

The Grace of God
Ephesians 2:4-7
By Jeremy Cagle, February 23, 2020

I met with some people at the prayer time and was telling them I've talked to several folks recently have said that life's very busy for them. It's very hectic. And I think our town is growing. Businesses are growing. And we're growing with it right? We're busy along with everybody else. And that can be a temptation. When you're busy like that to come to a text like the one we're going to look at this morning and say, "What does that have to do with me? And what does this have to do with my life, my job, my family, my home, just my busyness." And let me tell you what this has to do with you before we read it. This reminds you that there's something bigger going on than your busyness. Amen? A text like this reminds you that there's something bigger going on in the universe than your home and your family and your job. There is a God, there is a Creator. And there are topics such as sin and salvation and heaven and hell that are at stake in the universe. And you need to be reminded of that. Amen? You need to be reminded that there are bigger things going on. It can be so easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of life. And forget the importance of what we're going to talk about this morning.

But what I want to do is read this text to you. Again, Dwayne read it a moment ago, but just read it, so you can kind of reflect on what it says here and think about it. But if you look in Ephesians chapter two, says this, says

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them, we too all formerly lived in lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead and our transgressions made us alive together with Christ – by grace, you have been saved – and He raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come, He might show the surpassing riches of His grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace, you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we would walk in them."

If you notice, as you read that this is a very sobering text and that it's a very serious passage of the Bible. Every passage in the Bible is serious, but some just kind of get your attention more than others. And this is one that does that. Because there's a great movement as you read this, there's a great change and it's a change from death to life, you see that? It's a change from the

very bottom of human existence to the very top all in a few verses, I don't have to tell you, you can't get any worse than dead. Amen? We just can't get any worse than that. And you can't get any better than being made alive, that's as good as it gets. And Paul says, that's what you've experienced. If you are a Christian, that's what you have seen in your life, a great change from death to life.

And if you notice chapter two, verse eight says, this is what makes it all possible. This is why you have experienced this change. "For by grace you have been saved through faith." The change happens through grace, which means God does it all. He is the only one who can take credit for this. Because you did nothing it even says in verse eight, "not of yourselves, it's the gift of God, so that you cannot boast." Just as a dead man could do nothing so it was with you; just as a dead man is powerless to save himself so you were powerless, you were helpless. So God had to save you by His grace. I think we could all say there, there are a few portions of Scripture that are more dramatic than this one. There are a few portions that are more intense. This is an intense passage. In fact, Ephesians two has been called the little book of Romans because of this. It takes the whole book of Romans, and it puts it into one chapter. And this is what we're going to talk about this morning, we're going to look at the little book of Romans, and see and talk about this change.

Before we do let me give you some review of where we're at in the book of Ephesians. Chapter two comes at the end of long discussion about God's power. That's how Ephesians chapter one ends. That's where it stops with the discussion about God's power. Paul makes a prayer request in chapter one, verse 18, if you want to look and follow along. And to show you that God can answer it, to show that God is strong enough to answer prayer. Paul says that God is powerful in verse 19. Because following along there, He raised Christ from the dead. He put him above all rule and authority and power. He put all things under his feet. And to show you this in chapter two, Paul says that God raised you. That's the connection between chapter one and chapter two, to show you how powerful God is. Paul says God can raise the dead and give them life. And then in chapter two, Paul says, God did that for you. Which means you've experienced this.

If you are a Christian in this room this morning, you have seen this great change because it happened to you. Which is why this has such an impact on you when you read it, because we can all see ourselves in this passage. I told you before, if you were going to write your spiritual autobiography, this is what you would say. Everybody's name who was a Christian on this planet belongs in this chapter. This is a mirror into the renewed soul. This goes for all of us. There are no exceptions. It's not like half the people in this room were saved one way and the other half were saved another way. No, we were all saved like this. It's not that some of you were alive or partially alive, or you know, kind of alive because you were better than everybody else. No, everybody was dead. Everybody in their souls. And God raised you from that, because of his grace. You know, several people from back in the States have asked me since coming to

Chilliwack, "What's it like preaching in Canada? What's it like preaching in another country?" And I've told them, "I'm so glad the Bible is not an American book. I'm so glad it was not written just for Americans because I would have run out of material a long time ago." This book was written for everybody. And I can teach you with confidence every week that it has something to say to you. I had a family member one time ask me. "Do you ever run out of material when you preach?" No. Never. Because there's always something to say about the human soul.

