

Ephesians 2:6-7

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[0:00] Please do open up your Bibles again to Ephesians chapter 2. And we'll be focusing on verses 6 and 7 today. But wherever your vote lies, there's something that unites us all as voters.

Politicians disappoint. Some can be better than others. Some put out more fires than others. But the solutions this world is coming up with ultimately aren't working for the problems of our society. Some fires may go out. Some things may improve. But there is still this big fire raging. The world has problems. And we're looking to this world for solutions.

We vote one party. Think this will solve everything. They don't. And then we just set our sights on the next election. And hope that will solve it again.

But this world is not providing solutions. And it's not just in politics. We're miserable. We're lonely. And so we start a new relationship.

[1:26] We find happiness for a moment. But then the dissatisfaction just rears its ugly head again after a while. And then we want a new relationship. We know we're not happy.

And we realize that this world is not providing solutions. You can put an internet filter on your computer. It can help for a while. But the thoughts still remain.

The heart is filled with all sorts of mess. Small fires may have gone out in your life. But the big fire is still raging. And the world cannot provide a solution to it.

And it's not that these things are inherently bad. Of course we want righteous politicians more than unrighteous ones. An internet filter is a good thing.

But what we're experiencing in all this disappointing mess. All these failed solutions. And what you may be feeling today. Is that the problem is deeper than this world can reach.

[2:26] And we've seen in Ephesians over the past few Sunday evenings. What this problem is. It's to do with the human condition. By nature we are dead in our sins.

Not just lacking life. Not just got a half life. But no life. Opposed to God. Running from him. And from that deadness flows all the problems that we face.

And so there is a reason behind all of this disappointment. Any solution from this world. From around us. It cannot ultimately work. It cannot reach the heart.

It's like trying to cure heart disease with a bandage. It's like putting duct tape on a crashed car. It's like putting a plaster on a broken leg.

Whatever problems you face right now. The world ultimately cannot solve. The problem of the human condition. And so what hope is there?

[3:26] What do we need? We need a solution from outside this world. C.S. Lewis famously said this. You might have heard this before.

He wrote. If we find ourselves with a desire. That nothing in this world can satisfy. The most probable explanation. Is that we were made for another world.

Well C.S. Lewis is right. And this is what Ephesians has been saying. But we are made for another world. And so we need something from another world. To break into our lives.

To butt into our worlds. To reach beneath the surface. Reach what the world cannot reach. Your heart. And bring you to life. Life.

And Ephesians says this is exactly what God has done in the Christian. When God saved us. He made us alive. Actually brought our hearts back from the dead.

[4:24] If you're trusting in Christ here today. That this in front of you. This is your testimony. God broke into the world. And made me alive.

And what I want us to see today.

Is that this means something. Even more remarkable. This means. To be a Christian. To be made alive with Christ. To be saved. This means.

We now live. An other worldly existence. Our source of life. The source of who we are. The source. Is from that other world.

That we were made for. And that world. Is heaven. And this is what our. These are what our verses today. Tell us in Ephesians.

This world. Cannot provide its own solutions. But God. Has broken into our lives. From another world. Gone under the surface. And he has brought us. Heavenly life.

[5:26] And so if you're not a Christian here today. I want you to see. What it means to be a Christian. If you've been wondering. What this Christianity is all about. What this salvation stuff is all about.

I want you to see. It is far more than you realize. It is not just another solution. From this world. It is not just another. Plaster on the broken leg. No.

To be a Christian means. We have. Heavenly life. That's my first point today. We have heavenly life. The apostle Paul.

Has. In our verse. He's kind of been piling up. What God has done for us. So we were dead. But God made us alive. And you might think.

Well let's end there. Job done. End of Ephesians 2. But God doesn't end there. There's even more to our salvation. Look at verses 5 and 6. When we were dead in our trespasses.

[6:23] God 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. Do you see what salvation means here? To be a Christian means. God has made us alive. And raised us up.

And seated us with Christ. In the heavenly places. Now notice the pattern here. Three things that have happened to us. Made alive. Raised up. Seated in heaven. That's the heavenly places.

Now do those three things ring a bell? Who else was made alive from the dead? Raised up from this world. And seated in heaven. This is what happened to Jesus.

