

The Power of God

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[0 : 00] We're continuing our four-part series on this great chapter of Ephesians chapter 2 that's all about the new humanity in Christ.

The new humanity in Christ. We began last week by looking at verses 1 to 3. Under a consideration today are verses 4 to 10, but we're going to read through verses 1 to 10 again.

Let us hear then the word of God. Wrath like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved, and raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

[1 : 31] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God. Not 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 that we should walk in them.

Amen. May God add his blessing to this, the reading of his word. Just a short prayer. Father, we thank you for your word, the Bible. We thank you for the truth that it conveys just about our condition and about also your amazing love and grace.

We pray that in our time together, Father, you would speak to us. You would speak to us about the power that you've displayed in your son, the Lord Jesus. And in focusing on that power, Lord, we pray that you would make us alive in Christ.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. C.S. Lewis once said, The church is a building site. It is not a show home.

It is a building site. It is not a show home. And I don't want to risk falling out with Bob Fowler, a self-confessed C.S. Lewis fan.

[2 : 49] But I'm going to disagree with C.S. Lewis. Though not entirely. The church is a building site. Look to verses 20 and 22 of chapter 2.

The church built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone. In whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. So the scriptures testify.

The church is a building site. And we just need to look around the room today, don't we? We are not yet all that we are going to be. But although we are not yet all we are going to be.

Although we are a building site. We are yet at the same time. A show home. Remember the church is not the building. Nor is it the denomination.

[3 : 47] No. The church is the people. The people. The assembly whom God has called out of darkness into his wonderful light. And the church is a show home.

For it is through the church that the unfolding plan and purposes of God are displayed. Chapter 1 verse 10. The plan to unite all things.

All things in heaven and on earth in Christ. This plan is displayed to the church. To ourselves. It is displayed to a watching world. And it is displayed also to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Chapter 3 verse 10. Showing these rulers and authorities that the time for their destruction draws ever near. And look also to verses 6 and 7 of chapter 2.

God raises us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us.

[4 : 54] In Christ Jesus. In the coming ages God will show us off as examples of how immeasurably rich his grace and kindness towards us.

And Christ Jesus has been absolutely amazing. That God will one day show you off. That God will one day show me off.

It is absolute music to my ears. Because all my life all I have ever heard from my mother is that I am a showing up. But God will one day show off the church.

As a testimony. An example of how immeasurably rich his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus has been. And what makes this even more incredible is. As it's to those who were once.

Verse 1 to 3. Of chapter 2. That these words are spoken. As we seen last week. God isn't working with very promising material.

[5 : 55] Remember last week we looked at the plight of man. Every man, woman and child ever born. We looked at what life was like. Sins work against us.

And it wasn't very pleasant reading. The apostle in these verses shows all of us up. For who and what we really are. We are dead.

Disobedient. And doomed. The apostle pulls no punches. For he knows. That if we don't grasp. If we don't grasp the real plight of man.

We will never fully appreciate. The real power of God. This is the Bible's assessment. On all of humanity. We are dead. Disobedient.

And doomed. We are not sick. We are not not well. We are not terminally ill. We are dead. Dead in trespasses and sins.

[6 : 53] Verse 1. And like the rest of mankind. We are under God's deserved. And just judgment and wrath. Verse 3. We do not need resuscitation.

We need resurrection. Nothing and no one in this world can help us. As they are all under the same judgment. They possess the same condition. This is the plight of man.

This is sins work against us. We are dead. There are three movements in these first ten verses of chapter 2. What life was like. What happened.

And what life was like now. We have had the first of these in verse 1 to 3. What life was like. Sins work against us. But now we come to our verses for today.

Verse 4 to 10 of chapter 2. And so we have firstly in verses 4 to 9. What happened. God's work for us. And secondly verse 10.

[7 : 51] What life is like now. God's work through us. God's work through us. If you were looking for a title today. Then it would be the power of God.

Last week we had the plight of man. Now this week the power of God. If the apostle Paul had left in this chapter at verse 3.

We'd probably be depressed for the rest of the day. Indeed the rest of our lives. But thank God that the apostle doesn't leave it here. And thank God that he doesn't leave it here either.

In verse 4 we have the word. But. Which is like sunshine. Bursting through on a cloudy day. Especially after all the death.

And the darkness. And the disobedience. And the doomed. Of verses 1 to 3. It's at this point. After outlining what life was like. Paul goes on to tell us what happened.