To say it another way I don't think I have to tell you this world has a sin problem. Do I have to say that? This world knows you know what it's like to be dead in sin because you experience it every day. Spiritual death is all around us, even in a nice place like Chilliwack. If you just think about the town of Chilliwack, for a moment, our little corner of the world. With so many churches around here, you would think we would have a better handle on the sin problem, right? You would think we would be behaving a little better than we are. But according to an article in the Progress last year, Chilliwack has the highest rate of property crime in the Fraser Valley. We're at the top, and our violent crime rate is double that of Abbotsford. And personally, I think that's because we had better stuff and they have over there. I think that's because we have a nicer selection of things. No offense, if you live in Abbotsford, nice stuff over there, too. But we do that because we all have a sin problem, right? No matter where you live it, we do that because we're all dead on our own apart from God.

And we might add it's always been this way. This is nothing new to the world when God made Adam and Eve the first human beings He gave them one commandment to make things simple. He gave them one law and what did they do with it? They broke it. One law, Can you imagine living with one law? You know, don't push that button – oh man. And then they had kids. and what do those kids do? They murdered each other. One generation in to human beings and they're committing murder. Then their kids got so bad that God had to flood the earth and rid the whole world of them. Because we've always had a sin problem. You're not even out of the book of Genesis, you're not even past chapter six. And it's so bad that God has to destroy the earth and start all over again.

But the good news is that God has not left us alone in this. The good news is that God has not left us with our sin problem. He's provided a way out, he's provided a Savior and he's done it by grace. So we wouldn't have to save ourselves. He did it all himself. You know, some people are afraid that they're not good enough to be saved. You hear that a lot. They're afraid that they're not holy enough. But I want you to notice what this passage says, my friends Paul doesn't say you have to be good enough to be saved. He says you have to be dead. Dead. He doesn't say you have to be holy enough. He says you have to be helpless and powerless. That's the starting point. Which means that should be encouraging to you actually. That should give you some hope, because it means anyone can be saved now, right now today. You don't have to wait for it. You can experience this right now.

You know on September 22nd 1862, the US President, Abraham Lincoln, issued one of the most important orders ever given in the United States. It was called the Emancipation Proclamation which freed the slaves. It gave them their liberty for the first time in their lives. But the interesting thing about it is that after he passed that law, most of the slaves continued living like they had before. They continue living in bondage because they didn't know about it. They had no idea. It wasn't until the Union Army swept through the South and showed it to them that they could enjoy their freedom. It's the same way here it's the same way in this text. If you're in Christ, you are free from sin. If you believe you have victory over it right now. You're alive. You don't have to wait for life you have it. Now if you're in him. You just need to live like it. You just need to enjoy it. You need to hear the Emancipation Proclamation, which is what we're going to talk about today.

J.C. Ryle once said that it costs something to be a real Christian. According to the standard of the Bible, there are enemies to be overcome, there are battles to be fought, there are sacrifices to be made, and a race to be run because conversion is not putting a person in an armchair and taking them easily to heaven. It is the beginning of a mighty conflict which will cost much to win the victory. But the good news you have is that the victory has already been won in Christ. The good news we're going to see today is that not only does it cost a lot, but the price has already been paid. And you're free now. You're free from your sin. The chains have been broken.

