

# Ephesians 1:15 - 2:10

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[ 0 : 00 ] And if you've got a church Bible, I want you to turn to Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1, which is on page 976. And I'm going to read you from verse 15 of chapter 1 through to 9.

Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 15, page 976. For this reason, the Apostle Paul writes, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom.

And a 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 towards us who believe, 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.

[ 1 : 37 ] 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 body and the mind and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

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've 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 towards us in Christ Jesus.

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.

[ 2 : 50 ] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we ask for the help of your Holy Spirit. Your Holy Spirit who inspired the Apostle Paul to write these words. And we pray, Heavenly Father, that he would enlighten us.

And we ask that he might open our eyes, that we might see the wonder of the Lord Jesus Christ. Teach us by your Spirit. Through your word we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The message of Easter is vast. Easter is not just a season to be celebrated. It is a message to be believed and embraced.

And a gospel to be proclaimed in all the world. And recognizing that this message of Easter is something that transforms the lives of those who've understood it and embraced it.

Because the message of Easter is the message of resurrection. And resurrection lies at the very heart of the Christian faith. Resurrection is the very essence of true Christian experience.

[ 4 : 01 ] And so when we speak about Easter this morning, we're speaking about something that men and women and boys and girls who really know the Lord Jesus Christ, Easter and resurrection is not just something out there.

It is something that they've experienced in their own lives. If you come as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ this morning, you are no longer a spectator of Easter. Easter is something that has happened to you.

Christ is risen. And they are risen in him. And it's this message that the Apostle Paul is pressing upon you this morning in the passage we've just read.

He's praying that you will have a spiritual eye-opener. He's praying that your eyes would be opened. He prays that the Lord God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 1 and verse 17. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation and the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he's called you.

[ 5 : 05 ] What are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints? And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of his great might? That he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

In other words, Paul is praying for you and I this morning, that we might have a revelation of exactly what the implications of the resurrection are for us.

And if you look at it more closely, you will see in Ephesians chapter 1 and 2, that he's not only speaking of one resurrection, but three. Because Christianity is a religion of resurrection. And specifically, of three resurrections that the good news of the Lord Jesus brings. So here's my three resurrections. Here's my points.

First of all, the resurrection of Jesus on the third day of the week. Secondly, the resurrection of sinners in the present day of grace. And thirdly, the resurrection of the body on the last day.

[ 6 : 04 ] That is the good news. That is the resurrection in the Bible. A message that speaks to us about our past, and the present, and the future.

So first of all, resurrection past. The resurrection of Jesus on the third day. He puts it really plainly, doesn't it, in verse 20. Can you see it? He says that God the Father raised him from the dead. God the Father raised Jesus from the dead. That's always the way that the New Testament speaks of the resurrection. It's something that God has done.

And men, human beings, they've killed the author of life. You've taken him. By wicked hands, you've crucified him. But God has raised him from the dead. It's God's answer to what men have done with the Lord Jesus.

God has raised him from the grave. You killed the author of life. But God raised him from the dead. And the question immediately arises, well, why did God do that?

[ 7 : 12 ] And it's a question that you and I need to grapple with and understand. Easter can go by, can't it? And we can miss it so easily. The sheer glory and wonder of why did God raise Jesus from the dead?

And Paul tells us, doesn't it, in verses 20 to 22, that God raised Jesus primarily to confirm that he was the Son of God and the Lord of the universe.

Look at verse 20 of Ephesians chapter 1. The apostle says that he accomplished this great work of might in the Lord Jesus when he raised him from the dead and when he 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 in the one that is to come. And he's put all things under his feet.

Now in the whole of the New Testament, this is the great testimony, this is the great message of the resurrection. It tells you who Jesus is.

[ 8 : 18 ] In Romans chapter 1 and verse 4, it tells us that Jesus was designated Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. In Romans chapter 14, it says, Christ had died and returned to life so that he might be both Lord of the living and the dead.

