

Ephesians – Part 4

Ephesians 2

The prayer of intercession brought the Apostle Paul to discuss the power of God to raise Christ from the dead. Chapter 1 emphasizes our possessions in Christ and chapter 2 our position in Christ. The believer's position in Christ determines what they have and what they can do. Regardless of where the King of England may be physically, his position gives him certain access, power, and authority. Regardless of where we might be physically, we have certain access, power and authority in the spiritual realm because of our position in Christ. God has made us alive with Christ.

Where are we in Christ?

Ephesians 2 says God has made us alive and raised us with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms. We are alive, raised and seated with Christ, (2:1–10). Before we can adequately understand what God has done, it is important for us to see our desperate need and universal sinfulness.

What we were, (vv. 1–3).

Ephesians 2:1–3 NIV84 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

What were we like before Christ?

Ephesians 2:1-3 gives a picture of the sinner before Christ!

We were spiritually dead, bond slaves of Satan and subjects of God's wrath. Those without Christ are spiritually dead. Their inner man is dead toward God.

What is the condition of the person who is spiritually dead?

- Blind, (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)
- Slave to sin, (Romans 6:17)
- Love darkness, (John 3:19-20)
- Sick, (Mark 2:17)
- Lost, (Luke 15)
- Alien, stranger, foreigner, (Ephesians 2:12, 19)
- Child of wrath, (Ephesians 2:2)
- Under power of darkness, (Colossians 1:13)
- Without hope and without God, (Ephesians 2:12)

Spiritual death can only be conquered by the power of God that brings eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:1 NKJV And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins

All sinners are dead because of their trespasses and sins. Death never means extinction, annihilation, nonexistence, or inactivity. Death simply means that a person is separated, either separated from his body or from God or from both. Death is the separation of a person from the purpose or use for which he was intended. Man was created to know, fellowship, worship, and serve God.

The Bible speaks of three deaths.

Physical death

Physical death is the separation of a man's spirit from his body. This is what is commonly called "death." It is when a person ceases to exist on this earth and their body is buried.

1 Corinthians 15:21–22 NIV84 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Hebrews 9:27 NIV84 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment

Spiritual Death

Ephesians 2:1 NIV84 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

1 John 5:12 NIV84 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Spiritual death is the separation of a sinner from God while he is still living and walking upon earth. This is the state of everyone on earth without Jesus Christ. While in our sins, we are dead to God. A person may have physical life without God and Christ. That person is spiritually separated from God; they are dead to God.

Romans 8:9 NIV84 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

Eternal Death

Eternal death is the eternal separation from God's presence forever. This second death is an eternal state of being dead to God.

Romans 6:23 NIV84 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Thessalonians 1:9 NIV84 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power

Eternal death is everlasting destruction and separation from God's presence and majestic power. This is the place of outer darkness.

What God did (vv. 4–9).

Ephesians 2:49 NIV84 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

We were dead in trespasses and sin, *but God, Who is rich in mercy*, has intervened in our destiny. He has interrupted the doom of death and judgment.

BUT God has had mercy upon us!

“But God!”

These words are among the greatest in the Bible. God could have allowed us to continue in sin and be condemned eternally, but God chose to save us.

1. God has quickened us with Christ (v.45).
2. God has raised us up with Christ (v.6).
3. God has made us sit in heavenly places in Christ (v.6).
4. God has shown us the incomparable riches of His grace and kindness in Christ (v.7).

God's mercy reveals the riches of His grace to save.

He has made us alive (quickened us) in Christ. He raised us from the grave of sin, and took us out of the graveyard! More than that, He made us members of Christ! We have been quickened together with Christ, raised together, and made to sit together in the heavenly realms. God did this because He is rich in mercy and great in love. God is going to be eternally glorified through His grace and kindness toward us.

God is full of mercy and grace.

Mercy means that God does not give me what I do deserve. Grace means that He gives me what I don't deserve.

Salvation is the work of God (vv.8-9)

Ephesians 2:8–9 NIV84 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

Salvation, the free gift of God, is by grace alone. No one can do anything whatsoever to save themselves. We cannot earn, win, or merit salvation. All that can be done is accept the fact that God promises to save by grace and accept His free gift of salvation by faith.

Romans 11:6 NIV84 And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

Salvation is received by faith.

We are saved by God's grace, favor and kindness. Grace is God giving what people do not deserve. God has given His Son, Jesus Christ, to save men. He did not have to give His Son. God could have executed judgment on our sin. We all deserved it, but God is gracious and kind.

Romans 5:6 NIV84 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Romans 5:8 NIV84 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:10 NIV84 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

First, Christ paid for our redemption so that we may be reconciled to God. Then He conquered death and arose from the grave so that we may be saved by His life.

Ephesians 2:4–5 NIV84 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

We are saved through faith.

Jesus Christ bore our sin, and punishment upon the cross and died for us. When we believe that He died for us, God takes our faith and counts the death of Jesus Christ as the redemption price for our sins, and sets us free.

John 3:16 NIV84 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 10:9–10 NIV84 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Salvation is a gift of God.

By sin, we broke fellowship and relationship with God. We can ask for forgiveness, but God must have mercy and forgive our sins. If God gives mercy, it is by His grace.

Titus 3:4–5 NIV84 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Ephesians 2:8–9 NIV84 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—

and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

What we are now (v. 10)?

We are His workmanship, His new creation.

2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV84 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.

God works in you.

Philippians 2:12–13 NIV84 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Ephesians 2:1 NIV84 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

Ephesians 2:5 NIV84 God who is rich in mercy ...made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

God has made us a new creation, created in Christ Jesus.

In doing so, God places a new nature into the heart of the believer.

2 Peter 1:4 NIV84 (By God's own glory and goodness) He has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV84 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

We are His workmanship, created to do good works.

The believer shows that they are God's workmanship by the life they live and nature. Our works are evidence of our salvation. Those who walk in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:12) show that they are not God's workmanship no matter what profession they make.

Doing good works is the very nature of the believer.

Matthew 5:16 NIV84 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Colossians 1:10 ...live a life worthy of the Lord ...please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

James 2:17–18 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

When we are truly saved, everything becomes new in Christ.