That's what we're going to talk about. So if you're taking notes this morning in Ephesians, two, verses four through seven, by the way, we could spend a lifetime in this chapter. I'm not going to do that to you guys. But it's a chapter that you could just study for – we'll be studying this kind of stuff for all of eternity in heaven. This will be the subject of heaven. But in Ephesians, two verses four through seven, let's just kind of sum up what some of this says. We're going to look at three ways the grace of God is displayed in this passage. So if you're taking notes, that's our outline for today. That's what we're going to look at. Three ways the grace of God is displayed in this passage, and we'll tie it into the topic of victory. Because that's what the passage is about, we're going to talk about the power of God in this.

But it's been said that when you work for someone, they're obligated to pay you. They're in your debt and to make sure that God is not obligated to any man, to make sure God is not in anyone's debt, he saves you by His grace. God doesn't owe us a thing. But hell.

He saved us by His grace, which means that we need to live in that victory this morning. You shouldn't go around moping all the time as a Christian. If the world needs anything, it doesn't need any more mopey Christians. Amen? We need to live in victory. You shouldn't go around depressed saying "I'm not good enough for God." Of course, you're not good enough for God.

That's never been a debate. God saves us by grace and let's talk about that with three ways he does this.

The first one's very simple. It follows right along with the passage here. God saves us through His love. So the first way the grace of God is displayed here is through his love. God showed us his grace by loving us. Which means that that was the motive behind all this, that was the driving force. God looked at our dead soul, he looked at our dead corpse, and He loved us. He saw we could never get victory on our own, we could never defeat sin on our own. And so he did that on our behalf. And if you look in chapter two, verses one through five again, just to get the flow of it here, Paul writes, he says,

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them, we too all formerly lived in lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead and our transgressions made us alive together with Christ.”

Just to give you a little background for that, as I told you before, the point of this chapter is to show you the power of God. And to show you that, Paul says you were dead in your trespasses and sins. You weren't saved by your power; you're saved by His. Because you were dead. You walked according to the course of this world, you lived in the lust of your flesh. But verse four starts out, if you notice, verse four, it says, “but God,” that's a very important phrase in here. That's a very important transition. Some have said it's the most important transition in the entire Bible. Martyn Lloyd Jones preached an entire sermon on these two words, “but God” and he did that because it forms a contrast to all that was said before. It means that you were all these things, but God was this. You did all of these things in verses one through three you were dead and sinning and evil, but God was this, He was merciful to you. He was kind to you.

Verse four says it this way “but God being rich in mercy.” God looked down on you and he saw you sinning he saw you flailing and living in the world. And he showed mercy to you, it says, says rich mercy. The word rich here is the Greek word plocius which means abounding or overflowing with something, to have an abundance. You know, most of us would look at a person who was doing all these things, and we would grow tired of them, right? If we saw a person acting like in verses one through three, you know, following the devil, living like all of this, we would say off with their heads.

God was rich in mercy. The only way to save someone who looks like this is to be rich in mercy. A little bit of mercy is not going to cut it. You're going to need a lot. It also says "but God being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which He loved us," so first he was merciful. And now he loves us which is repeated twice there. For impact, see the word love mentioned twice. Which is very similar to the word mercy. I mean, they're very much alike, but there is a difference, because you can show mercy to someone without loving them. You can show kindness to someone without meaning it. I read one author say there's a big difference between giving a sandwich to a homeless guy in the street and giving one to your child. And the difference is that you love your child. You have a personal interest in the child's life. And God does that with us. He saves us this way. He doesn't just make you a sandwich and walk away. He doesn't just give you a handout and then leave. He takes you in because he loves you. Which is important because all the stuff we're going to talk about today is built on this. It all the material from verse four on comes from this, it starts right here. God loves you. When no one else cared about you, God did when no one else could help you. God did. You see a lot of self-improvement stuff today, a lot of people trying to just fix your life. You can't fix this. You can't. So God did.

