

EPHESIANS 2:6
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 6
March 4, 2012

INTRO: We are back in Ephesians 2. I have said that in my interpretation of the letter, Paul digresses twice in his subject of his prayers for the Ephesians. You will have a hard time keeping all of that straight in your minds. But we could view 2:1-22 as one unit of Scripture as far as subject matter is concerned. This chapter is Paul's first digression and it forms one unit.

Ephesians 2:1-22 is a digression that deals with the salvation of the Ephesian Gentiles, and thus it has direct application to us, since we too are Gentiles. And in 2:1-10, we are considering what the Gentiles were like before they were saved, and then how they got saved.

What were they like before salvation? They were dead, and the sphere of their death was in trespasses and sins. We found that in verse 1 (read). In verses 2-3 we looked at the cause of this death (read). And in verses 4-10 we have their release from this death. In the last message we saw that the release from this death came by new life in verses 4-5 (read). And you may remember that I said that in order to understand these verses we must understand the difference between the believer's standing and his state. And we saw that we died with Christ, were buried with Him and raised with Him. This is the believer's union with Christ. This is his standing. And in his state, he is to become more and more like Christ until his standing becomes equal to his state. And now in verse 5 Paul adds the words, 'by grace you have been saved'. I will leave those words until verse 8 and explain it there, for there this clause occurs once more but in a clarifying context.

That brings us to verses 6 and let us read it once more (read). We were dead in trespasses, which we covered in verse 1 and through Christ we were made alive together with Christ. When we repent of our sins and trust Christ by faith for our salvation, we are made alive together with Him. And when He was made alive, he folded up his death wrappings and arose and left His grave. When the ladies came to the grave to put the spices on Him, He was not there any more! You see, when He was released from death, we are in the release from this death with Him! God

releases those dead in trespasses and sins as soon as they repent and believe! He first makes them alive, verse 5, and then raises them up, verse 6! And that is where we are tonight in these messages.

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

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

-By new life (4-5)

Now before we go to verse 6, let me briefly mention a matter I did not cover last message in verse 5. It is a word I have not paid as much attention to in the past as I should have. It is the word 'alive' in the clause, 'made us alive together'. It is one word in the Greek, *sunezoooiēsen*. That is a long word for the Greek language. It is made up of three words. Sun = together + zoeē, life or alive and poieo, to make. So it is 'to make alive together'. Now the crucial word is in the middle. It is the word zoeē and it is a special word for life. The life all living people have, even those who are dead in trespasses and sins is *bios* life. We get our word 'biology' or 'biography' from that word. It has to do with this life. It is the life that both believers and unbelievers have.

I am going to admit that the study of this word, 'life' is beyond me at this point, though I see through a glass darkly. In English we have the word 'biology' and it covers two areas; botany, plant life; and zoology, animal life which would

include all animated beings. We are all familiar with the word 'zoo'. It comes from this word.

What is most interesting is that in classical Greek, the word 'bios' life was viewed as the higher life and 'zoe' life as the lower. But in the Greek NT, the word zoe is exalted above bios life.

I have to say that at this point I do not understand much of the ideas of these two words. But I give my opinion as I have it thus far, so it is subject to change on more study, as is my view on the phrase, 'aiwnios zoe', translated 'eternal life'. But it seems there is some agreement that 'bios' life is life *extensive* (length) and so we write biographies of people's lives. But zoe life is life *intensive*. A quality of life.

As it seems to me, bios life gives us the natural appetites we have along with other animated beings like eating and drinking etc... But zoe life gives us appetites for truth and holiness and righteousness etc...

Here is what happened in the Garden of Eden. God said, "The day you eat from the forbidden tree, you will die." And the day they ate, they continued living, as far as bios life is concerned, but they died as far as spiritual life is concerned. They no longer had zoe life. That is what it means to be dead in trespasses and sins.

But, the moment a person repents of his sins and receives Christ, he is given life. It is called 'aiwnios zoe' or as it is generally translated, eternal life; that is, zoe life. It is a quality of life. It desires God. It desires righteousness. It desires holiness. It desires the Word of God. It is life intensive, a quality of life.

And so verse 5 in Ephesians 2 says, "...He made us alive together with Christ..." That word *alive* is zoe. This word occurs 134 times in the NT. Bios occurs but in a few references. So John 11:26 says, "Whosoever lives (zoe) and believes in Me shall never die." The tenses are both present and give this idea that as long as we go on living, spiritually, and we go on believing, we will never die. That is not talking about dying with relation to bios life. It is talking about dying with relation to zoe life. And our text says that the believer has been made alive, zoe, together with Christ. There is the beginning of the spiritual life.

-Verse 6, raised up with Christ

So, let us now go to verse 6. Not only have we been given life, new life, zoe life; it says we have also been raised up together with Him. We have been given zoe life, and it is to affect our walk. So let us once more read the very closely related passage of Romans 6 (read 1-14). Having the zoe life principle within, and thus new desires for godliness, we are to walk in

those new desires and overcome the ever present old desires that are with us as long as we have bios life.