His resurrection. His ascension into heaven. And his being seated at the right hand of the Father. So raised up here. It doesn't refer to being raised from the dead. That's being made alive.

[7:22] This is being raised up into heaven. And then seated there. This is the sequence of Jesus' salvation. Resurrection. Ascension. Seating. And Paul is saying.

When God saved you Christian. In that moment. You were made alive. But not only that. You were raised up into heaven.

And you were seated at the right hand of God. That's why it says. With him. And in Christ Jesus. Do you see that? All that has happened to Christ.

Has happened to you. When God saves you. All that has happened to Christ. It all happens to you. Now before we unpack. What exactly this means for us.

We need to realise. What this is saying about salvation. Salvation is about. Being united. To Christ. Being. Inseparably tied.

[8:21] To all. He does. And all that he is. We can often. And wrongly think of salvation. As like. A present. With lots of goodies. Inside for us.

So like God hands us this present. Called salvation. And we can unwrap it. And then inside. There are lots of goodies. Like oh there's forgiveness. There's new life. There's resurrection. And when we become a Christian.

God sends us that present. And we get all the prizes. But that's not actually how salvation works. Actually. The heart of salvation. It's not about getting something.

It's about being united. To someone. In that moment. When God saved you. And brought you back from the deadness of your sin.

That was God. By the spirit. Uniting you to Jesus. But that's why this passage is filled with words. Like together with Christ.

[9:21] With him. With him. With him. In Christ Jesus. In Christ Jesus. It is this. Spiritual. Mysterious. Deep down. Connecting to Christ.

It's like. Our life. And his life. Have been woven together. Our whole existence. Has now been. Bound together with Christ. With the. Strongest super glue. That you can ever imagine. In fact. We're so united. We're in him. It says. So it's like. If you've got that. Superpowered MRI machine. And you've scanned. Your heart right now. If you're trusting in Christ. It's like. You can see. On the scanner. This. Indestructible cord. Going from you. All the way up to heaven. And it's attached to Christ. And it can never be undone. When God saves you. That cord. Gets attached to you forever.

[10:18] And you're united to Christ. Which means. Whatever happens to Jesus. Happens to you. Wherever he goes.

You go. So think of it. A bit like an airplane. When you're in an airplane. And you're buckled into it. Wherever the plane goes. You go. Right. So the plane leaves the gate. You leave the gate. The plane takes off. You take off. The plane sits at 30,000 feet. You sit at 30,000 feet in the air. So if you're going on an airplane this summer. Maybe you're flying to North Carolina. Think of being united to Jesus. Whatever happens to Jesus. Happens to us. And so when Jesus died on the cross. And if you're united to him. That means. You. And all your sins died with him. If you're united to Jesus.

[11:13] When Jesus left that tomb. What happened to you? You left that tomb. When Jesus went into heaven. What must have happened to you? You went into heaven.

And if Jesus sat down at the throne in heaven. Then you sat down on the throne in heaven. This is why when you become a Christian. You get raised from the deadness of your sin. Because you get united to his resurrection.

You share in all that's happened to him. It becomes yours with him. And so this is really key. Salvation is not about getting something.

It's about being united to someone. But all this becomes a bit more puzzling with verse 6 today. Doesn't it? Because you might be thinking.

Well. Okay. I'm able to understand being united to his death. Okay. My sins died with him. And I'm. Maybe I can understand being made alive. Okay. His resurrection power is now in me. But what about the ascension?

[12:16] God raised us up with him in the heavenly places. How am I raised up into heaven with Christ? And hold on. How am I seated with him? I'm here in Ealing.

Jesus is on the throne. How am I seated with him? Well. Let's just think about the ascension for now. Jesus going to heaven. Just think.

What does that mean for Christ? Christ. So Jesus isn't physically here right now, is he? He's in heaven. That's the heavenly places mentioned in verse 6. What kind of place has Jesus gone to? Jesus is now in the direct glory of God's presence. The place where God is most intensely present. Where his glory and his holiness and his life and his rule and his kingdom. All of it are most intensely and perfectly present. So yes, God is everywhere.

[13:13] He's omnipresent. But on earth, his rule and his life aren't perfectly displayed. We fight against his rule, don't we?

We can be dead in sin and not have his life. But in heaven, that rule and that life, it is completely, perfectly displayed.

That's why we pray, and we did earlier, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Heaven is the other world perfectly ruled by God.

