

LIVING THE CHRISTLIFE
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Studies in Ephesians
Ephesians 2:4-9

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. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

—Ephesians 2:4-9

v 4 – “But God...”

Paul’s discourse about our salvation is here (and always) God-centered, Christ-centered.

It is about what God has done and is doing. Our part—faith, obedience, walking in the Spirit—are in response to God and only made possible by and through Christ.

“rich in mercy”

God’s wrath is directed towards sin, but He is rich in mercy and desires that no one should perish (2 Peter 3:9)

“through (because of) the great love with which He loved us...”

Love started with God—not with us

Love is defined by God—not by us

Any “love” that leads us to disregard and disobey God is corrupted by sin

vv 5-7 – “even when we were dead in our trespasses”

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.—1 John 4:10

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.—Romans 5:8

“dead” means dead and condemned

“in our trespasses”—means because of our sin. We deserved the judgment we were under.

The more we believe we deserve our salvation, the less we have love and gratitude for what God has done for us in Christ.

“together made us alive with Christ!”

Paul’s great emphasis, here and in v 6, is that what God has done for us has necessarily been done **with Christ**, not just *because* of Him, but *along with Him, joined with Him, as a part of Him*.

This is easily conveyed in the Greek words he used.

He will come back to this great theme, but here inserts:

“by grace you have been saved”

More lit. – “by grace you are having been saved”—both accomplished and ongoing
By grace—by God’s great love given to undeserving, sinful people.
There is no place whatsoever for thoughts or feelings of self-righteousness or, God forbid,
entitlement

v 6 – “and raised us up with him...”

Paul returns to what has been done for us “together with” Christ
“together with Christ, has raised us up”

Christ died with the sins of the world on Him, but God raised Him
from the dead—because He was the sinless Lamb of God
He walked away from death—including eternal death—He defeated it.
And *with Him, in Him, and only in Him*, we also have been raised
from death

The “together with” words. Emphasizing “syn” [with] and having rhetorical rhythm and rhyme:

synezōopoiēsen – made us alive with (v 5)
synēgeiren – raised us with (v 6)
synekathisen – seated with (v 6)

“and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”

“together with Christ, has seated us in the heavenly places...”

We have been made joint heirs with Christ. This is astonishing. But this is the teaching of Scripture, to include Christ’s promises in His letters to the seven churches at the beginning of the book of Revelation.

This is all because we are *in Christ*.

Paul consistently uses a future-already-accomplished verb style—speaking of things to come as if they had already occurred. It is because although we have yet to arrive at that point in time—we have not yet fully experienced these things—they have already been fully accomplished for us. A settled matter. There is somewhat a sense of this when we use the phrase “consider it done” to denote that something that will happen is so certain, we can speak of it in past tense.

“so that in the coming ages...”

Paul expands on God’s purposes for all of us—that His eternal plans for us are rich in grace and kindness

And the end of the statement is key: *in Christ Jesus*.

vv 8-9 – “For by grace you have been saved through faith...”

Paul returns to the theme of grace—this time expanding to include the role of faith
dia pisteos -- through faith. Saved *by* grace, *by* God—*through* faith.

The sense is—you have been saved by God—with your only role being to trust Him for it and receive His gift. You are to take no credit for your salvation. Nothing that you did has resulted in your salvation.

v 10 – “for we are his workmanship...”

This is, as much as anything, to correct someone’s idea about good “works”—which are good, taught about, and even commanded in Scripture

A paraphrase: “When it comes to works, we are actually **God’s** workmanship. He made us! And He made us in Christ Jesus to accomplish good works—God’s good works—which He has already prepared for us—that we should walk in them.”

So, works are good—prepared for us by God. But even “our” works are accomplished *in Christ* by the will of God and His plan for us. We are not saved *by* them—we are saved *unto* them.