

SEATED IN HEAVENLY PLACES (Ephesians 2:1-7)

Read Ephesians 2:1-7

1/WHAT WE WERE

- Dead in trespasses and sins (1, 5). Trespass = stumbling. Sin = missing the mark (Rom 3:23). Like warrior missing a target with a spear (Used in this way 100 times in Homer)
- Sin is a deadly disease
- We were by nature children of wrath (3)
- cf AIDS—2.2 million deaths, including children, in sub-Saharan Africa in 2001.
- Like children of HIV-infected parents, we were ‘by nature children of wrath’

2/WHAT WE DID

- Walked in sin (2). Like people sloshing around in the mud and slush.
- Followed the course of the world (2)
- Followed the prince of the power (authority) of the air (2)
- ‘Sons of disobedience’

The nature of disobedience

- Lived in the passions of the flesh (3)
- Carried out the desires (will) of the flesh (3)
- Carried out the desires (will) of the mind (3). See Matt 5:21-30
- Flesh = sinful self

3/THE NATURE OF GOD

BUT God...

- Rich in mercy (4). There is an abundant supply
- Loves with great love (*agape*—4). His love is greater than all our sin

*Mercy there was great and grace was free,
Pardon there was multiplied to me,
There my burdened soul found liberty,
At Calvary (W.R.Newell)*

4/THE POWER OF GOD

Three compound verbs follow—all begin with *sun* = together. Strong emphasis on the fact that it is only together with Christ that these things are possible

Alive with Christ

- Made us alive together with Christ (5)
- Contrast with verse one
- Not just life but eternal life! We only truly live when we are in Christ

Raised with Christ

- Raised us together with Christ (5)
- Lifted us out of the realm of darkness and death. Eg On 30 July 1997, 100 tons of earth slid down hillside in Thredbo taking ski lodge with it. Rescue workers struggled in freezing temperatures. 48 hours later found Stuart Diver trapped under two metres of concrete lying in running spring water. Rescued after 63 hours.
- We, too, were entrapped in a hopeless situation. But Jesus came to rescue us. Baptism symbolises this (Romans 6:1-4)
- Much cheering etc when Diver rescued. We, too, rejoice with indescribable joy!

Seated with Christ

- Seated us together with Christ (5)
- Position of authority and victory. As if already in heaven! See again 1:20-22
- Over sin
- Over Satan

5/THE PURPOSE OF GOD

To show his immeasurable (*hyperballo*) riches—

- Of grace (*charis*) = Undeserved favour
- Of kindness (*chresto*). Like good wine.

Where do I stand in this passage?

- Still dead in trespasses and sins?
- Still a child of wrath?
- Still following the passions of the flesh?
- Or am I made alive, raised and seated in heavenly places with Christ?

6/WHAT TO DO

- Repent of our sins
- Believe in Jesus
- See ourselves as safe in him
- Let's believe the Word of God today!

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Read: Ephesians 2:1-6

1. If you had to describe living without Christ, how would you do it? Think of several different ways. After you have discussed this fully, compare your list with the one in verses 1-3 of this passage. What similarities are there? What differences?
2. Who is the 'prince of the power of the air'? (2) Why do you think he is called this? (Think about the significance of air.)

3. If you were to use the phrase 'rich in mercy' (4) about a human being, what sort of behaviour or actions would you expect? (Take some time on this.) Now relate this to God.
4. How does the idea of being seated in heavenly places work out in practice for you? (6) Share examples with the group, either from your own life or the lives of others.
5. What is kindness? (7)
6. Angus is a man who feels there is no purpose in life. He has tried several jobs and twice attempted to set up his own business. Nothing has worked. He often feels personally frustrated, and whatever he does for entertainment or pleasure, he seems to feel even more empty afterwards. He says it's almost as though life is deliberately leading him to dead ends. He sometimes wonders if it is worth going on. How would you apply this passage to Angus's situation? (Be as detailed as possible.)

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