And now, right now, Jesus has been raised up and lives in that world. He belongs to and is defined by that world, by heaven.

He is now a man of heaven. So we've seen the unbeliever belongs to and is defined by what three things?

[14:15] The world, the flesh, and the devil. Corrupt things here below. That's what we were identified with before Christ saves us. That's what makes the unbeliever who he is. But Jesus identifies with the world above.

He belongs to and is defined by not the world, the flesh, and the devil, but by heaven and holiness and God. That's the air he breathes.

That's the life running through his veins. That's what defines his identity. And so what does that mean for you? If you're united to Christ, if you're in that airplane, if that cord is attached to you, what must that mean for you?

That means you are now defined by heaven. We can be defined by all sorts of things. I'm British. I'm a man.

I'm a husband. I'm a father. And when we're not in Christ, we're defined by our sin. Those are the things that say who we are, our values, our future, our life. But if you're united to Christ, you now belong to and are deep down defined by, not the things here on earth, not by your sin, not by the devil, not by this world, but by heaven.

[15:38] To be a Christian means you are inseparably bound to that life. So think of a deep sea diver. You know those old style deep sea divers in those big kind of clunky orange suits and they have that big helmet and they've got like a glass window at the front.

Okay, picture one of them. And when they deep sea dive, they go to the ocean floor and they have that big tube going from the ocean floor from their suit up to the surface, don't they?

And air would be pumped down from the surface into their suit. And so they'd be on the deep dark ocean floor, but they're breathing the air above because they belong to the air above.

That's their home. That's their life. Well, that's like the Christian here on earth. When God saved you, you now breathe the air of heaven.

We may be walking around here on this dark earth, but the air keeping you alive now, your real home where you really belong, what you are defined by is heaven. That's why the Bible says our citizenship is in heaven.

[16:47] And so this means there has been a fundamental change of who you are. When God saves you, he raises you into heaven with Christ and says, this is where you really belong.

This is who you truly are. You are most at home when you are with God. You may live in Ealing or Hanwell or Acton, but you really belong to the highest of heavens.

Your passport may say British, but it's really heaven. And this is why, as Christians, this is why we don't feel at home here on earth anymore.

And why it can be so frustrating to be a Christian here, seeing the world run away from God and just so oblivious to his goodness, so blind to his law.

And we feel that because deep down, you want to live in a place ruled by God. When you feel that frustration, that is your heavenly existence that you can feel.

[17:56] And this is why death is transformed for us. For the Christian, death is not stepping into the scary unknown. No, death is going home.

It's like a diver coming back to the surface and taking in that fresh air. When you enter heaven, your passport says, I really belong here. If you know someone that has died in Christ, you need to know they have gone home.

So we may be lots of things here on earth, a husband, a father, an employee. God doesn't destroy those things when he saves you, but you are first and foremost a Christian.

You are a husband in Christ, a student in Christ, a grandmother in Christ. Your heavenly identity changes everything about who you are. You have been raised with Christ.

And this, this is God's grace. Not only has God taken the undeserving dead and made us alive, he's taken the sinful dust of this earth.

[19:04] He's taken us and said, you will now belong to the courts of heaven. You are at home on this fallen earth. You are happy and comfortable with the devil.

But now you are going to be more at home in the presence of the living God, amongst the angels, in the purity and glory of heaven, because you were raised with Christ.

You are no longer children of wrath. You are children of heaven. This is salvation. It is a complete redefining of who you are, a new source of life and identity and meaning and destiny.

And this is what the world needs. It needs to be united to heaven. It needs that heavenly oxygen. It's like the world is suffocating on carbon monoxide right now and all our attempts to solve it are

just like trying to pump more carbon monoxide into the world.

No wonder all of this is disappointing. No, we need another world. We need heavenly life. And in Christ we have it. And if you put your trust in him today, you can have it.

[20:22] Heavenly life, it is there for the taking. But if that isn't enough, something even more has happened to us. We don't only have a heavenly life.

We have a victorious life. That's my second and final point today. We have a victorious life. Think about what Christ is doing right now. Yes, he's breathing the air of heaven, but he's doing something.

He's ruling as the king of creation. So do you remember what we confessed in the Nicene Creed? We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Now what does sitting mean? Sitting means ruling. So kings sit on thrones, don't they? They sit on thrones to be in charge and to rule over the land.