This resurrection life that we experience with Him after the new birth must affect our lives. How can we say we are born again if we do not live differently now? And if we follow after the desires of that bios life, which has with it that which is called the flesh in the NT; we are, according to Romans 8:13 on the way to spiritual death. And if we pursue the ways of the flesh until we deny Christ altogether, it is impossible to ever be renewed again. So says Hebrews 6:4-6. And Hebrews 10:26-27 says, "For if we sin willfully after we received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries." This zoeë life that the Christian receives is a very precious commodity. Hebrews 2 carefully instructs us not to neglect this great salvation, for if we do, we will not escape.

While we are in this present body, the principles residing in the flesh and the principles of the life we have been given will be in constant conflict or battle. And through this new life we have been given we can live the life God wants us to live. We have been given life and we have been raised up to walk a new life.

Now I want to make one more point with regard to the life we have in Christ. Our relationship to Christ, as expressed in our co death, burial and resurrection with Christ can be called a mystical relationship.

They have called AW. Tozer a mystic, but I would not want to be called a mystic. I do not like mysticism. And I want to talk about something mystical but it is not to be confused with mysticism. You see, there are some things that are mystical. For example, you might join two colors of paint by mixing them together and now they are joined together in one. But that is not a mystical union. It is an actual union. But, when husband and wife are joined together in marriage, they become one. But that is not actually one. When you see them, they are still the same two distinct people. That is a mystical union. It is real, but it is not literally so, as it was with the two colors of paint.

Marriage is a mystical union. When we become Christians, we become part of the body of Christ; but this is a mystical union. And in this sense, we have died with Him, been buried with Him, been raised with Him, and now live with Him. And the thing that binds us together is His life in us, is zoeë life.

In this light, look at John 15 (read 1-6). The branch in a vine, just like in any tree, is dependent on the vine for its life sustenance. Any branch that

is severed from the trunk dies. The life giving juices no longer have access to the branch and it dies.

We have talked about bios life and zoe life. As the flowing blood in the body to every part is necessary for the life of every part, so the zoe life, of which Christ is the source, is necessary to give life to every part of His body, the Church. And our union to Him is a mystical union.

Now I want to make a very strong point tonight. If we profess to have become Christians, and we had already become used to living in sin before we were saved, and our professed salvation has not made much of a change in our lives, our Christianity ought to come under serious question by other believers! The new birth must radically affect the life of a new believer who has formerly become used to living in sin! And a fine young lady or young man, who has grown up in a godly family, and is starting to hanker after the things of this world, and to do that which is ungodly, such a young person should seriously question if they ever did become a Christian in the first place. And if they did, they should now tremble in their shoes, because to now turn to sin could lead into an irrevocable way of life! We have come to an age of tolerance in the Christian Church that is pitiable.

I do not tell many stories in my preaching. I want to tell you

one. In 1569, after many, many of our forefathers and foremothers had died for their new found faith and everyone knew how dangerous it was to reject the Catholic Religion, another man was converted. His name was Dirk Willems. I want to read for you an article that was done in the Voice of the Martyrs magazine some time ago. Few stories of our Anabaptist history have captured the imagination like this one.

The article says, "Dirk was captured and imprisoned in his home town of Asperen in the Netherlands. Knowing that his fate would be death if he remained in prison, Dirk made a rope of strips of cloth and slid down it over the prison wall. A guard chased him (PICTURE).

"Frost had covered a nearby pond with a thin layer of ice. Dirk risked a dash across it. He made it to safety, but the ice broke under his pursuer who cried for help. Dirk believed the Scripture that a man should help his enemies. He immediately turned back and pulled the floundering man from the frigid water.

"In gratitude for his life, the man would have let Dirk escape, but a Burgomaster (chief magistrate) standing on the shore sternly ordered him to arrest Dirk and bring him back, reminding him of the oath he had sworn as an officer of the peace.

"Back to prison went Dirk. He was condemned to death for being re-baptized, allowing secret church

services in his home and letting others be baptized there. The record of his sentencing concludes: "all of which is contrary to our holy Christian faith, and to the decrees of his royal majesty, and ought not to be tolerated, but severely punished, for an example to others; therefore, we the aforesaid judges, having, with mature deliberation of council, examined and considered all that was to be considered in this matter, have condemned and do condemn by these presents in the name; and in the behalf, of his royal majesty, as Count of Holland, the aforesaid Dirk Willems, prisoner, persisting obstinately in his opinion, that he shall be executed with fire, until death ensues; and declare all his property confiscated, for the benefit of his royal majesty.

Dirk was burned to death on this day, May 16, 1569. His tongue was not clamped. The wind blew the flame away from him so that his death was long and miserable. Time and again Dirk cried out to God. Finally one of the authorities could not bear to see him suffer any longer and ordered an underling to end his torment with a quick death" (end quote).

I understand that even today, in Asperen, folk unrelated to our history regard Dirk as a hero. And recently, the town of Asperen, which is in south Holland, named one of its streets after Dirk Willems.

