your mind that young boy and the vulture waiting for him to topple over. There is the picture of our state in verses 1-3. Now imagine a king seeing this boy in this state, and he takes him home, nourishes him to health and strength and dresses him as a prince! There is the picture of verses 4-6! It is the before and after effect, and the contrast is huge. And so, when Paul says God made us alive together with Christ we can see ourselves as princes or princesses.

Now, it may be that in the words *He made us alive*, he has drawn a contrast to that first great statement of the state we were in in 2:1, and that is that *we were dead in trespasses and sins*. So, on the bad side of the picture it is said, "We were dead in trespasses and sins." On the good now, it contrasts that picture with these words, "He made us alive together with Christ."

Now there is a phrase used by theologians to describe the great truths we are taught in verses 4-6. It is called the Christian's *union with Christ*. So Romans 6:5 says, "...if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection..." There is our union with Christ both in our death with Him and our resurrection.

Now before we can understand the text that lies before us, we must understand a difficult, but very important teaching. You see, what

this is saying is that we, as Christians, have been made alive with Christ! But as if that were not enough to grasp, he gives us two more great statements. We have also been raised with Him! And yet again, we have been seated together with Christ in heavenly places! I wonder how many of you feel like you are sitting with Christ in heavenly places?

Well, we must understand some great truths here first before we go on. It is the truths related to our standing and our state, or our position and our practice. We are taught these great truths in both the Old and New Testaments. And what we must understand in order to understand these great truths of the glory to the heights to which we were raised when we were saved, is the difference that is often there between the Christian's standing and his state.

I want to show you these truths in picture form. Now I think only once before in preaching have I covered this subject. It may be new to many or most of you and I must take time to explain.

Let us begin in the Garden of Eden. Before Adam and Eve sinned, their page was perfect. So, here is a picture of the original page of their moral lives (#1). You see, on the left side is their standing with God, and on the right, is their actual state. Before they sinned their standing or state was the same. You can also call that their position or

practice. Before sin, their standing was righteous and their state was righteous. Before sin, their standing was holy and their state was holy in actual life. There was no sin (#2). And then they sinned, and their standing with God was unholy and unrighteous, and their state was unholy and unrighteous. Now they were doomed for hell. And in the gulf between is their sin. (#3) And then, in the Garden, they submitted themselves to the clothing God had made for them, and they were saved. Now their standing with God once more was holy, and when they were saved their sin was dealt with and they were once more righteous and holy in their state as well. But they now had a fallen nature.

Now let us look at how this works from a picture of this in the OT. Look at Numbers 33 (read 50-56). Now I want you to notice that they have not yet crossed the Jordan River. The land of Israel lies on the other side. And before they cross, while the other nations still are in possession of the land, God said that when they crossed over, they were to drive out the inhabitants of the land. But in verse 53 God gives this great **proclamation, (#4)**. "For I have given you the land" (#5). You see, with regard to their standing, they already possess the land. But with regard to their actual state, the inhabitants of the land still possessed it (#6). And according to our verse, Israel is to drive out the inhabitants of the land and take possession of it

practically. That is the **process**. And each area in which they drove out the inhabitants, their standing became their state. in order for their state to equal their standing, they must now go in and dispossess the inhabitants of their land. And Israel did that. And whenever they drove out those inhabitants from an area, their standing and state became the same with regard to that area. That is the **product** of obedience by faith (#7). And thus, as they conquered the land, their standing became their state (#8). And so as time progressed, Israel conquered more and more of the land that God by right had already given to them.

Now we want to see this great truth from the NT. So we go to Romans 6 (read 5-6). Now I want you to notice our standing as believers with God. We are crucified with Christ (#9). Indicative statement of fact! This is the proclamation!

But what is the process in Romans 6? Well, in verse 6 the **process** is, "...that the body of sin might be done away with..." (#10). Now the verb here is in the subjunctive. The indication is that this may or may not happen. But it is to happen. We are to make it happen by faith.

And when we obey God by faith, what is the **product**? According to Romans 6:6, it is stated like this, "...that we should no longer be slaves to sin" (#11). I trust this is what we all long for, freedom from sin's dominion!