[8 : 47] God's work for us. In verses 49. And if you scan your eyes over these verses. You will see that the main subject. The main subject is no longer us.

And our condition. But God. And his amazing grace. And power. In these verses. Paul wants the Ephesians to see.

That they've escaped their awful condition. Only through what God has done for them. And look what it is that God has done. But God. Being rich in mercy.

Because of the great love. With which he loved us. Even when we were dead in trespasses. He made us alive together with Christ. By grace. You have been saved.

In these verses. The grave clothes of verses 1 to 3. Are replaced with the grace clothes of Christ. And look what we're being told here.

[9 : 45] God's motivation for saving us. Lies in nothing to do with us. Nothing in our character. Nothing of our choosing. But in God's character alone.

Because of his great love for us. Because he is rich in mercy. These are astonishing words. Which tell us that the God who has no need of anyone.

Or anything. Has shivered those deserving of his judgment and wrath. With love and mercy instead. Just note. He made us.

He made us. Those who were dead in sin. He made us alive with Christ. Not when we were trying to sort ourselves out. Or trying to turn over a new leaf.

Or get religion. No. He. Even when we were dead in our trespasses. Made us alive together with Christ. Romans 5 puts it like this.

[10:45] God demonstrates his love towards us in this. While we were still sinners. Christ died for us. The God we are dealing with this afternoon.

Is a good. Loving. Merciful. And compassionate God. Which begs the question. Why don't we come closer to him? Why do we doubt him?

Why won't we commit to him more? To emphasize the point he's just made. About God making us alive. While we've been dead. And dead in transgressions.

Paul adds in verse 5. By grace you have been saved. By God's undeserved favor and kindness. You have been saved. And in case we don't get it first time.

He says it again in verse 8. By grace you have been saved. Through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God. Not a result of works. So that no one may boast.

[11:44] What a relief. That salvation is from God. Through grace. And that we have not been left to try and save ourselves through good works. If God had made it this way.

Then no one could ever be saved. Focus on those words in verse 5 and 8. You have been saved. Christian. You have been saved. There is no condemnation for you.

Nothing shall separate you. Nothing shall separate you from the love of God that is yours in Christ Jesus. All this is ours. Not by working hard or trying to be good or moral.

By grace you have been saved. Through faith. And even the faith is not your own doing. It is the gift of God. Doesn't this speak about how kind God is?

He gave us what we don't deserve. And kept from us what we do deserve. Verse 3 says, We deserve his wrath and his judgment. But verse 4 says, Because of God's great love and mercy, In Christ, We get grace.

[12:51] We get made alive. On no other basis will we stand before God with confidence. Other than on what he has done for us in Christ.

And the grace that comes through Christ. We must be in Christ. And friends, Being in Christ mustn't be confused with having a belief or having an opinion about Jesus.

Being in Christ means being connected to him. Being united with him. And his death. And his burial. And his resurrection. All that Christ is.

All that Christ has. All that Christ has done. And all that Christ has accomplished. Is of absolutely no use to us. As long as we remain outside of Christ.

Paul is saying that this is what we need. In relation to Jesus. We need to be in Christ. Covered by him. Surrounded by him.

[13:54] Raised with him. The tragedy is in Scotland. Not many churches preach this message. And in churches that do preach this message.

Sometimes people only leave with an admiration or an opinion about Jesus. Their head is touched. But not their heart. Let's pray this is not the case with us.

What happened? God's work for us. And now secondly and finally. What life is like now. God's work through us. Verse 10. Paul says in verse 10.

That those trusting in Jesus. Those who have received God's mercy and love through the cross of Christ. Are God's workmanship. Note. God's workmanship reflects God himself.

For we are his workmanship. Created in Christ Jesus for good works. Which God prepared beforehand. That we should walk in them. One of the things Paul wants us to see.

[14:56] Is that there will be evidence of salvation in our lives. God didn't save anyone. So they could sit about doing nothing. He didn't save anyone. So we could give him back one day or one hour a week.

To come to church. With the rest of the week for ourselves. What would that have to say. To a world looking on. About how much we value. The goodness and the grace of God.

Evidence of true salvation. As we will be working models of God's saving grace and power. No longer walking in sin. Verse 1 and 2. But now walking in service.

Verse 10. Paul calls believers. God's workmanship. Who have been created in Christ Jesus. To do good works. Now this doesn't mean being perfect.

But it does mean being active. We have been created in Christ Jesus. Not by good works. But for good works. We are saved by faith.

