

The Pearl of the Epistles – Ephesians

God’s Great Love For the Believer

Ephesians 2:4-9

***Ephesians 2:4-9** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

Introduction

The Apostle takes us from the “graveyard” to heaven. We now know what we were truly like in the eyes of God before we met the Savior in first three verses of this chapter. The grace of God is nothing short of amazing! After reviewing what man was like before “the new man”, it is such a joy to jump into the next portion of scripture.

God Loved Us (v. 4)

***Ephesians 2:4** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*

In the King James Version of the Holy Bible, “but” is used 3994 times in 3751 verses. Grammatically, “but” is a conjunction that can be contrasting or subordinating. It can also be used as a preposition, adverb or noun.

I like the definition of “but” by John Phillips:

“Thank God for that ‘but’! The buts of the Bible are always arresting; they are the hinges on which great issues turn.”¹

In this case the old life is contrasted to the new life and what is in store for those that are believers; the rich mercy of God himself. I know that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalms

¹ Exploring Ephesians and Philippians, An Expository Commentary; John Phillips, Kregel Publications, p63.

50:10), I know He is rich. But Paul lets us in on a secret; God is rich in Mercy, the one item I am in dire need. And He has a lot of it.

Not only is God rich in mercy, but the icing on this cake is that God loves us. But not just with any love, but with “great” love. In John Phillips commentary on Ephesians, he relates this story:

The grown daughter of a man I know is an alcoholic. I was visiting his home one day when she was delivered to his door in the grip of her terrible vice. She had drunk almost an entire bottle of whiskey. Her temper was flaming and abusive. Her face was flushed, her manner belligerent, her actions violent. I thought of the young girl I had met years before—before drink laid its devilish hand on her life. I looked at the picture of the young unspoiled girl that still hung on the wall of this man’s home. I pitied the poor soul with all my heart for the terrible shipwreck she had made of her life, for the ruin of her womanhood, and for her slavery to such a cruel and relentless tyrant.

Her father took her gently by the arm, ignoring her abuse. He steered her unsteady footsteps to his car. He carefully settled her in, his face drawn and his eyes filled with pain. She thrashed around but he patiently strapped her into the seat, drove her home, and put her to bed. I pitied her; he loved her. Multiply her wretchedness by all the misery sin has wrought in this world and multiply her father’s love by infinity. Such is God’s great love. He did not just pity me. He loved me.²

God Made Us To Live (v. 5)

Ephesians 2:5 *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

This is the second time in this chapter that Paul said that when we were dead in our sins, that God will make us alive (V. 1, 5)

² Exploring Ephesians and Philippians, An Expository Commentary; John Phillips, Kregel Publications, p64.

The majority of times in the New Testament the verb “to make alive” literally means “to raise from the dead.” Man is dead, but for those that choose to believe and worship Jesus, there is a resurrection.

For believers then, there are two resurrections: The first is our resurrection where we were dead in our trespasses and sins taking place upon our salvation. The second resurrection is when our Savior comes to gather his Bride unto himself.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica because their faith was wavering concerning the future for the believer. They were going through persecution and many wondered what happens next. Paul made it very clear.

***1 Thessalonians 4:16-18** For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: **17** Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. **18** Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

There are two types of people – those that are resurrected and those that are still dead. If you do not have a personal relationship with Jesus you are dead in your sins. No one can crawl from their casket. You must be resurrected! Oh the power of God!

God Elevated Us (v. 6)

***Ephesians 2:6** And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

For twenty years I flew search and rescue in the U. S. Coast Guard. At duty stations around the world, Coasties are ready to take to the air for search and rescue. They launch into their aircraft with one thought in mind; to save those that cannot save themselves. Training and preparation are put to task when the alarm sounds. They launch no matter the weather. No matter the circumstances they fly. What makes a man or a woman risk their own lives for others? They do not consider themselves hero's, they are just doing their job.

When a man or woman is “made alive” through faith in Jesus, they are “raised up together and sit in heavenly places”. This is part of the resurrection from our trespasses and sins. In one act a person goes from the depravity of the world to sit in heavenly places in “Christ Jesus”.

God Preserves Us (v. 7-8)

***Ephesians 2:7-9** That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **9** Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

The verse begins with an amazing thought. Read it with me; “that in the ages to come”. There will never be an end to what God has for us. He will show us His exceeding riches of his Mercy.

Ephesians 2:8-9 are the clearest statement from Paul concerning the action that takes place at Salvation. Salvation comes from the Lord!

***Psalms 18:2** The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

For by Grace [*God’s unmerited Mercy*] are you saved [*from the world, Satan, death and hell*] through faith [*that which cannot be seen, the substance and evidence of things not seen*], that not of yourselves [*anything you could do would never be enough*]: it is the gift [*nothing you worked for or deserve*] of God [*Creator, Savior, Merciful Father, Almighty God*]. Not of works [*anything that we could do that would gain us God’s Mercy*] lest any man should boast [*rising above God in knowledge and reason*].

Conclusion

God Loved Us

God Made Us To Live

God Elevated Us

God Preserves Us

There are three actions of the Christian life from God's point of view.

- Resurrection
- Ascension
- Riches

Robert C. Crowder