Which leads to a couple of applications here a couple of ways to apply this. For one thing, this means that when you struggle through life, you are not alone. You're not alone. When you go through hard times, trials, suffering, you don't do it by yourself because God is with you. He was there the whole time. He was there before you were saved and he will be there after. He was there when you were dead, so he'll be there now. Some people read a passage like this. And they question some of it, they read Ephesians two, and they wonder if God loves them because they're struggling, because they're going through a trial. And they feel all alone. And Paul says, If God didn't leave you here, he won't leave you anywhere. If God didn't leave you when you were at your worst, He won't leave you now you'll be fine.

It's been said, if you don't feel close to God, remember that he never moved. He stayed put. You're the one who walked away and need to come back. Which leads to another application for this and that is that you will be saved if you're in Christ. It's a certain thing in this passage. If God is with you, if you're in Christ, He will make sure you go to heaven. Because if he finds you in verse four, he will take you to verse 10. Do you see that? If he finds you at the beginning of this passage, he won't drop you toward the end. You meet a lot of Christians today who don't get this, they, they think God's going to drop them. They think he's gonna pick them up in verse four and drop them somewhere around maybe verse seven or eight. And they're scared and they're afraid. Paul says that will never happen. Never happen for a believer. I read this week that prayer does not depend on the size of the one praying, it depends on the size of the one being prayed to. Some of us need to remember that we need to remember our salvation is based on his size of Him, not us. It's not based on the size of your love and your grace and your mercy. It's based on His and you need to have victory in that.

I don't know if you guys have ever heard the poem "Footprints" before, where the person is walking on the beach. They see their life on a beach and they're looking at their life as two sets of footprints in the sand. Theirs and God's until a few rough parts in their life when they only see one set of footprints. They only see one path. And so they ask God, "why did you leave me there? God, why did you Why did you walk away?" And the Lord said, "My child, I didn't leave you there. I carried you there. I didn't walk away, I picked you up and I brought you home."

That's what Paul says here, that's what's driving this passage is the love of God, the mercy of God, the desire to bring you safely home. And he says that a God who has that desire will never ever, ever lose you. Ever. Friends, let's be honest, we have such a puny view of God today, don't we? We have such a weak view of our Savior. We are mopey Christians because we don't get this. We forget eternal life is eternal, it lasts forever. And once you have it, you will never lose it. God never lies, he does not go back on his word. And he says, if you're saved, then you're saved. We need to remember that today.

It leads to the next point we want to consider in our passage this morning. A second way the grace of God is displayed in this passage. And this is where the action begins. This is where the movement starts in the text. But first, God showed his grace through love. So the first way the grace of God is displayed is through loving us, which means he took a personal interest in our lives. Some people believe God is a divine watchmaker, and he kind of wound the earth up and let it go. That's not what you read here. God is personally invested in those he has saved, which leads to a certain next point to consider, second way the grace of God is displayed is that he made us alive together with Christ. That's the second way God's grace is displayed. He made us alive together with Christ. Which means that not only did he love us, but he did something about it. Not only does he care, but he shows it by taking our death away.

If you look in verses four through five, it says "but God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ, For by grace, you have been saved." Just to say a few words about this, this doesn't come across well in English but starting in verse five Paul gives a list of three verbs that all start out with the Greek word "*sun*" or "with" or "together with". He writes them in such a way that they all sound the same they alliterate in Greek they are the words *suxa poieo*, *sunegeiro*, and *sugkathizo*. And in your Bibles, they are the words "made alive", "raised us up" and "seated us." Those are three words in Greek, which means that you could translate it this way. God made you alive together with Christ, raised you up together with Christ, seated you in the heavenly places, together with Christ. And you get the idea as you read the passage that this is all together with Christ. You see the personal interaction there; God didn't save you from a distance. He didn't save you from far away. He did this together with you. Doesn't mean that he needed your permission, it means that he held your hand through it all. Some have said that Paul

made these words up to describe this they're his invention. But he did this to highlight the fact that God did this with you. And the first thing that God does here is to make you alive. Which means that he gives you the power to act. That's what it means to be alive. You can act on something. When you're dead, you didn't have that, when you're dead, you couldn't act you couldn't respond. So God, changed that for you.