Now let me briefly show you one more thing from the OT example we had earlier. Here is how God brings our state in line with our standing. In Deuteronomy 7 God told Israel to enter the land and drive out all the inhabitants. And God said they were not to be afraid of them. There were giants there, but they were not to be afraid of them. I believe that is a picture of the Christian's life. There are many enemies to drive out of us, and we are not to be afraid of them. Recently we have been talking about envy and jealousy. These are giants.

So go with me to Deuteronomy 7, (read 7:16-22). How does God do it? How does He defeat the hostile territory in us? Here is the key. He does it, "Little by little." Let me explain. When I became a Christian I was a cigarette smoker. I very soon came under conviction about that. Sometimes I would be talking to somebody about the Lord, and I was very excited about that, then I would reach for my cigarette pack, and I thought, "Oh, oh, not now." And as time progressed I battled more and more. So here is the picture. As a new believer, I was perfect in Christ (#12). But at the same time, I had a habit that I believed was sin. And so I began to struggle with it (#13). My standing and state were not the same. Well, I battled for about a year and finally, when I thought I would never win, I threw myself down on the floor of my home and cried out to God. And from that day onward, slowly I

gained the victory. And now, for over 30 years, my standing and state have been the same with regard to smoking. And now, with regard to cigarette smoking, for over 30 years, my standing has equaled my state (**#14**). Praise God! Many other areas have been added to that. But I have not yet arrived. As a matter of fact, I still have numerous struggles.

So, from Romans 6 and Ephesians 2, let me give you some of these great positional truths (**#15**). Romans 6 says that we died with Christ. It says we were buried with Him. Ephesians 2:5 says that we have been made alive with Him. How can that be true when we have not yet been resurrected? Well, it is true of our position, not our practice yet, though it is to be happening more and more. Second, note in verse 6 as well, that He raised us up with Christ. And third, we have been made to sit together with Him in the heavenlies. Again, that is our position. That has not yet been realized in practice or in our state. So, what is spoken of in our text is our standing, not our state; our position, not our practice.

But if we live by faith and we repent and confess when we have done wrong, we learn to overcome by faith (**#16**). And if we keep living, present tense, by faith; some day our standing will become our state. We will be physically raised from this fallen body and we will truly be sitting together with Him in the heavenlies (**#17**). Our standing will have become our

state, our position will have become our practice. And all of that is called our glorification.

Last Sunday Pastor Boehlig gave us a good message from Colossians 3 on putting off the old man and putting on the new. Now you could go through this chapter and put most of it on this page. It starts with the fact that we were raised with Christ and then what all we are to put on and put off **(#18)**.

So let me make one point here from Numbers 33. God said they were to drive out all the inhabitants of the land. Then He said in verse 55, "But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell." This is exactly what happens to us as Christians when we do not deal with anger and bitterness and so on.

-By new life (4-5)

Now we are ready to look at verse 5. So, let us read 4-5. You see, with this understanding we are now ready to look at how God brought us out of the vile predicament we were in when we were dead in trespasses and sins. First, He made us alive together with Christ. This should have a tremendous impact on our lives!

Now that we have looked at the difference between our standing

and state, I want us not to think that our having died with Christ, having been buried with Him and raised with Him have not affected our lives, since these truths are related to our standing. In practice, when we understand that we have died, were buried, and raised with Christ in position, this understanding should greatly affect our lives. We have been raised with Him!

Now I want you to go back to Romans 6 for a moment. Let us read 6:1-10 (read). Now I want to show you a most important verse. As John 3:16 is crucial to our initial salvation, so Romans 6:11 is crucial to our ongoing salvation, or sanctification as we know it (read 6:11). It says we are to 'reckon' ourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now we want to do that. The word to reckon that we have here is a term that could be used by accountants. The original word here is logizomai. It is what accountants do with the credit and debit side of a ledger. They add up all the credits on one side and all the debits on the other, and in the bottom they reckon, logizomai, the standing of the account.

So, let us take a lost sinner. Let us add up the outstanding debts of his sins before God. Let us say this person is in his early 20s. By now the column of his debt load cannot bear all the zeros that follow the nines that precede it. On the credit side of

his ledger is just on zero. His life, all his good works added together have not earned him anything before God. And now, this sinner hears the Gospel, that is that Jesus died for his sins, and when this huge truth dawns on him, he falls before God and acknowledges his sinfulness and he repents before God. And in that moment, the numbers on the debit side spin backwards wildly and stop at zero. But on the credit side, they now spin even more wildly and stop at a number that cannot handle all the zeros after the nine's. All of Christ's righteousness has been added to his account, and all his sins have been placed on Christ's account.

