

EPHESIANS 2:7
The Wonderful Work of Salvation
Message 7
April 1, 2012
Words: 4686

INTRO: Now you will not remember this, but a long time ago we began to look at Paul's first digression in this letter and it is regarding the salvation of the Gentiles. Since we are Gentiles, this has direct application to us. And Paul said that before we were saved we were dead. That is, we were dead spiritually. We had bios life but not the zoe life we spoke of in the last message. And the sphere of death was in trespasses and sins (2:1b). In 2:2-3 we had the cause of this death given. It was because of the sins in which we lived, and these sins were clearly set out for us there.

We have now, for several messages, been looking at the release from this death. And what we have spent time on is the first point of that, and that is how we were released from this death. When an unbeliever repents and believes in Christ, that unbeliever is given new life. It is resurrection life. That is how God releases us from this death in which we were held fast. And then God seats this new believer, in position, in the heavenlies. That is true of all of those who are true believers. And that brings us to the second point of the release from this death, and that is to answer this question: Why does God release us from this death? Why does God save wicked sinful people? Why?

Now the text does not ask that question, it answers that question. Look at verse 7, it begins with the word 'that'. This word has a number of grammatical functions, but one is to introduce a purpose clause. In such a case it is a subordinating conjunction, and that is what we have in this sentence. God made us alive, raised us up with Christ and made us sit together in heavenly places, IN ORDER THAT..." And the question is, "...in order that what?"

So all of this brings us to verses 7-10, and to some of the most well known verses in all the Bible, Ephesians 2:8-9. So we begin with verse 7, to begin to answer this question: Why does God save us? Why does He deliver us from this death we were in?

(2) Why God released us from this death - (7-10)

D Martyn Lloyd Jones says after all of what has been related in verses 1-6, "But now the question arises, why has God done all this? What was the motive? What was it that led God to do all this for creatures such as we are? The answer is given in this seventh verse, and is introduced by the word *that* which comes at the very beginning. He has done all this 'that', 'in order that', 'to the intent that', 'with the object, or with the objective in view, that'... This word *that*, therefore is a tremendously important word, and it is vital that we should consider together what the apostle tells us here concerning this great purpose", end quote.

He goes on to say that when we consider this next verse we will probably all be made to feel that our view of Christianity, our view of the church, our view of ourselves as Christians people, is defective and inadequate. So let us now read verse 7 (read).

Now if I were to pick out the most important words in this verse, it would be the words, 'that He might show'. This great and revealing verse which gives us some of the purpose of God in saving man begins with the words, "...that in the ages to come He might show..." Now I want you to notice in this verse that He wants to show something of Himself. It is the exceeding riches of HIS GRACE He wants to

show. You see, He wants to show something of Himself. And second, notice that He wants to show something good about Himself. It is THE EXCEEDING RICHES of His grace. Now when you show someone something good about yourself, what is the word the Bible uses to describe that? It is GLORY!!!

So we want to learn here first of all that man's salvation is all about the glory of God! This is the reason God created man! So God is doing something by which in all the ages to come, He will be able to show His glory! I am taking for granted tonight that you understand what glory is. Glory is when something positive is revealed to one person about another person. That is what we have here. God has something positive to show.

Now there is something left out in the text. I do not know why God left it out. I suppose He wanted us to ponder it. Here is my question: To whom does God want to show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward saved sinners? To whom? You see, the text does not say. And I want to make this proposition: He wants to show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us to all created personal beings! That means all angels, both good and bad; and all mankind, both good and bad.

Now I do not say that altogether without reason. Go to chapter three with me (read 8-10). Now Ephesians 2:7 speaks of the ages

to come. These verses speak of now. But to Paul was given the grace to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ that ALL people might see the fellowship of the mystery. This is the salvation of both Jew and Gentile. So, this is to ALL people. Then notice in verse 10, that it is to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places (read). John MacArthur says this refers to both good and bad angels.

Could it be that one of the things that will make hell so horrible is to be able to witness the glory that saved people experience and to be able to know in all full revelation the unsearchable riches of Christ and the exceeding riches of God's grace? LE Maxwell said something to the effect that hell is the unmitigated presence of God! Oh, if the riches of Christ are unsearchable and the grace of God has exceeding riches, how horrible must hell be!

Now with that, consider the first words of Ephesians 2:7 again, to see how long God's glory will be revealed. It says, "...that in the ages to come..." Now I cannot take time to give evidence for what I am going to say now, but I want to give some of my conclusions on this word 'age', aiwn; from which we get the phrase, 'eternal life'. First, Scripture speaks of past ages (Titus 1:2, translated 'worlds' in the KJV and 'before time began' in the NKJV). So we have the past ages. Then there is this age. As I see it, it takes us from creation to

the millennium. The Jews speak of two ages, this age and the age to come. Jesus spoke like that as well (Matt. 12:32). The age to come, I understand to speak of the millennium. It may go on from there to forever, but I rather understand the time of the new heavens and the new earth to refer to that which the Bible calls, 'the ages of the ages.' Let me just give you Galatians 4:5 there, but there are many references to it.

All of that to say this, when Paul says in Ephesians 2:7, "... that in the ages to come He might show..." he is speaking of that which has no end. It is forever, and forever, and forever. Why will no angel ever be tempted to fall away after all is said and done in the ages of the ages? Because, for all eternity God will be able to show of His exceeding riches through saved people! Why will no person who enters heaven ever be tempted to sin again? Because of what we have in our text right here. So incredible, so unimaginably huge will these revelations be, that all eternity will be safe from unfallen angels ever being tempted to it again, or saved sinners ever desiring sin again. And it will all be because of the glory of God revealed in saved people and the demonstration of that forever and forever! Glory!

Now, in those ages to come, what is He going to show all created beings? The exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus!

Now let me pause here for a moment. Have you ever wondered why God created man even though He knew if He created man as a being with free will, man would sin and fall? D. Martyn Lloyd Jones had toyed with that question. And it is holy ground on which we stand right now and we must be ever so careful. But let me make you think for a moment with this question: If man had not sinned, how could God ever have revealed the exceeding riches of His grace; how could He ever have revealed His mercy, we spoke of in previous verses. How could He ever have revealed His love? How could God have revealed all of His character, and be glorified for it for all eternity, if sin had never happened? Now you will not be able to answer that question and nor can I. But what is not possible with man, is still very possible with God. But from that question we can see that in spite of the fact that angels and man sinned, God is able to make the best of it. And we can see from that why all things can work together for good to those who love God!

But I want you to see in our verse now, the key thing about God's character He wants to reveal to us. It is His grace. It has now been quite some time that I have pondered this word. But I studied this word for years. Now I want to leave out a definition of this word now for the second time. We met it at the close of verse 5 as well. But we will

leave it until verse 8. We just note here that God's grace is the key ingredient He wants to show in the Christian in the ages to come.

But notice now the modifying words to grace. It is the exceeding riches of His grace! This word, exceeding, is the word 'hyperballon'. It is made up of two words. It is over + to throw. It is to throw over. It is overthrowing grace. It is grace that goes over the top of everything else! John, when He introduces Jesus Christ in his Gospel says of Christians, "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace." It is grace upon grace!

When this same John wrote the book of Revelation, he wrote in Revelation chapter 5 of those who had been redeemed out of the great tribulation, a time that lies now shortly before us. And there John saw a great number of people that was so great they could not be numbered. And one of the elders of heaven said to John, "Who are these arrayed in white robes and where did they come from?" For all of eternity, all created personal beings will wonder and marvel. How did they get here? Who are they?

And there, in that great throng in heaven will be millions upon millions who were murderers, drunkards, extortioners, whoremongers, fornicators, embezzlers, cheaters, stealers, liars, idolaters, revelers, haters of God and haters of man,

adulterers and on and on.

And then it will be said of them, "But they are washed. They are sanctified. They are justified. And now they are glorified. And now they are victors!!" And God will be glorified and glorified and glorified.

Revelation 4 tells us of the 24 elders, of whom I want to tell you when I speak on John 14:1-6. And when they come before this great God, this most incredible and wonderful of all Personal beings, the One who sits on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever, it says there that they cast their crowns before Him, and they fall down before Him, and they say, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created!"

And I suppose that over millions of eons of ages, God will parade one believer after another before the host of glory, and again and again the exceeding riches of His grace will be shown and free moral agents will prostrate themselves before Him and say, after millions of millions of times like this, "Lord, it seems as if I am just barely learning to know who you really are!!"

You see, He will show the exceeding riches of His grace, these super-abounding, overthrowing riches. But notice what is so super-abounding, what it is that goes over the top of everything else. It is the

exceeding RICHES of His grace. Sometimes we say that so and so is very rich. Or we say this soil is rich. Or this cream is rich. And when your cholesterol levels climb, you find there are all kinds of rich foods. But this verse speaks of the exceeding riches of His grace.

D. Martyn Lloyd Jones makes a point on a later text that I think fits here. God is going to show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in or through Christ Jesus. Let us say I am in some financial trouble. I have been sued for one million dollars and I am in serious trouble. And a multi millionaire has heard of my troubles and he pays the amount I have been sued for. He gave of His riches to pay for my debt. And when He has paid for my riches, though it has been a tremendously kind deed, it has cost him next to nothing in comparison to what he has. He was kind and gracious and all, but his bank account has hardly noticed it. It really has not cost him much in comparison to what he has.

Now picture this sin riddled believer. He is now in glory. He literally sparkles with righteousness, and all because of the exceeding riches of God's grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. And I ask you, what has it cost God? What price has He paid? Well, He paid the ultimate price. He had one Son. His one Son was perfect. He was all a completely holy God could

want. And God sent Him to His people and His people hated His Son. This Friday we will commemorate the death of God's Son, His only Son. And put yourselves into the shoes of any Father, whose only son has been killed.

I am reading the story of Roger Oakland. One of his sons was killed in an accident when he was 19 years old, and Roger thought his world had come to an end. It was so tragic, in the midst of life's other sorrows, that for some time he felt that he was done. That was an accident. What would it have taken for him to offer his son? Roger had another son. God did not have another son.

Theologians discuss sometimes the possibility or impassibility of God. The question is, can He suffer? If God cannot suffer, the price He paid in His Son is nothing! I believe He can love more than we. I believe He is more merciful than we are. I believe He is more just than we are, and I believe He feels deeper than we can. When God would offer of His exceeding great riches, He paid a price. It cost Him something. It is not like a multi millionaire giving away a million. God paid the ultimate price. I ask, this millionaire that saw my plight, would he have paid a price like this for me? That is hardly a question.

This past fall I watched my son and his wife with their little

premature son. And when they tried to put the IV into him they could not find a vein. And that little baby cried and cried as they poked him again and again. And after a while they had to take that young mom and dad out of the room. They could not handle watching their little son going through this pain.

Now let me speak very graciously. What they watched was like nothing compared to what God watched when Judas came to the Garden of Gethsemane, and what His only Son went through in the next 20 hours. There is not a father that has ever lived that is normal, that would have allowed that if he had had the power to do something about it. But God watched. He turned His back on His only Son. He listened to His only Son's heart rending cry, "My God, My God, why have YOU forsaken Me?" He watched until His only Son's head fell on His chest in death. He paid the ultimate price!

A number of years ago, at a Jamboree at Eagle's Nest Bible camp I told the story of John Griffith, and the railroad bridge. I won't tell it again. But it is the most graphic human picture I know that relates this truth. At that Jamboree was a young lady. Some months later I met her in town. She stopped me and said, "Oh, thank you for telling that story. I never realized before what it cost God the Father to save us." And then some months later I met her again and she said, "Oh, thank you for

telling that story. I never realized before what it cost God the Father to save us."

But that is not all. Think now of the price God's only Son paid. Maybe I could sum it up with the words of the song, "If That Isn't Love."

**He left the splendour of heaven
Knowing His destiny
Was the lonely hill of Golgotha
There to lay down His life for me**

CHORUS

***If that isn't love the ocean is dry
There's no stars in the sky
And the sparrow cannot fly!
If that isn't love
Then heaven is a myth
There's no feeling like this
If that isn't love***

**Even in death He remembered
The thief hanging by His side;
He spoke with love and compassion
Then He took him to paradise**

Can anyone ever fathom the price Jesus paid when He left the splendor of heaven? Can anyone fathom the price He paid in the Garden of Gethsemane. Who else would have allowed his own good friend to greet him with a kiss when he knew that kiss was the kiss of betrayal? Who would have allowed the soldiers to tie him up, when He could have called 10,000 angels?

What is the truth here? God will display the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus, but those riches cost Him an unspeakable sum.

Oh, if we but only understood this text, all our earthly sorrows would pale in comparison. We would burst out with Paul, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

Now the Online Bible says this of the word 'kindness' in our text, that it speaks of moral goodness or integrity. It is translated variously as kindness, goodness, gentleness.

Listen to a few verses that use this word to get a feel for it: Galatians 5:22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness [<5544>](#), goodness, faithfulness."

Colossians 3:12, "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness [<5544>](#), humility, meekness, longsuffering."

Titus 3:4, "But when the kindness [<5544>](#) and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared..."

Ephesians 2:7, "...that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness [<5544>](#) toward us in Christ Jesus."

Like people, you can sometimes tell a word by the company it keeps. When I read this word 'kindness', I feel myself to be so far from it. God is kind. He is gracious. And it is in this graciousness or kindness, that He

extends these exceeding riches of His grace to us.

And last, note that our verse says, "...that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us *in Christ Jesus.*"

I think it would be safe to say that everything from God's point of view towards man, and man's point of view towards God centers around Jesus Christ! He is the center of everything!

Turn with me for a moment to Luke 24. Jesus had been crucified. Sadness has filled all those who had trusted Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. Their hopes were dashed. And on the first Sunday after the crucifixion, two sad travelers were on the way to Emmaus, some seven miles from Jerusalem. And let us read the account (read 13-27).

You see, you can go to Genesis 1:3, and there you will find Him. God said, "Let there be light." And if you supply the implied word it says, "You let there be light." And that 'You' is Jesus. And then you can read about Him all through the OT books. And when the OT closes, there you will find Him again (Mal. 4:2). And in the last two verses, of the OT we find a reference to John the Baptist, who will introduce the Messiah to the world.

You see, our text says that God's exceeding great riches came to us

through Jesus Christ. The name 'Christ' is 'Christos', meaning the anointed One, or the Messiah. The name Jesus speaks of a Savior. He is the Savior anointed by God!

So we have Him at the beginning of the OT. We have Him through the writings of Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets. And then we have Him at the close of the OT. And then, right at the beginning of the NT we have Him again. Here we have His human genealogy traced back to Abraham, and then His coming to earth.

And throughout the NT you will find Him. He is the centerpiece of the Gospels. He is the subject of the Epistles. And He is the source of the Revelation. And when you come to the end of that book, there we find Him again. Look at it (read 22:16, 20, 21).

And what I want to tell you is that it is through Him that we are saved. It is through Him that God's riches, in His kindness came to us. Without Him, we are lost. Without Him, we are nothing. Without Him we can do nothing. He is the fullness that fills all in all.

And I would like to close by reading Dr. S. M. Lockridge's introduction of Jesus Christ, called, "That's My King!" He says,

The Bible says, My King is a seven way king. He's a king of the Jews, that's a racial king; He's a king of Israel, that's a national king; He's a king of righteousness; He's a king of the ages; He's a king of heaven; He's a king of glory; He's a king of kings; and He's the Lord of Lords; That's my King!

Well, I wonder do you know Him? David said, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork." My King is a sovereign King; no means of measure can define His limitless love; no far-seeing telescope can bring into visibility the coastline of His shore-less supply; no barrier can hinder Him from throwing out His blessings. He's enduringly strong; He's entirely sincere; He's eternally steadfast; He's immortally graceful; He's imperially powerful; He's impartially merciful.

DO YOU KNOW HIM?

He's the greatest phenomenon that has ever crossed the horizon of this world; He's God's Son; He's the sinner's Savior; He's the centerpiece of civilization; He stands in the solitude of Himself; He's August and He's unique; He's unparalleled; He's unprecedented; He is the loftiest idea in literature; He's the highest Personality in philosophy; He is the supreme problem in higher criticism; He's the fundamental doctrine of true theology; He is the core, the necessity for spiritual religion; He's the miracle of the age; He is the superlative of everything good that you choose to call Him; He's the only one qualified to be an all-sufficient Savior!

I WONDER IF YOU KNOW HIM TODAY?

He supplies strength for the weak; He's available for the tempted and the tried; He sympathizes and He saves; He strengthens and sustains; He guards and He guides; He heals the sick; He cleansed the lepers; He forgives sinners; He discharges debtors; He delivers the captives; He defends the feeble; He blesses the young; He serves the unfortunate; He regards the aged; He rewards the diligent and He purifies the meek.

I WONDER IF YOU KNOW HIM?

Well, my King, He is a key to knowledge; He's a wellspring of wisdom; He's a doorway of deliverance; He's a pathway of peace; He's a roadway of righteousness; He's a highway of holiness; He's a gateway of glory.

DO YOU KNOW HIM?

Well, His office is manifold; His promise is sure; His light is matchless; His goodness is limitless; His mercy is everlasting; His love never changes; His Word is enough: His grace is sufficient; His reign is righteousness and His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

I wish I could describe Him to you! But He is indescribable! He's God. He's incomprehensible; He's invincible; He's irresistible; Well, you can't get Him out of your mind; you can't get Him off your hand; you can't outlive Him and you

can't live without Him; the Pharisees couldn't stand Him, but they found out they couldn't stop Him; Pilate couldn't find any fault in Him; the witnesses couldn't get their testimonies to agree; Herod couldn't kill Him; death couldn't handle Him and the grave couldn't hold Him!

YES, THAT'S MY KING! THAT'S MY KING!

And thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever and ever and ever (How long is that?) and ever and ever, and when you get through with all the forever, then AMEN, AMEN, AMEN!!!

CONCL: So, let us conclude. Why does God save such a decrepit bunch of sinners as we were? Those who were dead in trespasses and sins. Those who walked according to the course of this world. Those who walked according to the prince of the power of the air, the arch enemy of God. Those who were the children of disobedience, those who fulfilled the lusts of the flesh. Those who fulfilled the desires of the flesh. Those who were by nature the children of wrath? Why?

He did it, "in order that in the ages to come He might display, He might show, He might demonstrate, the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." That's why! And for all eternity we will learn more and more of the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. And we will cast our crowns before God Almighty and glory in our Lord Jesus Christ. And when millions upon millions of years have gone by, we will have begun to know Him! And we will never ever tire of hearing one more story of the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus! And He will be perfectly glorified! And we will be perfectly fulfilled! Amen, and amen, and amen!