

# Made Alive to Live

Ephesians 2:4-7

Turn with me if you will to the book of **Ephesians 2:4-7**. I cannot tell you how good it is to know that I am no longer just an ordinary person. When God looks at me he sees his son, Jesus. (Read this together) **When Jesus died God saw my death to my sinful human nature, when Jesus rose again God saw me as a new creation, always in process, always becoming new, always being stretched, and so everyday I am not the same person I was the day before.** Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 6:17**:

*But the person who is joined with the Lord becomes one spirit with him.*

Even Jesus said it himself in **John 14:20**:

*When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.*

Jesus has welded himself to us so that an unbreakable union has been established. Nothing can break this relationship. Look at our text this morning in **chapter 2:4-7**:

*But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so very much, that even while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's special favor that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ, and we are seated with him in the heavenly realms – all because we are one with Christ Jesus. And so God can always point to us as examples of the incredible wealth of his favor and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us through Christ Jesus.*

This morning I want to look particularly at two concepts here in our text and that is (1) We are raised from the dead along with Christ (2) We are seated with him in the heavenly realms.

## 1. We are raised from the dead.

We have already looked at the idea that our fallen human bodies needed help and God stepped in and turned the deterioration of mankind around by resurrecting our dead souls. When we were raised from the dead we were made alive in Christ. Christ didn't remain in the grave just as God doesn't expect us to remain in the grave. But God puts us back into action to operate once again, on a different level and with a different power. **God expects us to live in the power of the Holy Spirit – the same spirit who raised Christ from the dead.**

So what does that mean to me as a Christian today? **You weren't made a new creation to function the way you did when you were spiritually dead.** I have seen all too many times. A person responds and receives Jesus Christ into their heart, they taste and see

that the Lord is good, but they go right back to living their life the same way they always have. They still try to do the right thing, say the right thing on their own effort instead of allowing the resurrecting power of the Holy Spirit to lead them and direct them and speak to them and bring humility and love. Jesus didn't make us alive with him so that we can continue to live our lives the same. **We were brought back to life so that his power could be demonstrated in light of our weaknesses.**

It is a power that transforms our values, it's a power that changes my focus, it's a power that changes my heart for people, it's a power that changes my perspective of the world, it's a power that changes my perspective of church, it's a power that makes me interested in the things of God that I once couldn't stand. And if I ignore what is happening inside of me I will find myself wandering amongst the graveyard hoping to find rest, yet never in peace. Hudson Taylor put it this way:

“Many Christians estimate difficulties in the light of their own resources, and thus attempt little and often fail in the little they attempt. All God's giants however have been weak men who did great things for God because they relied on His power and presence with them.”

Only God can take the lost and give them purpose, only God can take the hurting and give them strength, only God can take the addicted and make them committed followers, only God can take the powerless and make them strong. Only God can take what we once were and turn us into those who now are everything we thought impossible. That is what it means to be raised from the dead along with Jesus Christ. The second statement I want to look at in our text is:

## 2. We Are Seated With Him

As you look through scripture you find on numerous occasions that Jesus was raised and sat at the right hand of God. **Hebrews 1:13:**

*And God never said to an angel, as he did to his Son, “Sit in honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies, making them a footstool under your feet.”*

*But our High Priest offered himself to God as once sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down at the place of highest honor at God's right hand. There he waits until his enemies are humbled as a footstool under his feet. **Hebrews 10:12-13***

We see in Hebrews 10 that under the old covenant (the old agreement / Old Testament) the priest would stand before the altar day after day offering sacrifices that couldn't take away sin. Contrast that to what Jesus now does. Scripture tells us that he sits. **Christ sits to symbolize that his work is done. Sitting is the end of work and strain.** It therefore means that there is dependence upon the work of another.

If we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies what does that mean we are to do? When we speak of the heavenlies we are talking about heaven, we are talking about the invisible realm – the inner life, the place where we feel tension and pressure and anxiety and hostility. We are to rest there. **We are to sit down and rest, relax and let God bear the pressure and the problems.** Just this last week I had a situation where God totally moved and he relieved the pressure and he did the work and all I had to do was sit back and watch.

