

Union

Ephesians 2:1-7

1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Paul reminds us why such great power was necessary for our salvation by laying out the devastating nature of the sin that we all carry. He hits it from several angles: we are dead, enslaved, condemned.

- 1) **What does the world tell us about our nature? Why do you think it is so different from what we see here?**
- 2) **What stands out most to you from Paul's description of who we are in our sin? What are ways this understanding of sin should shape us?**

God intervenes for us in this desperate state, and he does so "in Christ". In him, he has made us alive, raised us up, and seated us with him. The emphasis is on the fact that we are spiritually united to Christ, and that all the blessings and benefits of our salvation flow from this reality. All that is his is ours, and all that is ours he now takes on.

- 3) **Have you thought much about "union with Christ" before? Why is it important versus just seeing our salvation as a collection of gifts God gives us (i.e., justification, sanctification, etc.)?**
- 4) **What does it mean to be united to Christ? How does marriage help us understand this? How has this shifted the way you think about your salvation?**

Considering who we are in our sin, it is a pretty stunning thing that God would join us to his son. We see here that it flows out of who God is – rich in mercy, love, and grace.

- 5) **What do we bring to the table when it comes our union with Christ? What do we contribute?**
- 6) **What is the point of our salvation – why does God do it?**
- 7) **How should this understanding of union with Christ at the center of the gospel shape us as a church?**

Some things you can be praying about:

- Praise God for graciously uniting us to his son!
- What can we praise God for?
- What sin do you need to confess?
- What cares or burdens we can help carry?