You guys are great at evangelism. But you know what it's like when you evangelize a lost person. It's like things just bounce off of them, right? When I used to practice tennis, you'd hit a tennis ball against the wall. Sometimes when you evangelize, it feels like you're doing that. Sermons are lost on them. Prayers have no effect, the gospel just falls off. And the reason is because they're dead. And Paul says, God made you alive. So you could respond to this. Theologians refer to this as the doctrine of regeneration or new life. The word Genesis means creation. So to save you God recreated your soul gave you a new birth. It's also known as the doctrine of conversion, and means to change direction, to go from this way to that way. When you convert electricity, you change the direction of the current. God did that with you. And if you notice the word "made alive", it's in the past tense in Greek to show this happened in the past. This is a settled thing now. It has been done for you if you're in Christ, which means you're not being made alive, you are alive. You're not being regenerated or converted. If you're a believer, you're converted now, right now. The victory has been proclaimed there has been an Emancipation Proclamation, and you need to live that way.

This is huge. This is a big deal. Because a lot of people think that salvation is something they contribute to that salvation is something they have to do themselves and so they weep and they cry and they wail And they mourn all with the intention that if I do that enough, God will make me alive. If I do that enough, God will regenerate me. It's not the way it works. You say it bluntly, you have monks and nuns all over the world doing that, and they're not regenerate. And they've been doing it for decades, centuries. Or some people take it in the other direction, they, they do something else. And they say, if I just get excited enough, if I just get worked up enough, if I can have a hallelujah moment for God, and go to this event, and this event and this event, then he will make me alive. It doesn't work that way either. That's not what this says.

Paul says, if you believe you are alive, period. If you trust in Christ then you're experiencing this now, right now. It says "For by grace, you have been saved." He will later talk about faith because that is how you receive this. Doesn't come later, it comes now. The crying and the weeping and mourning doesn't proceed this, it can proceed this, but it's not our efforts. It's all of God.

Which means there's several applications for this several ways to apply this as well and one is this, it obliterates all forms of legalism. Do you see that? It means all forms of self-righteousness, works based religion are just blown away in this passage. If you notice the life comes before the

works done, salvation comes before the works. Salvation is mentioned in verses four and five. The works don't come until verse 10. And to make sure you get it he says, "For we are His workmanship." Our works give credit to him. He repeats several times in here "For you been saved by grace."

I told you last week all a dead man can do is stink, right? Remember that how a dead man can do is smell. Which means that his work smell. His crying and weeping and wailing, his getting excited and having a hallelujah moment for God. If it's not done with the right heart, it stinks in the God's eyes, stinks. If he's dead it counts for nothing. So God saves us of his own initiative.

It leads to another application we see here and that's it. This is a finished thing. I can't emphasize this enough. But this is a finished thing Paul's describing here. It's complete, because you're either alive or you're not right. You guys get that. You're either dead or you're not. You don't go to a funeral and say, "Boy, I hope they're dead." No, they are dead. We have that settled beforehand. You can't be halfway in this, it's a finished thing, so that if God has made you alive. It's the end of story. You are His and you are saved.

In his commentary on Ephesians, John MacArthur tells a story of a man who came late to a revival meeting. He came to after it was all over and he asked a worker who was cleaning up, "what must I do to be saved?" And the worker said, "Well, you can't do anything because you're too late." The man replied, kind of in horror, he said, "Well, what do you mean I'm too late?" And the worker said, "Well, you're too late. The work has already been done. Christ has already died for you. He's already risen from the grave. All you need to do now is trust in that. All you need to do now is believe and you'll be saved."

