

## FROM DEATH TO LIFE, PT. 5; EPH. 2:5b-7 (Ed O'Leary)

### INTRODUCTION.

WE ARE CURRENTLY IN THE MIDDLE SECTION OF EPH. 2:1-10, ~ WHICH STEVE JUST read, ~ specifically, ~ verses 4-7.

▶▶ As noted last week, ~ Paul accomplishes two things in this four verses.

▷▷ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ in **verses 4-6**, ~ Paul describes the gracious, ~ merciful, ~ and loving act of God that brought us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

▷▷ And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ in **verse 7**, ~ Paul points out  $\bar{a}$  purpose of God's gracious, ~ merciful, ~ and loving act of bringing us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

▶▶ Last time we looked at **verses 4-5a**, ~ part of Paul's description of .....

▷▷ As we noted, ~ Paul began with those simple but beautiful words, ~ "But God."

↳↳ I.e., ~ even though we were in a horribly sinful, ~ helpless, ~ and hopeless condition, ~ and headed for God's wrath, ~ He chose to rectify our situation.

▷▷ And then Paul gave two reasons why God acted on our behalf. ~ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ because He is "rich in mercy." ~ And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ "because of the great love with which he loved us."

THIS MORNING, ~ WE'LL TAKE UP VERSES 5b-7.

▶▶ Paul writes, ~ and for context we'll begin at **verse 4**, ~ "4 But God, ~ being rich in mercy, ~ because of the great love with which he loved us, ~ <sup>5a</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, ~ <sup>5b</sup> made us alive together with Christ — <sup>5c</sup> by grace you have been saved — ¶¶

▷▷ <sup>6a</sup> and raised us up with him ~ <sup>6b</sup> and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

AFTER HE LISTS THE 2 REASONS WHY GOD ACTED ON OUR BEHALF, ~ ¶¶

IN VERSES 5b-6, ~ PAUL GETS INTO THE DETAILS OF GOD'S GRACIOUS, ~ MERCIFUL, ~ and loving act that brought us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

▶▶ In these verses we'll see that God's act of bringing us from spiritual death to spiritual life consisted of three components. ¶¶ 1/8

1<sup>st</sup> COMP. IN VS. 5b, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT BECAUSE GOD IS "RICH in mercy" ~ and "because of the great love with which he loved us," ~ He "made us alive together with Christ."

WE KNOW FROM THE CONTEXT, ~ IN REGARD TO US PAUL IS REFERRING TO BEING made alive spiritually.

▶▶ We were dead spiritually, ~ and through Christ God made us alive spiritually. ~~ Just as God the Father breathed physical life into Jesus in the tomb, ~ He breathes spiritual life into those who believe in His Son for salvation.

▶▶ In Jn. 5:24, ~ Jesus said, ~ "Truly, ~ truly, ~ I say to you, ~ whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. ~~ He does not come into judgment, ~ but has passed from death to life ~ [i.e., ~ from spiritual death to spiritual life]."

▷▷ Verb form for "has passed" means a permanent transfer from one realm to another.

↳↳ Jesus is saying that those who hear His word and believe the One who sent Him, ~ i.e., ~ God the Father, ~ "has eternal life," ~ "does not come into judgment," ~ ¶¶

→→ and has permanently passed from spiritual death to spiritual life. ~~ Protected

▶▶ To paraphrase Paul, ~ "because God is rich in mercy, ~ and loved us with a great love, ~ he made us spiritually alive forever."

NOW, ~ THE FACT THAT GOD THE FATHER "MADE US ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST" ~ reinforces what we said back in 2:1.

▶▶ Prior to salvation Paul said in [verse 1](#), ~ we were spiritually dead.

▷▷ And spiritual death, ~ we noted, ~ is a state from which people cannot break free on their own. ~~ We had absolutely no capability to generate spiritual life.

↳↳ In [Rom. 5:6](#), ~ Paul writes, ~ "For while we were still weak ~ [i.e., ~ when we could not do anything about it], ~ at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."