[15:59] Faith alone. Says John Calvin. But that faith never comes alone. It is always followed by works. We are not saved by works.

Faith plus good works. But by a faith that works. As James writes. Faith without works is dead. Saving faith always results in a changed life.

Faith. It is not enough to say we have faith. But we must demonstrate this faith by good works. Well what are these good works that we should walk in them? Well remember I said last week that the letter splits into three sections.

The first section that we are in. The wealth of the church. Then the second section. The walk of the church. And then finally. The warfare of the church.

How we are to walk. Is contained in verses. Chapter 4 verse 1. To chapter 6 verse 9. In that section. The walk of the church.

[17:00] Chapter 4 verse 1. We are to walk. In a manner worthy of our calling. To which we have been called. Writes the apostle. With all humility and gentleness.

With patience. Bearing with one another in love. Chapter 4 verse 17. We must no longer walk. As the Gentiles do. Chapter 5 verse 8.

For at one time you were darkness. But now you are light in the Lord. Walk. As children of light. And it is in our everyday lives.

And relationships. And conduct. That these good works are seen. That these good works are played out. Before a watching world. In our speech. Putting away all falsehood.

Foolish talk. And filthiness. In our sexuality. Having no sexual immorality amongst us. In our public lives.

[18:00] In our private lives. In our closest. In our closest. Nearest. And deepest relationships. Within our marriages. Within our homes. Within our families. The word good.

The word good in the scriptures. Means fulfilling the purpose. For which God made it. So when you have people like the Ephesians. And us. Who once lived like verses 1 to 3.

And now have been. Now being made alive in Christ Jesus. Living lives now as God intended. And the church becomes a great show home. A great show home for the power.

And the grace of God. People can't fail to take notice. And see the marked difference. In our lives. In our lives. I remember hearing the story.

I've told this story before. But it's a great story. The story of a fella from Erdry. And his name was Duncan Donaldson. And he was famously known as Drunken Duncan. And you've guessed why.

[18:58] Because he liked a good drink. And he was a beastier man. And Duncan used to get drunk. And sometimes when he would get drunk. He would end up fighting with the police. And then sometimes it would take 6, 8, 10 policemen to restrain him.

And he would often spend a night in the cells. But on the nights that he didn't spend in the cells. Duncan used to go home. And he had a key for his front door. But he never used to bother with a key.

He used to just kick it in. And just go into the house. And he hit this dog. Every time he went into it. He kicked the door in. And then he would just kick the dog. But this night Duncan wandered into a Christian meeting.

In Erdry. And he got converted. And he went home that night. A changed man. And he opened the door. Not as was his custom by kicking it in. He opened the door with using the key.

And the dog bit him. There was a marked difference. In Duncan Donaldson's life. That much so that even his dog noticed.

[20:01] People can't fail to notice the marked change. The marked difference in our lives. When us who have been upside down get turned the right side. The right way up. And in our everyday relationships.

In our everyday speech. And in our everyday conduct. We become a great show home. For the power and the grace. Of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Although this work begins here in the present time. Look at verse 6 and 7. We are told heaven is the showroom. The real showroom. Where God's workmanship will be displayed.

In all its glory for all eternity. God raised us up with him. And seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So that in the coming ages.

He might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us. In Christ Jesus. All heaven is waiting. To see God's masterpiece.

[21 : 00] And what or who is his masterpiece? God's new humanity. The church. You and me. People who were at one time.

Dead and sin. Following the world and the devil. Who lived not for God but self. And who had no interest in God. Except when rebelling against him.

But. But in an astonishing and incomparable act of love. Mercy and grace. In eternity past. Before the world was created.

God the Father set us aside for himself. And planned to win us for himself. By sending his own eternal and beloved son into the world on our behalf.

To be a sacrificial offering for our sin. God's new humanity friends. Those that were dead in sin. Now made alive in Christ.

[21 : 58] Are you part of this new humanity? Are you part of the church? Are you wearing the grave clothes of sin? Or have you been made alive?

By the grace clothes of Christ. Let us pray. Let us pray. Father we.

We stand amazed in your presence. As those who were once dead. Disobedient and doomed for all eternity. Having now been made alive by.

Your wonderful grace and kindness to us in Christ Jesus. How marvelous. And how wonderful is your love towards us in Christ. Please help us Father.

To walk in a manner worthy of our calling. So that our lives may shine before others. And in seeing our good works. We may give glory to you our Father in heaven.

[22 : 56] We ask in Jesus name. And for his glory alone. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.