

From Death to Purpose

Resurrection Life / Ephesians 2:1-10 / April 5, 2026

Introduction:

What compels people across the world to center their lives around one weekend? Why do we dare call the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth good? And why, before the sun rises, do we gather to celebrate His empty tomb? Because of it all means. The crucifixion of Jesus had purpose. And the saying, “He is risen” is much more than tradition. It proclaims life and power. The apostle Paul speaks to this in Ephesians 1-2. In Ephesians 1:5, he says God “predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ.” Verse 7, that, “In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.” That, verse 11, “In [Christ] we have obtained an inheritance.” And that, verse 13, “In [Christ we] ...were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.” Our adoption and redemption, the forgiveness of sin, our hope of inheritance, and the gift of God’s Spirit all come because of these three days. For our time this morning, I want to emphasize the significance of Jesus’ resurrection to all of this by seeing its place within Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 1:17–23 which connects with his teaching in Ephesians 2:1–10. Look at what Paul prays for, starting in verse 17, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.” Paul wants us to know three things: the depths of our hope, the riches of inheritance, and the greatness of God’s power toward us who believe. Now, note what these things are linked to in verses 19–23, “according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” Everything is connected to Christ’s resurrection, ascension to the Father’s right hand, and current kingdom reign over all things. We don’t just celebrate the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead, but that He is the exalted King ruling now with all power and authority in the heavenly places. And Paul tells us the power that raised Jesus is working toward us. Harold Hoehner helps to show the significance of this, “This power” he points out, “is described by three nouns: *ischus* depicts inherent strength, *kratos* portrays the force of power, and *energeia* delineates power in action. By way of illustration, a bulldozer has the ability, capacity, and potential strength of rooting out trees. One may sense its inherent strength (*ischus*), but when its engine roars and it begins to move, its force of power (*kratos*) becomes active (*energeia*) as it demonstrates its ability to topple trees in its path. Thus, an intimate knowledge of God enables believers to experience the incredible greatness of God’s power available to them” (Harold W. Hoehner, *The Cornerstone Bible Commentary: Ephesians*, p. 43). So, we need to go deep in our knowledge of what God has done in the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, Paul turns our attention to God’s power in action in Ephesians 2:1-10, showing how,

We Have Been Raised with Christ for a Purpose

Follow the overarching flow of these ten verses. Verses 1-3 reveal our state before God intervened. Look there with me, “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 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—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” Focus on the main truth being communicated. Before something happened, we were dead with no capacity for fellowship with God because our manner of life was in active rebellion against Him. This, Paul says, is the state of all humanity, ultimately following the influence of Satan to carry out our passions and sinful desires, leaving us as children of wrath. Let those first words sink in, “you were dead.” What’s dead is dead, with no capacity for life.

Where is hope in this state? It's introduced in verse 4 with a powerful statement, "But God," turning our attention to God's activity. As we read verses 4-7, track the main point by focusing on the subject—God—and the primary verbs—what He has done, "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 in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Each primary verb—made alive, raised up, and seated—takes place with Christ, with Him, and with Him. Paul is saying, as God raised Christ and seated Him in the heavenly places, He has done with us who believe. We will come back to the purpose statement in verse 7 in a moment. Church, consider what Paul is saying. God's main activity is having those who believe experience His resurrection power. Verses 8-10, then, conclude by explaining how this happened and the reason for this, "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." Paul essentially says this: we who have been saved are the magnificent work of God, who by grace alone makes us new like a skilled craftsman, so that we would walk in good works God has prepared. Think through the flow of these verses with me. We were lifeless and powerless, but God graced us with life and power to live with purpose. Paul is not only concerned with us knowing God saves through Jesus, but also how God gives resurrection life through Jesus. And he does so for a purpose. I want to draw out three things I see about the purpose of resurrection life. First, that we would,

1. Boast in Merciful Love

Consider all the phrases Paul adds between what God has done in verses 4-5. Look there again, "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." First, Paul emphasizes that God's great love moved Him to be rich in mercy. Second, Paul reminds us this came even when we were spiritually dead in our rebellion. Third, Paul interjects a comment about being saved by grace that connects to verses 8-9. So move there with me, "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." Before and after describing what God has done, Paul shows everything coming from unmerited love, mercy and grace to keep us from boasting in anything we have done. This goes even deeper. But, if the purpose is to keep us from boasting, why am I saying the purpose of resurrection life is to boast? Listen to the repeated purpose statements in Ephesians 1:4-14. Start at the end of verse 4, "In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace." Verse 7, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace." Verses 11-14, "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory." The point isn't not to boast at all but to boast in the right thing. Family, the riches of God's grace and mercy removes all boasting in ourselves to free our hearts to praise or boast in His glory and grace. We have been raised with Christ to boast in His merciful love. Second, that we would,

2. Hope in True Riches

Consider the purpose Paul gave for God's resurrection power working toward us. Look again at verse 7, "so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." God made us alive, raised us, and seated us with Christ in the heavenly places to display how rich His grace is as He extends His kindness to us for all eternity.

Our inheritance is an eternity of lavish kindness from God. We have been raised with Christ to hope in the true riches of God's eternal kindness. Yet, we aren't simply waiting for that blessing. Note how the primary verbs speak in the past tense. We have been made alive, are already raised, and are seated with Christ now in the heavenly places. There is a present experience of this eternal reality as we live in a spiritual resurrection that corresponds to Christ's resurrection. This is why Ephesians 1:3 says, God "has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." Family, we have access to every spiritual blessing now due to our position with Christ. Blessings that will only grow in their immeasurable riches. Love, joy, and peace are available now and will be profoundly magnified for all eternity. God's healing, comfort and power exist now and will exponentially increase. We have been raised with Christ to hope in true riches both now and for eternity. This present experience bleeds into the third purpose of resurrection life. That we would,

3. Walk in Resurrection Power

We have a glorious purpose while we wait for our full inheritance that is rooted in God's power. Look at verse 10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." God's masterful work in raising us with Jesus is to have us walk in good works He has prepared. Note the great change. Those who believe once walked in false steps of rebellion against God. Now they walk in the good works of God. How? We are moved from being under the power of darkness to being infused with the power of God. And what are these works? In the beginning of chapter 4, they involve bearing with others to maintain peace and using spiritual gifts to build up God's people. At the end of chapter 4, they are not letting anger lead to sin, working to give to others, extending grace with our speech, being kind and forgiving. In chapters 5 and 6, these works are not entertaining impure thoughts, actions or speech, sacrificial care for spouses and kids, and working hard for the Lord. And they are standing against the schemes of the devil. All are this is part of the good works we are to walk in. But pay attention to how these are works God has prepared and empowers people to do. Family, we do not work for God, He works through us. We have been raised with Christ to walk in resurrection power through faith.

Conclusion:

As the worship team is coming to lead us in a time of reflection and response, let me bring this all together to build faith. Boasting in God's merciful love and hoping in true riches fan the flame of faith. And faith moves us to lean into the immeasurable greatness of God's resurrection power at work with in us. So, boast in God's Mercy today, have bright hope in tomorrow, and walk in the works God has prepared for you. And never forget these things are possible because Christ died, rose again, and is reigning in power now. Without His crucifixion, our sins have not been paid for, and we remain spiritually dead with no hope of life. But through faith in Jesus, God performs His masterful work of saving us by grace and giving us resurrection life and power. If you are here and are wondering what being a Christian really means. It means God's power is actively work towards you. Acknowledge you are dead in your sins. Confess your rebellion. Believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus. And find merciful love to boast in, true riches to hope in, and resurrection power to walk in.