As Christians though it is difficult for us to let go. You've heard the saying to "Let go and let God." **As much maneuvering and manipulating we may try to do to make things go the way we think they should, in the end it will turn out the way God wants it to.** God has ways of working behind the scenes and in ways that go beyond what we are able to do. He has told us that he is able to abundantly above all that we can ask or think. I like Paul's words in **Romans 11:33**:

*Oh, what a wonderful God we have! How great are his riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and methods!*

Do you see what this does to our everyday life? It turns it into an adventure. You never know what any situation is going to result in. A creative God, beginning to work in the most ordinary circumstances, can suddenly make them break wide open, and you have something on your hands which amazes you, and which you never dreamed could happen, and in which you can do nothing but say what a great God he is to us.

When we sit with him, we are to rest, not be anxious and struggling and straining, and striving and frantic, but rest and let God do what he does best – orchestrate history and do things that only he can do.

In Hebrews, I want you to notice that Jesus sits down at the right hand of the father until his enemies are made his foot stool. This speaks of a time that we have looked at before in **Ephesians 1:10**:

*And this is his plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ.*

There will be a day when Christ will reign with peace and harmony, and everything will be brought under the authority of Jesus. This day will not happen until the end. Until then he is sitting (resting) but a day will come when God will give him a footstool.

How many of us here have a recliner or a special chair? It is one thing to sit in your chair but it is another to recline or put your feet up on your footstool. It feels so good and the next thing you know you fall asleep.

God wants us to sit and rest in him. It doesn't mean that we neglect our time in the Word or disregard our responsibilities, but God wants us to rely upon his ability. Let him take the steering wheel.

I think one of the greatest struggles however in the Christian walk is the slowness of God. Have you ever struggled with that? At times he seems so slow, and I get so impatient. In fact, there are times I can see things that need to happen and I let him know, and yet for some reason God ignores me. He just does things on his own timing, in his own way and you know what? It turned out better than what I had planned. **God wants us to rest and not become impatient with his slowness.** Eventually, things are going to work out. We read Jesus' own words in **Mark 4:26-28**:

*Jesus also said, "Here is another illustration of what the Kingdom of God is like: A farmer planted seeds in a field, and then he went on with his other activities. As the days went by, the seeds sprouted and grew without the farmer's help, because the earth produces crops on its own."*

Things have to go through a process of time before they will produce fruit. We don't just drop a seed in the ground and immediately see a plant sprout forth. The process of time is going to require patience. It is going to require that we sit down and rest and let things pan out naturally. Do I trust God? If I really do then I will wait. **Psalms 37:7** tells us:

*Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for him to act.*

Let me finish by making three observations.

- A. **Any effort to try to be religious or "Christian" which doesn't come out of being made alive in Christ, raised by the power of Christ, and resting in God's sovereignty is nothing more than godliness without God, Christianity without Christ, spirituality without the Spirit.** It has nothing to do with what we accomplish but what God is doing in us everyday and our obedience to it.
- B. **Our spiritual vitality and life, the ability to live differently, and the call to rest with Christ, these are all things that are available to us today.** These are not things that will happen later on as you further in your knowledge of God, or when you are filled with the Spirit and speak in tongues. These things are already true. There is no further you can go. However, there are still those who fall into the trap of performance. And there are those who rely more on the pleasures of the flesh and think there is no hope for them. The work of Jesus, the wedding of Jesus to ourselves is a permanent act and will always be there for us when we are willing to return.
- C. **Despite how our flesh may want us to live, to rely upon our death with Christ, our resurrection with Christ and find rest will require steps of faith.** To choose other than what we want for the sake of what God wants is faith. Faith is a choice.

We need to remind ourselves that "I am alive in Christ". I am not the same person. I am no longer what I once was. I may not be what I ought to be, but thank God I am not what I was! I am alive in Christ and I am raised with him. I have a new power at my disposal

– the power of his life in me. Therefore I can rest. I can step out and say and do the right thing, and expect him to accomplish the results. I can relax. I don't have to strain. I can leave the problem of solving the difficult situations in his hands, and I will wait for the ultimate and sure result.

And when I do this, I have learned to let God be God in me. This is the way God works. This is the way the life of God is released into the human situation. I have been made alive to live. In **Galatians 2:20** Paul writes:

*I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*