▷▷ My fellow Christians, ~ we could not ~ and did not ~ raise ourselves from spiritual death to spiritual life.

↳↳ It was God, ~ and God alone, ~ who could and did make "us alive together with Christ."

AND REMEMBER, ~ OUR OLD SINFUL NATURE IS SO BAD, ~ THAT GOD GIVES US A totally new nature when we come to Christ for salvation. ¶¶ 2/8

▶▶Once again, ~ as Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:17, ~ "Therefore, ~ if anyone is in Christ, ~ he is a new creation. ~~ The old has passed away; ~~ behold, ~ the new has come.

▶▶And as we learned in Ezek. 36:26, ~ God gives us a "a new heart" and "a new spirit," ~ 77

▷▷i.e., ~ a totally new nature, ~ which by instinct wants to please, ~ to live for, ~ and to serve ~ God. ~~ The total opposite of our old nature.

▶▶Again, ~ it's not a remodeling or repairing of the old nature. ~~ When God makes us alive spiritually, ~ we become a totally new person in Christ.

BEFORE MOVING TO THE SECOND AND THIRD COMPONENTS OF GOD'S GRACIOUS, ~ merciful, ~ and loving act on our behalf, ~ Paul inserts a parenthetical comment in verse 5c.

PAUL SAYS, ~ "BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED."

▶▶Now, ~ in verses 8-10, ~ Paul will go into greater detail about this. ~~ And we'll cover it in a couple of weeks.

▶▶So, ~ here we will just make a couple of brief comments.

▷▷1<sup>st</sup>, ~ here, ~ in verse 5c, ~ Paul emphasizes the word translated "by grace." ~~ "by grace you have been saved."

↳↳In his parenthetical statement and emphasis, ~ Paul is driving the point home that it was because, ~ and only because, ~ God is "rich in mercy" and loved us with a great love ~ that He "made us alive together with Christ."

▷▷And, ~ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ in the Greek text, ~ the phrase "have been saved" indicates an ongoing permanent condition. ~~ Para.: ~~ "by grace you have been saved forever and ever."

NOW LET'S MOVE ON TO THE SECOND AND THIRD COMPONENTS OF GOD'S GRACIOUS, ~ merciful, ~ and loving act that brought us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

SECOND COMPONENT IN VS. 6a, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT BECAUSE GOD IS "RICH in mercy" ~ and "because of the great love with which he loved us," ~ He "raised us up with him."

PAUL IS NOT TALKING ABOUT OUR PHYSICAL RESURRECTION HERE.

▶▶That comes when Jesus returns. ~~ He is speaking about our spiritual resurrection.

▶▶He is however talking about Jesus' physical resurrection. ~~ Jesus died physically. ~~ And God the Father raised Him physically. 77 3/8

▶▶ And when it comes to people, ~ when a person comes to Christ for salvation, ~ he or she is immediately raised to permanent spiritual life, ~ and will be raised physically forever when Jesus returns.

NOW, ~ I'M NOT SURE THAT THERE'S THAT MUCH DISTINCTION BETWEEN BEING made alive spiritually and being raised spiritually. ~ Simultaneous . . . Jesus . . . Us . . . .

▶▶ So, ~ the question is, ~ "what point was Paul perhaps getting at in saying them separately?"

▷▷ Well, ~ I would suggest that the point Paul is perhaps making here is more implicit and may have to do with being raised to ~ and walking in [emphasis on . . .] ~ newness of life.

↳↳ Perhaps we can put it this way: ~ Paul is perhaps implying here that ~ just as Jesus was raised physically and lives a new way of life physically, ~ we have been raised spiritually ~ and are to live a new way of life spiritually.

▷▷ When Jesus left the tomb, ~ He left the grave clothes in it. ~ Likewise, ~ when God makes and raises us alive spiritually, ~ we are to leave the grave clothes behind.

↳↳ I.e., ~ the old life, ~ when we were dominated by our sin nature and its sinful desires, ~ is to be left behind.