Friends, I wonder if everyone gets this today. This is so simple. This is basic Christianity, but I wonder if all of us understand and have our minds around this. Because I would say some of the angriest people I have met and maybe you would say as well have been in churches. And some of the most frustrated people I've come across in Canada, the US, wherever, have been professing Christians who don't think that the work is done. They think they have to contribute something; they think it's about them as well. And they're frustrated and they're angry. Because they have no peace. They're trying to bargain with God, strike a deal with God, and they say "If I do this God, for you, will you do this for me? If I cry for you and get excited for you, will you save me?" But they forget God doesn't bargain with dead men. God doesn't strike a deal with sinners. There's no deal in this passage. Because there's nothing to strike a deal with.

God saves you when you believe and that's it. He gives you life and you live. It's nothing you can take credit for. We believe, we trust in Him but that's even of the Lord.

You know, I know people that stay up night after night after night, because they wrestle with this. They can't sleep, they can eat. I know other people who are paranoid, they are a nervous wreck because they feel like if I sin one more time, the gates of hell are going to swallow me whole. Paul says, this is a finished thing in the eyes of God. What did Jesus say on the cross? He said, "It is finished." It's over. There's nothing more to pay. And victory comes when you realize that. Victory doesn't come when you sin, and you just beat yourself up repeatedly over that. Listen, Christ has already been beaten for your sin. Victory comes when you realize that. You trust in that.

A.W. Tozer said, "Jesus knows the worst about you and He died for it. He knows the worst things you ever did, and he saved you anyway because he loves you." And the proper response to that is to rejoice and have victory in him. And the leads to a final point to consider this morning. One more way the grace of God is displayed in this passage. Just to review the other ones. The first one is through God's love for us. First way God's grace is displayed is through the fact that he loved us. He looked at our dead soul our loveless, or our unlovely corpse. And he loved us, he cared. Second way the grace of God is displayed is that he made us alive together with Christ. Which means he did something about our dead soul. He took our death away. And he gave us new life.

Bringing us to one more point to consider this morning, one more way the grace of God displayed, and that is that he raised us up and seated us with him in the heavenly places. I put those two together because they're listed together in the passage. But a final way the grace of God is displayed is that he raised us up and seated us with him in the heavenly places. Which is just further proof that he finished the job. If we didn't get it before Paul says it again. The job is finished because he puts us in heaven where Christ is. If you look in verse four, says

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead and our transgressions made us alive together with Christ – by grace, you have been saved – and He raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come, He might show the surpassing riches of His grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

As you as you read that you can tell there's a lot in here it's a it's a heavy passage. But just to walk you through this, the second and third word that starts out with the prefix "su" here, these are the next couple of words that sound alike. And Paul uses them to say this is what God has done together with you. This is what Christ has done. He has raised us up with him. That word raised up it's a reference to the resurrection, Jesus resurrection that was mentioned in chapter one. He refers to the time that God lifted Christ out of the grave. To say that just as God raised him, so God has raised us, just as Jesus defeated death, we have defeated death in him. And then it says he has seated us with him in the heavenly places. That's a reference to his ascension into

heaven. The time that Jesus left the earth and entered heaven. He was seated at the right hand of the Father to show that salvation is finished. Now it is complete. You know, I told you previously, a couple weeks ago, there were no seats in the temple in Jerusalem. There were no chairs there, because the work was never finished. It was never done. So if you were a priest, you were always making one more sacrifice, killing one more animal. But Jesus sat down because his work was finished. You get that? He said down because it's over. And Paul says, God sat you down with him to show that your salvation is finished too. God sets you down with him to show that it's over. You're as good as in heaven already.

Doesn't always feel like that now does it? Anybody feel like they're in heaven? Do you live in the real world with traffic and the rain? Paul says you're as you're as good as there. To say this another way, to say this is that when God looks at His Son, he sees you. When God looks at Christ sitting down in heaven at his right hand, he sees you in Him. Which should give you a new perspective on things. Again, you're not trying to be saved, you are saved if you're in Christ. You're not trying to get to heaven, you're there already with him. You're just waiting for the day when you have a reunion. Some passages say it this way, we're no longer citizens of this world, a citizen of heaven because of this. We don't belong to the kingdom of this earth. We belong to another kingdom, the kingdom of God. And it should change the way we see things.