And that's a vital thing for you and I to grasp. But this is what God was doing in the resurrection of Jesus. He is overwhelmingly, God is declaring, in the resurrection of Jesus, Jesus who was despised, Jesus who was rejected, who was crucified on the Friday, who men did not esteem, they regarded him as somebody under God's judgment, God has raised him from the dead.

And God has raised him to a place of unique and unsurpassable glory. Every enemy beneath his feet. He's been exalted on all authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, he's above it.

And the importance of that is this. During the time when Jesus was on earth, he claimed, didn't he, if you've read Jesus' story at all, he claimed he was not simply a prophet.

That he was the one whom the prophet spoke about. That he was the fulfillment of the prophecy. He was not just some man amongst men. He was not just a decent teacher.

[ 9 : 43 ] He was the Lord of men. Who would ultimately become their judge. He had pictured the end of the age in his teaching in quite graphic and dramatic terms as a day when he would be singled out from every other creature.

When he will judge the world. And the whole of humankind will be gathered before him. And lots of people, when they heard that, they greeted the message with scorn, as they do today. They were as cynical as we are.

They mocked him. That he claimed to be the son of God and the saviour of men and the Lord of all. It seemed ridiculous. And they said to Jesus, give us a sign.

Show us then. Prove it. Give us a sign that we would know that these things are true. And Jesus says to them, there will be no sign. There will be no sign given to this generation except one.

And it was the sign of the prophet Jonah. Jonah. Because, says Jesus, Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale. So shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

[ 10 : 53 ] And then, like Jonah, there will be resurrection. And when they challenged him, do you remember? He said, I will destroy this temple. And the temple he spoke about was his body.

And in three days I will raise it again. What was that sign? The sign was the sign of his resurrection. And it was to be a sign that all his claims were true.

And when God raised Jesus, he raised him in order to place him on this throne of infinite glory. Where he would be on high, above all dominion and power and authority.

That he would be in the place of king of kings and lord of lords. That he would be the designated son of God with power. And that is to Jesus we come to worship this morning.

And the father points to him and says, he is the one in all the universe. Whom the hearts of men and women are to turn to in order that they might worship and adore him.

[ 11 : 57 ] But God raised Jesus not only to show us who he was, but also to show us what he's done in his death. That's why Paul says he was put to death for our trespasses.

He was put to death for my rebellion. But he was raised for our justification. In Romans chapter 4. And so here in this letter to the Ephesians, he's speaking about the plight of men and women.

That the men and women and boys and girls, can you see it in chapter 2 verse 1, they are dead in their trespasses and sins. And then he goes on to speak about what God has done for us in sending the Lord Jesus.

Where does the resurrection come into all this? The point is this. It is not enough to simply know that Jesus has died. It is not enough to simply know that Jesus died in the place of sinners.

That he said he was going to go to the cross at Calvary. To give his life as a ransom for many. That they might know the redemption he was offering. It is not enough to know that Jesus died.

[ 13 : 07 ] The question arises, doesn't it, after his death is this. How do we know, how do we know this morning that the death that Jesus died has been successful? That it's paid the price, that it's sufficient.

That it's dealt with my rebellion and my sin. How do we know that the sacrifice that he has offered has been accepted by God? How do we know that he alone in the universe is the only God-appointed saviour?

How do we know that? And the answer is that the resurrection is God's finger pointing down from heaven to Calvary. As the only place under heaven where you and I may be saved.

The resurrection of Jesus, if I can put it like this, is God's amen. To the sacrifice that Jesus offered. Whatever men may say, they might spurn it.

They might despise a crucified saviour. They might mock him. They might take his name in vain. But God the Father reaches down from glory. And he snatches Jesus from the grave.

[ 14 : 16 ] And he raises him to a place of unexcelled glory. But the Lamb of God. And the saviour of the world. So all of heaven cries this morning, worthy is the Lamb who was slain.

To receive honour and glory and blessing and dominion. And so what resurrection Easter morning tells you is that God has done something in history. God has done something in history which has set the seal on Jesus' sacrifice for himself on the cross.

And this is God's way of saying that there's no other way. There's no other name under heaven given to men by which you may be saved.