→→ As Peter says in 1 Pet. 4:3a, ~ "For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do."

↳↳ We are to now be governed by the new nature that God has given us. ~ Our new nature that instinctively wants to please, ~ to live for, ~ and to serve ~ God.

▶▶ That this perhaps is the point Paul may have been making is reinforced by him in Rom. 6:4, ~ where he also talks about our spiritual resurrection ~ and explicitly makes the point that we are to walk in newness of life.

▷▷ Paul writes, ~ "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, ~ in order that, ~ just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, ~ we too might walk in newness of life."

↳↳ Paul's point here, ~ if understand the grammar correctly, ~ is that now that we have been raised spiritually, ~ just as Jesus was raised physically and lives a new way of life physically, ~ we can ~ and should ~ live a new way of life spiritually.

→→ TPID, ~ Our old, ~ sinful lives have ended. ~ And we are now able to ~ and should ~ live lives that are glorifying and pleasing to God. ↴ 4/8

▷▷Peter makes this point in 1 Pet. 1:15-16. ~ "As obedient children, ~ do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ~ but as he who called you is holy, ~ you also be holy in all your conduct, ~ since it is written, ~ 'You shall be holy, ~ for I am holy.'"

↳↳"be holy" means to live a life that pleases and glorifies God.

→→Instead of continuing in the sinful lifestyle of our unsaved life, ~ Christians are to conform our behavior to our new status of being new creations in Christ.

▶▶Furthermore, ~ that Paul, ~ in Eph. 2:6a, ~ was saying that we have been raised spiritually ~ and are to live a new way of life spiritually ~ is also reinforced by him in Col. 3:1-2. ~ ~ Brief.

▷▷NIV, ~ "Since, ~ then, ~ you have been raised with Christ, ~ set your hearts on things above, ~ where Christ is, ~ seated at the right hand of God. ~ ~ Set your minds on things above, ~ not on earthly things." ~ ~ Work for eternal rewards, ~ thinking, ~ outlook . . . .

NOW, ~ BEFORE DISCUSSING THE THIRD COMPONENT OF GOD'S GRACIOUS, ~ merciful, ~ and loving act that brought us from spiritual death to spiritual life, ~ need to digress . . . .

▶▶Because it's extremely important to understand ~ that Our spiritual and physical resurrections are impossible apart from Christ's physical resurrection.

▶▶Consider this, ~ if Jesus had not risen physically from the dead, ~ no one could be raised spiritually or physically.

▷▷And we would still be in the condition that Paul described in verses 1-3.

▶▶A point that Paul makes clearly in 1 Cor. 15:17. ~ ~ He writes, ~ "And if Christ has not been raised, ~ your faith is futile and you are still in your sins."

▷▷If Jesus has not been raised, ~ then our faith in Him for salvation is useless. ~ ~ I.e., ~ what good is it? ~ ~ It bears no fruit, ~ gives us no benefit.

↳↳And if Jesus is not raised, ~ our sins have never been forgiven ~ and we're still headed for God's wrath.

▶▶Then in verse 20 of 1 Cor. 15, ~ Paul declares, ~ "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, ~ the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."

▷▷Therefore, ~ faith in Christ for salvation is effective, ~ fruit, ~ benefit, ~ and it's not futile. ~ ~ And resurrection, ~ both spiritual and physical, ~ for those who put their faith in Jesus for salvation, ~ is a reality. ↴ ↴ 5/8

▶▶ Neither in Ephesians nor 1 Cor. 15 does Paul propose an alternate way of gaining spiritual and physical resurrection.

▷▷ In fact, ~ he's pretty clear there is no other way. ~ Resurrection, ~ both spiritual and physical, ~ comes only through Jesus' resurrection.