Kings, after they've completed their battles and conquered, they sit down and they rule it. So kings don't stand. Servants stand. Kings sit. My mind always goes to Lord of the Rings.

[21:28] King Theoden, he sits on his throne. King Theoden, he sits on his throne. But worm tongue stands. Only kings sit. And so Jesus is at the right hand, Jesus being sitting at the right hand of God, it means Jesus has finished his battle.

He's conquered his enemies, taken over the land, and he sat down in heaven to rule it with victory over all of this fallen creation.

And what does Paul say has happened to us in Christ? Verse 6. God seated us with him in the heavenly places.

Not only made alive, not only belonging to heaven, but he also sat you on the throne with Christ. Look at the cord. Think of the plane.

Jesus sits. We sit. And so what must that mean for us? It means we share in his victory. Just like we share in his death, his resurrection, his heavenly life, if we are sat with him, we share in his victory.

[22:38] Christian, right now, you are breathing the air of victory. And what does Jesus have victory over? Who are the enemies he defeated?

It is sin, death, and the devil. On the cross, Jesus shattered the power of sin. He put death to death. The cross was Jesus crushing Satan under his feet.

And Ephesians is saying, Christian, you share in that victory. And that changes everything for you. Sin is no longer the controlling force in the Christian life.

We feel sin, don't we? We can get to the end of the day and think, why did I say that? I can't believe I've done that again. And it's a real force in our lives.

But it is not, it is not the controlling force. You are breathing the air of victory over sin. You can fight sin.

[23:46] There can be victory. This is the other worldly help that we need. Never think that your struggle with sin is hopeless. Never think your fight is pointless.

Whatever temptations you face, whatever that pull of sin is, don't be discouraged. There can be victory because you're already seated with Christ. internet filters, politicians, relationships, they are plasters on a broken world.

But in Christ is the victory. Now we won't have complete victory in this life. We will only be sinless in the next. But the victory begins now.

You're already breathing that air. And this means there is a certainty about your future. If you're in Christ, you already have victory over death.

So not only are you guaranteed to go to heaven when you die, this means you are guaranteed that you will be raised from the grave. Resurrection is a certainty for you because you're already seated with Christ.

[24:58] And this means Satan is lost. You were a puppet in his plan. You were following him, belonging to him, defined by him. But now you have victory over him.

His plans are destroyed for you. Tear it up. It is gone. This is why your salvation is secure forever. It is impossible for Satan to snatch you out of the Father's hands because you're already seated. You've already won. There was a basketball coach in the 1960s called Red Auerbach. He used to coach the Boston Celtics.

And when his team was winning, he would sometimes get to a point in the game where he knew that his team couldn't lose. It was impossible. He knew victory was just in the bag.

And at that point in the game, what he would do, he would, on the court side, as he's coaching his team, he would get out a cigar, light it, and he would just start smoking on the court side.

[26:03] And so when you saw Red Auerbach light that cigar, you knew victory was already in the bag. Well, that is just like the Christian. You're already seated with Christ.

The cigar is lit. And I don't want us to miss how remarkable this is. Just see all of this, all that God has done.

See all of this. See it in contrast to what could have been. See the white paint against the black paint. God has taken us, us, his enemies.

He's taken us hell-bound sinners, enemies who hated him. He's taken us and enthroned us into heaven. God has taken the fallen dust of this earth when we were lost and wandering off a cliff and he said, come and belong to heaven.

Why would God make the undeserving dead come alive? Why would God make children of wrath into children of heaven? Why would God make his enemies sit on his own throne?

[27:11] It is because God is gracious. This is all because of grace. It is one thing to not give us hell.

It is another thing to give us life and heaven and a throne. That is grace. And he has done this. We are here today so that God may show just how gracious he is.

Look at verse 7. He has raised us and seated us so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Christian, you now live, you exist as a living witness of just how gracious God is. And it's immeasurable. You can't put a measuring tape around what God has done for you.

We need help from another world. Well, this is it. And if you're here today and you have a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy and the solutions of this world only disappoint, then here is the other world.

[28:22] trust in Christ, be united to him and he will give you a heavenly life, a victorious life and you will be living proof of the immeasurable riches of God's grace.

Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.