

THE MERCY OF GOD'S GRACE EPHESIANS 2:4-6

I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. Did you hear the good news out of Washington this week? President Obama said that we have finally put the brakes on the recession. The bad news is that the brakes that were used have just been recalled by Toyota.
- b. The first three verses of this chapter give us the bad news of the terrible spiritual condition of every unsaved person. Every lost person is spiritually dead, a slave to sin and an object of divine wrath.
- c. Starting in verse 4 we have the good news that there is hope for lost humanity and that hope is found in the first two words of Ephesians 2:4, "But God..." Only the saving power of Jesus Christ can save the lost sinner.
- d. The first six verses of Ephesians 2 contrast the difference God makes when a person repents of their sins and receives Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.
- e. Before we were saved we were the objects of God's wrath and judgment, now that we are saved we are the recipients of His mercy and grace.
- f. Before we were saved we were held in the grip of spiritual death and bondage, now that we are saved we have been made alive in Christ and we have been set free from the bondage of sin.
- g. Before we were saved we walked among the disobedient, now that we are saved we enjoy fellowship with God.
- h. These verses say two things that God does when a person gives their life to Jesus Christ. We receive divine mercy and we are resurrected to new life.

II. WE RECEIVE DIVINE MERCY-

- a. *Ephesians 2:4 (NKJV) "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us."*
- b. **First**, this verse teaches that God alone is the author of our salvation. "*But God..*"
- c. It was God who pursued us in our lostness and drew us to Himself; it was God who opened our minds and hearts to the reality that were desperately lost; it was God who gave us an understanding of the truth of the gospel; it was God who granted us repentance and the faith to believe; it was God who saved us when we

called upon Him; and it was God who changed our life by His mighty saving power.

- d. From start to finish salvation is totally and completely a work of God. None of us have done anything whatsoever to earn, deserve or contribute to our salvation.
- e. *Psalm 3:8 and Jonah 2:9 says "...Salvation is of the Lord." Revelation 7:10 "...Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*
- f. **Second**, this verse teaches that our salvation is based solely on God's rich mercy and on His great love.
- g. The "mercy" of God speaks of His compassion and pity for lost and helpless sinners.
- h. Because of our sin and rebellion, God could have turned His back on us but He didn't. God had mercy on lost sinners and gave His Son for us.
- i. The "love" (*agape*) of God means that in spite of our sin and rebellion, God still loved us. Even in our sin and rebellion God saw something precious in us.
- j. Even when we were unlovely and utterly undeserving of His love, God still loved us and gave His only begotten Son to die on the cross to save us from our sins.
- k. *Romans 5:8 (NKJV) "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:10 (NIV) "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!"*

III. WE ARE RESURRECTED TO NEW LIFE-

- a. *Ephesians 2:5-6 (NKJV) "even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."*
- b. These verses say three things that God does for the believer in Christ. He makes us spiritually alive. He raises us up to a new life. He exalts us to be with Christ.
- c. **#1, He makes us alive.** When a person believes in Christ something remarkable and dramatic happens. By His power, God literally makes the believer alive in Christ.
- d. One who was spiritually dead, alienated and separated from God because of their trespasses and sins, is forgiven, reconciled to God, made spiritually alive and forever joined to Him.

- e. As Lazarus was literally made alive from physical death the believer in Christ is literally made alive from spiritual death.
- f. For a person to lose their salvation God's life giving work in their life would have to be reversed and undone.
- g. **#2, He raises us to a new kind of life.** Not only are we made alive in Christ, we are raised up to live a new kind of life.
- h. A life no longer dominated and controlled by sin but one lived in union and fellowship with Christ for His honor, glory and purposes.
- i. When we come to Christ we receive a new nature, a new will, a new mind, a new heart, a new power, a new knowledge, a new wisdom, a new perception, a new understanding, a new life, a new inheritance, a new relationship with God, a new righteousness, a new love, a new desire, and a new citizenship.
- j. The more faithfully we walk in the Spirit the more evident our life will be. The more our life will be characterized by holiness, purity and a passion for the things of God like the Word of God, prayer, worship, service, witnessing, etc.
- k. *Romans 6:4 (NKJV) "...just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we (who have been raised from spiritual death) also should walk in newness of life." Romans 8:1 (NKJV) "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."*
- l. The indwelling Holy Spirit empowers us to live the new kind of life.
- m. **#3, He exalts us to be with Christ.** The end result of our salvation is that we will be exalted to live forever in heaven in fellowship with Christ and all believers.
- n. This truth is so certain that in verse 6, Paul speaks as if it has already happened. *Ephesians 2:6 (NKJV) "and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."*

IV. CONCLUSION-

- a. The bad news is that every lost person is spiritually dead, a slave to sin and an object of divine wrath.
- b. The good news is God has provided a way that every lost person can be saved through the Lord Jesus Christ. Come to Him today.