Now stand back and look at the page. And do you know what Romans 6:11 says? It says, "Do the math yourself. And calculate that you are dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord! You see, we have been made alive with Christ!

And maybe now we stammer and say, "But, but, I still sin! What of that?" Well, look at verse 12-14 (read). How will sin not reign in our mortal bodies? By our not yielding our bodies to sin any longer! And when we fail, we now have the promise of 1 John 2:1 (read). And then we have 1 John 1:9. And when we deal with our sin, our account goes back to zero. Then we continue to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin.

Pastor Boehlig read a poem for us

about the child who had messed up his page and the teacher gave him a brand new page to try again. So each time we deal with our sin, we get a brand new page. It is when we do not deal with our sin that our spiritual life falls into danger.

Now let me make one more point, lest perchance some would go overboard on these truths as many others have done. Just recently I read the statement that when we become a believer, the Lord forgives our sins; past, present and future. Actually, I have read it several times.

I received an e-mail article from Compass Direct. They put out a lot of good information and cd's and dvd's. In the article I read Bill Perkins wrote that the only thing required for salvation is to believe. I e-mailed back that repentance was a requirement as well. He responded that neither repentance nor confession of sin are required after we get saved. We simply did not agree with each other. He sent me an e-book to prove what he had said.

But in the article he further closed it like this, "Salvation has zero to do with what you did in the past--or will do in the future--and everything to do with what Jesus did on the cross 2000 years ago. When you believe you are forever assured of eternal life with Jesus. Because once He comes into your life, He's there forever. PTL!"

Well, in the article he made this point. He said, "The key word in Paul's answer is 'believe.'

In the original Greek, the word 'believe' (pisteuo) means 'to have faith in / to trust in.' It's in the aorist tense in the Greek which means it doesn't require future action, just a single decision.

The late Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said in his book, 'Salvation: God's Marvelous Work of Grace, (p.33) 'This one word 'believe' represents all a sinner can do and all a sinner must do to be saved.'"

And then he says, "Chafer's statement is Biblically consistent. Consider:

"...whoever believes in Him..."
John 3:16

"He who believes in the Son..."
John 3:36

"... he who hears My word and believes..." John 5:24

"...he who believes in Me shall never thirst." John 6:35

"...everyone who ... believes in Him, ..." John 6:40

"...he who believes has eternal life." John 6:47

"...unless you believe..." John 8:24

"...he who believes in Me..."
John 11:25

"...everyone who ... believes in Me..." John 11:26

"... that (by) believing you may have life..." John 20:31, " End quote.

Now the aorist does not indicate what he said it did, but in my e-mail I pointed out to him that every verse he quoted except one was in the present tense, not in the aorist. He e-mailed back, "Interesting....I need to look at my notes some more. Thanks."

So our confessing, repenting, reckoning and believing are to continue as long as sin continues. This is how we win the victory! The writer I mentioned sent me an e-book that seeks to prove that repentance and confession are not necessary at all. According to these teachers 1 John 1:9 does not mean what Christians have always thought it meant!

CONCL: So, in conclusion, how does God release us from that great death we found in Ephesians 2:1-3? First, by making us alive with Christ. We were dead in trespasses and sins! We were very lost. But when we repented and believed, we were saved and we died, were buried, and we were raised with Christ. Here is one of those great heights D. Martyn Lloyd Jones spoke of. We have been raised statement of fact! So let me ask with Paul in Romans 6, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" And the KJV response is, "God forbid!" The original is, "mee genoitw!" "May it never be!"

And Colossians 3 says that if we are raised with Christ, and a true Christian is, then it should impact every area of our lives! It should drive out all the sin and it should receive in place all the good, such as humility and

kindness and meekness etc... May this study of this letter do just that in all of us.

And let me remind us that if we do not deal with things God points out to us, these things become irritants in our eyes and thorns in our sides, and will harass us in our Christian lives.