My point in the Dirk Willems

story is that salvation, resurrection life, so changed his life, that when he could have escaped death, he helped a drowning man and paid for it with his own death. He had experienced a co-resurrection with Christ and it had radically changed his life. Our early forefathers have often been referred to as radicals. It needs to happen again with regard to the text that is before us.

-By seating us above (6b)

Let us now go to the second part of verse six by reading the verse first (read). Not only have we been made alive together with Christ, not only have we been raised up together with Him, but we have already been made to sit together with Christ in heaven. So sure is the Christian's final outcome that he is said to already have been seated together with Christ in heaven! This future event is treated as history!

I want you to see this in another passage in Romans 8 (read 28-30). You see, in the last message we saw that before Israel crossed the Jordan River, God said, "I have given you the land." That was their position with Him. It was not yet theirs in actual possession. But it already belonged to them in position. So too, we have already been seated together with Christ in heaven! We have been called, and we have been justified, and we have already been glorified! This is biblical eternal security!

I am sometimes told that since the Bible teaches eternal security one cannot lose his salvation. And so they think because I believe one can lose one's salvation, I therefore cannot believe in eternal security. But I do. What I do not believe in is *unconditional* eternal security and I maintain there is no verse properly exegeted that teaches unconditional eternal security.

Listen to this verse we gave earlier, "He that lives (zoe, pres. tense) and believes (pres. tense, goes on believing) in Me shall never die." Now in order to have eternal security you must first have zoe life, and second you must go on believing. But here in our text we have assurance of salvation, and eternal security for the believer. Our future is written as history if we continue to believe!

And now I want us to notice how it is that the believer is already in heaven. He is there in Christ! By the believer's co-crucifixion and co-resurrection he also sits together with Christ in heaven because He is in Christ! The preposition 'in' is found 80 times in this little book and numerous times it refers to being in Christ. The believer is in Christ Jesus!

But, not only are we in Him, but He is in us! And since He is also in us, that truth ought to affect how we live! Go with me for a

moment to Romans 8 (read 8-11). You see, verse 9 says if the Holy Spirit is in us, then we are also in Him! And he says that if we do not have the Holy Spirit we are not Christians. In other words, if we are Christians, we have Him, and we are in Him and He is in us! Now notice verse 10, "And if Christ is in you (and He is), the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Now I want you to notice the word life. It is zoe life! You see, if Christ is in us, sin will have to go, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness. When Christ is in us it will affect how we live!

Then Paul writes in verse 11, "But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through the Spirit who dwells in you!"

Now I recommend it is more than just resurrecting us some day in the future. It is to raise us up now to live a different life here and now! So, verse 12 says, "Therefore brethren, we are debtors - not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live after the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live!"

You see, we are in Christ, and thus seated with Him in heaven. But He is in us, and thus changing our life here on earth! We have both standing and state

in these passages.

Now we have been seated together in Christ in a place described as 'heavenly places'. Now notice that the word 'places' is in italics. That means the translators have added this word. Literally this passage would read that we are seated in the heavenlies. So heavenly places, or heavenly realms, as some have translated it seems reasonable. And now I ask you where that is? "Well", you might say, "that must be in heaven." Yes, that is correct. It is in the highest of the three heavens.

I will not dwell on the heavenly places here. Shortly I want to do a series on John 14:1-6, and I think I will call those messages, "In My Father's House." We will spend considerable time in those messages on that so we will leave it out here.

CONCL: So, in conclusion, let me sum up this whole idea of our being 'in Christ' or being given life together with Him when He was in the tomb, being co-resurrected with Him when He was raised, and being seated together with Him in heaven today. Those incredible truths are hard to fathom. How could I be given life and resurrected together with Him 2000 years ago? And how can I be seated together with Him today in heaven? It surely does not feel like it in life! Well, what we have had expressed here is our position or our standing in Christ. All these things are true, positionally. But not all of these have been realized yet, practically.

We have been made alive together with Christ and we have been raised together. And as we live this life in obedience in our salvation, we will some day experience in reality what is already true in position. As to our position, we are already seated together with Christ in the heavenlies,

but in practice it still lies before us to be experienced. Some of us will experience this in reality not too long from now. Others of us may experience it in the rapture if we live that long. Oh that will be glory! I look forward to spending time on this great subject in the near future.

And now I close with these questions: Why did God make us alive together with Christ? Why did He send His Son to die for us? When we had lived in the lusts of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature the children of wrath and far from God, so unholy and so unrighteous; why did He then make us alive? Why did He do all this? What is the purpose? You may ponder those questions for the next message. In verse 7 there are some very, very incredible truths! But you have to dig for them. Will you try? You see, verse 7 starts with this very important word, "that." He did all this, 'in order that.' In order for what? Paul will answer. I look forward to giving this message.

But as we close I want us to sing a song. We have ended the message with these wonderful words that He has made us sit together in heavenly places! This is glory! We fail to recognize it many times, but it is the truth. The Bible says it right here!