One reason we're so depressed and discouraged all the time is because we think our identity is still down here. Our identity is not down here, our identity is up there with him. Can't get any higher than heaven, can't get any higher than Christ and you're there with him now. This is known as our union with Christ or fellowship with Him.

You know, before coming to Grace Fellowship Chilliwack, I did some research on the history of Canada. And I learned that one of the greatest battles in the nation's history was the battle for Quebec in 1759, when the English fought for control against the French. They had two famous generals going head to head, the British General Wolfe and the French General Montcalm. And the British won. They defeated the French in that battle, causing Canada to become a Christian nation. But it didn't end the fighting. It didn't end the struggle, but it brought a completion to it. It brought a finality to it, because never again would Canada be under French rule. And Paul says the same thing happened to you when God saved you. The same thing happened when you became a Christian. He brought a completion to your soul. He brought a finale to it and never again would you come under the rule of the devil. You're going to struggle. You're going to fight, but the war has been won. And nothing can ever change that now. You will not be brought down from heaven.

Christ is there. He's staying there until he returns. And you'll do the same. In fact, as a result of this, verse seven says, here's what happens as a result, "So that in the ages to come, he might show the surpassing riches of his grace and kindness toward us who are in Christ Jesus." That's a

mysterious passage in some ways, but it means a time is coming when God is going to show you off because of this. A time is coming in the ages to come. When God will say to the angels, Look at the ones I have saved, look at the ones I have resurrected, don't they show the riches of my grace? God's not going to show you off in heaven and say, Look how wonderful these people are. Look what they did. He's going to show you off in heaven and say, Look how wonderful My grace is. I can save sinners like that.

The point Paul is making is that God has thought of everything here. He's taken care of every detail in your salvation, because he found you dead and he left you alive. He finds you in a coffin and a graveyard and a tomb, and he seats you in heaven. To show that everything has been taken care of, your victory is complete. One commentator said there are several conclusions you can draw from this, several ways to sum this up. One is that this is true Christianity. This is what it's all about. We're alive in Christ, we're in heaven. Second, he said, this is true for every Christian. This is true for every believer on the planet. No matter who you are, no matter what your background, if you're in Christ, this is yours, right now. And third, he said this means that anyone can experience this. That's the greatest part of this passage. That's the most encouraging part, this means this is available for anyone because we've all been dead.

The question is, Do you want this? Would you like to experience what Paul is talking about here? Would you like to have the victory? Would you like to be free from sin? If you would, you can have it by trusting in Jesus Christ. Remember, you don't have to earn this. You don't have to work for it. I said before, this is not for those who are doing good. This is for those who are dead. And if that is you, you can have this right now. You know, during the Civil War, I don't think there were too many slaves who heard about their newfound freedom and said, "I don't want that. I would rather go back to my chains." And this morning, I'll encourage you if you're lost, don't go back to your chains. Don't look at this and say "I don't want that." This is the greatest gift in the universe. And it's offered through the Lord Jesus Christ freely to all who believe.

As we take the Lord's Supper this morning let's reflect on that and remember that. The great thing our Savior has done. Before we do that, let me close in a word of prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the riches of a passage like this one here. We could never plumb the depths of this, we could never get to the bottom of this just like we could never get to the bottom of what our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us. He has changed us in a way nothing else ever could. There's no health plan. There's no philosophy. There's no book that could do what Christ has done for us in this great change. And Lord, so for those who are saved this morning, as they celebrate the Lord's Supper, may they remember the change that has occurred in them and may they give you glory for it. Thank you, Father for the lavish grace and mercy and kindness we've experienced as believers, and I do pray for any who are lost here this morning, any who read this and they say that's me in the first part of the chapter I am that dead

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man, I am that dead woman. Lord, would you remind them that they don't have to leave this room that way. The change can happen to them now. Thank you, Lord for the free gift of grace that you've offered to sinners. May we go out and proclaim it to a lost world. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen.