

INTRODUCTION

1. Please take God's Word this morning and turn to Ephesians chapter 2.
2. Read Ephesians 2:1-10.
3. In the Baptist Confession of 1689, it says, "Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of himself in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf;...their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners."¹

¹ <https://www.fivesolas.com/5solas.htm>

4. The salvation of those who are justified is “only of free grace.”
5. It is sola gratia - by grace alone.
6. A central cry of the Reformation was salvation by grace.
7. Though the Roman church taught that Mass is a "sacrifice [which] is truly propitiatory" and that by the Mass "God...grant[s] us grace and the gift of penitence, remits our faults and even our enormous sins.”
8. But the reformers, wanting the church to return to the biblical doctrine of salvation, taught that salvation is by grace through faith not through the Mass or the sacraments.
9. Our righteous standing before God is imputed to us by grace because of the work of Jesus Christ.

10. Ephesians 2:8 says we are saved by grace through faith.
11. But the Roman Catholic church says it's grace plus something else.
12. The something else is works or sacraments.
13. There were 7 sacraments:
14. Baptism cleanses from original sin, provides spiritual rebirth or regeneration, and begins the process of justification (§694, 1213, 1250).
15. Confirmation bestows the Holy Spirit, leading to increased spiritual power and sealing to the Catholic Church.
16. Penance removes the penalty of sins committed after baptism and confirmation.
17. Holy Eucharist is where Christ is re-offered up as a non-bloody sacrifice, and the benefits of Calvary are perpetuated and applied to the life of the

believer (§1367, 1377, 1382).

18. Marriage provides a special grace bestowed to couples who choose to wed in the Catholic Church.
19. Anointing the sick bestows grace on those who are sick, old, or near death.
20. Holy orders confer special grace and spiritual power upon the leadership of the Church (bishops, priests, deacons) as representatives of Christ.
21. It is believed that the sacraments function *ex opere operato*—“from the work worked.”
22. In other words, they have intrinsic spiritual power that works on their own, independently of the faith of the person receiving them.
23. Simply put, grace is received through the sacraments themselves.

24. However, this phenomenon is purely man-made, and is taught nowhere in Scripture.²
25. In Luther's day (and today), Rome taught that salvation came by the grace of God, but their understanding of "grace" was markedly different than what the Bible teaches.
26. For the Roman Catholic Church, grace was a "thing"—a force of divine power bestowed on believers to accomplish spiritual tasks.
27. A shot in the arm, a boost; one writer even likened it to a spiritual Red Bull.
28. At the behest of the Pope, this "grace would be given to those who wanted and pursued it, and it saved only insofar as it enabled people to become holy and so win their salvation."

² Pickowicz, Nate. *Why We're Protestant: An Introduction to the Five Solas of the Reformation* (pp. 61-62). UNKNOWN. Kindle Edition.

29. And so, Roman Catholicism is built on the notion of obtaining this spiritual substance they call “grace.”³
30. But the Apostle Paul says otherwise.
31. And as we look at Ephesians chapter 2, we see the grace of God that is given by God to the sinner.
32. Last time in chapter 2 we saw...

LESSON

I. What We Were (vv.1-3)

- A. Dead in Sin (v.1)
- B. Living According to the World and Satan (v.2)
- C. Living According to the Flesh (v.3)

II. What God Did (vv.4-7)

- A. He Made Us Alive (vv.4-5)

³ Pickowicz, Nate. Why We're Protestant: An Introduction to the Five Solas of the Reformation (pp. 61-62). UNKNOWN. Kindle Edition.

1. It says in verse 4 that He did this according to His “mercy” (v.4a).
2. The word that Paul uses here for *mercy* is *eleos*, which means, “undeserved kindness.”
3. The three words “made us alive” (Gr.*suzoopoieo*) means “to cause to live, to give life” (Wuest), “to make alive together with someone” (UBS)

Romans 8:11 says, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

B. He Raised Us Up (v.6a)

Paul says that God “raised us up with Him.”

This speaks of our union with Christ.

His resurrection is the basis for our resurrection.

We partook of His resurrection life and now we have been “positionally resurrected”.

Matthew Henry says, “What remains yet to be done is here spoken of as though it were already past, though indeed we are raised up in virtue of our union with Him whom God hath raised from the dead. When He raised Christ from the dead, He did in effect raise up all believers together with Him, He being their common head”.⁴

“The tense of "raised" and "made" indicates that these are immediate and direct results of salvation”.⁵

When Christ was raised physically, we were raised spiritually.

“Our union with Him is the ground of our present spiritual, and future bodily, resurrection and ascension”.

⁴ Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible : Complete and unabridged in one volume (Eph 2:4). Peabody: Hendrickson

⁵ John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible.

Romans 6:4-5 says 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.”

“Not only have we been made alive with Christ; we have also been raised up with Him. Just as death and judgment are behind Him, they are behind us also. We stand on the resurrection side of the tomb. This is our glorious position as a result of our union with Him. And because it is true of us positionally, we should live as those who are alive from the dead”.⁶

John Walvoord says, “Believers are positioned spiritually in heaven, where Christ is. They are no longer mere earthlings; their citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). He is the exalted Son of God, and they are exalted sons and daughters of God. These actions of God toward

⁶ Ibid., MacDonald.

unbelievers are similar to what God did for Christ: "He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 1:20). Whereas Christ had died physically (1:20), unbelievers were dead spiritually (2:1-3). While Christ was raised physically (1:20), unbelievers are made alive and raised with Christ spiritually (2:5-6). Christ is seated in the heavenly realms physically (in His resurrected, ascended body; 1:20), but believers are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms spiritually (2:6). This divine power that can make an unbeliever have life, be raised, and exalted with Christ is the same power that presently operates in believers".⁷

C. He Seated Us Together with Christ in the Heavens (vv.6b-7)

Paul says He "made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in

⁷ Ibid., Walvoord.

Christ Jesus.”

1. Believers are positioned spiritually in heaven, where Christ is
2. They are no longer earthly; their citizenship is in heaven
3. Paul told the Philippians in Philippians 3:20-21, “For our citizenship is in heaven.”

“We are no longer of this present world or in its sphere of sinfulness and rebellion. We have been rescued from spiritual death and given spiritual life in order to be in Christ Jesus and to be with Him in the heavenly places.”⁸

Jesus is the exalted Son of God and believers are exalted sons and daughters of God.

That is the results of being made alive by

⁸ Ibid., MacArthur.

God and “raised...up with Him and seated...with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

John Walvoord says, “These actions of God toward unbelievers are similar to what God did for Christ: ‘He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms’ (Eph. 1:20). Whereas Christ had died physically (1:20), unbelievers were dead spiritually (2:1-3). While Christ was raised physically (1:20), unbelievers are made alive and raised with Christ spiritually (2:5-6). Christ is seated in the heavenly realms physically (in His resurrected, ascended body; 1:20), but believers are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms spiritually (2:6)”.⁹

The phrase “in the heavenly places in Christ” occurs also in 1:3 which states the sphere in which we were blessed by God in

⁹ Ibid., Walvoord.

Christ.

4. In verses 4-14, Paul talks about what those “spiritual” blessings are: our election (v.4), our predestination (v.5), our redemption (v.7), our forgiveness (v.7), our understanding of the mystery of His will (v.9), our inheritance (v.11), our sealing with the Holy Spirit (vv.13-14).

John MacArthur says, “This spiritual realm is where believers’ blessings are (cf. 1:3), their inheritance is (1 Pet. 1:4), their affections should be (Col. 3:3), and where they enjoy fellowship with the Lord. It is the realm from which all divine revelation has come and where all praise and petitions go”.¹⁰

The purpose of our being raised up with Christ is so “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (v.7).

¹⁰ Ibid., MacArthur.

In other words, “God will exhibit His kindness to the saints for His own glory, in order that He may be glorified. And the spectators will be the angels. We saints will be the objects of this kindness. We will be on display before the angelic world, basking in the sunshine of God’s smile, enjoying the riches of His blessings, all, in order that He might be glorified by the angelic hosts”.

“The whole of heaven [will glorify] Him for what He has done in saving sinners”.¹¹

“God will display [believers as] the trophies of His grace throughout the endless ages of eternity”.¹²

III. Paul’s Commentary on Salvation (vv.8-10)

“The next three verses present as clear a statement of the simple plan of salvation as we can find in the Bible.

¹¹ Ibid., MacArthur.

¹² KJV Bible Commentary.

It all originates with the grace of God: He takes the initiative in providing it. Salvation is given to those who are utterly unworthy of it, on the basis of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is given as a present possession. Those who are saved can know it”.¹³

A. What Salvation Is (vv.8a, 10)

Verses 1-7 gives us the definition of salvation:

1. It is God, by His mercy and love, raising sinners from spiritual death and giving them spiritual life. It is making them alive and raising them up to sit with Christ in the heavens.
2. It is a display of God’s grace on the sinner: “for by grace you have been saved.”
3. “It is the gift of God” (v.8b)

¹³ Ibid., MacDonald.

4. It is a work of God (vv.5, 10)
5. We are “made alive” by God (v.5)
6. We are “**His workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (v.10).

B. What Salvation Is Not (v.8b-9)

1. It is “not of yourselves” (v.8b)
2. It is “not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (v.9)

Titus 3:5 says, “ **Not by works of righteousness which we have done** , but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

Faith “is not something a person can earn through supposedly meritorious deeds. It

cannot be earned, for instance, by Confirmation, Baptism, Church membership, Church attendance, Holy Communion, Trying to keep the Ten Commandments, Living by the Sermon on the Mount, Giving to charity, Being a good neighbor, Living a moral, respectable life.

People are not saved by works. And they are not saved by faith plus works.

They are saved through faith alone.

The minute you add works of any kind or in any amount as a means of gaining eternal life, salvation is no longer by grace (Rom. 11:6)".¹⁴

A dead corpse cannot make himself alive.

Therefore salvation has to be initiated by someone greater.

¹⁴ Ibid., MacDonald.

Verse 4 says it is “God” who “made us alive.” He is more powerful than death.

The nail that is placed in the coffin is found in Romans 3:10-18. In this passage, Paul speaks of man’s spiritual state of deadness and depravity with the clearest possible terms.

He says, “As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." 13 "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways; 17 And the way of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

CONCLUSION

1. What were we before our spiritual resurrection?
Dead in sin, living according to the world and Satan,
and living according to the flesh.
2. When God raised us from spiritual death, He made us alive by raising us up with Christ and seating us together with Him in the heavens “so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (v.7).
3. It is “by grace” that we “have been saved through faith” (v.8).
4. As such “we are His workmanship” (v.10).
5. Have you been raised from spiritual death?
6. You can be if you come to Him by “faith” realizing that His grace is a gift not something you earn.

7. Turn from your sin and turn to Christ who alone can save you.
8. Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide, and Sola Gratia.
9. Let's pray.