↳↳ Peter points this out in 1 Pet. 1:3. ~ "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! ~ According to his great mercy, ~ he has caused us to be born again to a living hope ~ through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

IN VERSE 6b, ~ WE FIND THE THIRD COMPONENT OF GOD'S GRACIOUS, ~ merciful, ~ and loving act that brought us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

PAUL SAYS THAT BECAUSE GOD IS "RICH IN MERCY" ~ AND "BECAUSE OF THE GREAT love with which he loved us," ~ He "seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

1<sup>st</sup>, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT GOD HAS "SEATED US WITH HIM IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES."

▶▶ Just as God raised and seated Jesus in the heavenly places physically, ~ He has raised and seated believers together with Jesus in the heavenly places spiritually.

▶▶ This position of being seated there with Jesus ~ gives believers at least two things.

▷▷ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ it gives Christians a heavenly status.

↳↳ This means that we have a place of dignity and honor. ~ The world . . . .

↳↳ Our heavenly status also means that, ~ as Paul puts it in Phil. 3:20, ~ "our citizenship is in heaven."

→→ Think about it, ~ Christians actually live in two spheres. ~ Physically, ~ we are here on earth in a human body.

↳↳ But spiritually, ~ we are seated with Jesus "in the heavenly places."

↳↳ Even though here physically . . . .

▷▷ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ the position of being seated with Jesus in the heavenly places gives believers heavenly power to overcome the power of sin.

↳↳ In 2 Cor. 10:4, ~ Paul writes, ~ "For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds." ↓↓ 6/8

AND THEN AT THE END OF VERSE 6b, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT GOD SEATING US WITH Jesus "in the heavenly places" ~ is "in Christ Jesus."

▶▶ Paul's purpose in using this phrase here seems to be to explain how it came about that believers are seated with Jesus "in the heavenly places."

▷▷ More specifically, ~ believers being seated with Jesus "in the heavenly places" came about through Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary.

↳↳ I.e., ~ through what Jesus did on the cross, ~ those who believe in Him for salvation are seated with Him "in the heavenly places."

▶▶ Once again, ~ as we were over and over in 1:3-14, ~ we are confronted by Paul ~ with the centrality of Christ in our salvation and its accompanying blessings.

▷▷ Paul could have left this phrase out, ~ and we still would have gotten the third component of God's gracious, ~ merciful, ~ and loving act on our behalf.

↳↳ He could have simply said, ~ "because God is rich in mercy and loved us with a great love, ~ we are seated in the heavenly places with Jesus." ~~ And stopped there.

▷▷ But Paul goes out of his way and writes this phrase, ~ "in Christ Jesus."

↳↳ He does not want believers to ever forget ~ that we have been seated with Jesus "in the heavenly places," ~ through, ~ and only through, ~ what Jesus has done.

→→ The only reason we have a place of dignity and honor, ~ the only reason we have citizenship in heaven, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and the only reason we have heavenly power to overcome sin ~ is because of Jesus.

IN VERSE 7, ~ PAUL POINTS OUT A PURPOSE OF GOD'S GRACIOUS ACT OF bringing us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

PAUL SAYS, ~ "SO THAT IN THE COMING AGES HE MIGHT SHOW THE IMMEASURABLE riches of his grace in kindness ~ [i.e., ~ expressed in his kindness] ~ toward us in Christ Jesus."

▶▶ God's ultimate purpose in acting on our behalf was to display for ever and ever, ~ just how extraordinarily rich in grace he is. ¶¶ 7/8

▷▷For all eternity, ~ the hosts of heaven and redeemed humanity will marvel at, ~ and never fully grasp because it's immeasurable, ~ just how incredibly rich in grace our great God is.

↳↳The display of God's immeasurable grace will forever be a source of eternal joy for us, ~ and will continuously move us to worship Him.

→→And notice again, ~ the centrality of Christ.

↳↳"so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

### CONCLUSION.

FOR ALL ETERNITY, ~ GOD THE FATHER WILL SHOW THE INCOMPARABLE RICHES OF his grace, ~ expressed in his kindness to us through Christ Jesus.

▶▶Indeed, ~ "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Eph. 1:3, NIV)

LET'S PRAY . . . . 8/8