And if you're here this morning and you are seeking eternal life and you want to be acceptable with God on any other grounds than the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross, then God the Father

has got a problem with you.

Because he says the only way. The only way that you can be made right with God is through the death of my son.

[ 15 : 29 ] Because in the resurrection, the finger of God points you to the cross. It points you to the cross of Jesus and says that is the place where I'm satisfied.

I'm satisfied with what my son has done. I'm satisfied with my son. And God has raised Jesus to demonstrate who he is and who he was.

That's the resurrection of Jesus on the first day. Secondly, the resurrection of the sinner in the present day. For these men in the New Testament, for these people in the New Testament, Easter was something that had happened to them.

They said quite simply that their Christianity was about having passed from death to life. The Bible's Christianity is not turning over a new leaf.

It's not reformation. It's not trying your best. They spoke about true Christianity and they said it is a resurrection in someone's soul to everlasting life.

[ 16 : 38 ] And so the Christians in the New Testament, they would say we have passed from death to life. It's no longer I that live, but Christ who lives in me.

That's the resurrection. The essence, the heart of Christian experience is this. That by faith, I am united to the Lord Jesus Christ.

By trusting him, I am joined to him. And I am therefore raised with him out of spiritual death into spiritual life. So look with me at what Paul says in chapter 2.

Look at verse 5 in chapter 2. He says we were dead in chapter 2. But God has made us alive together with Christ.

We've been made alive. If you look at the start of chapter 2, he gives us the diagnosis of what we were without Christ, before Christ.

[ 17 : 38 ] He says we were dead in our rebellion, trespasses and sins, in which you once walked. And he described what did that life look like? What does life look like without the Lord Jesus Christ?

You see, that's an extraordinarily offensive thing to say, isn't it? Just because a person doesn't know Jesus Christ, they're dead? Here's a guy, he's got a really acute and an active mind.

He's an intelligent young bloke. He's got a fit body of an athlete. He's got a glowing and attractive personality. But he's no time for God. He's no time for Jesus. He's not against him.

He's not angry with him. He's just got no time for him. Am I telling you that he's dead? That's precisely what I'm saying. Because that guy, he was created and formed for the very essence of what true life really is.

That it's found in Jesus Christ. Only in Jesus Christ. This is eternal life, says Jesus, that they might know me. And if you do not know God this morning, through the Lord Jesus Christ, you are no more alive than a dead man is alive physically.

[ 18 : 55 ] Because the heart of Christianity, the essence of spiritual life, for which God created you, and created the universe in which you live, the essence of that life is that you might know God.

The apostle says, you were dead in your trespasses and sins. You followed the course of this world. Do you notice the description there?

You followed the course of the world. That means, just like everybody else, going along with the flow. You followed the prince of the air, which means that you were disobedient to God. And you followed the desires of your flesh.

That is that you did what you wanted. That is the characteristic of someone who is dead in their trespasses and sins. But in verse 4, but God.

That's what the resurrection means. Verse 4, but God. Being rich in mercy. Because of the great love with which he loved us.

[ 19 : 54 ] Even when we were dead in our rebellion, God made us alive.

Together with Christ. What's happened to these people here this morning that would claim to be Christians? That would call themselves Christians? Who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ?

What has happened to them? Is that the grace and the kindness and the mercy of God touched them? True Christians will say to you, it's not that I decided that I was going to become or going to be religious.

It's not even that somebody persuaded me mentally about the Christian gospel. And I said, well, I agree now, so I might as well follow. It's not that they signed their name on some kind of pledge to

be more religious.

No, what has happened in the person that has put their faith in Jesus Christ is something cataclysmic has happened. Something miraculous, something so supernatural that they cannot fully understand it.

[ 21 : 03 ] They cannot fully explain it. They cannot grasp it. There's been a supernatural miracle of grace in their heart. And it's a resurrection to newness of life.

And if you are a Christian here this morning, that is what has happened to you. The same divine energy that brought Jesus Christ from the grave has been operating in your life.

To bring you from being dead in your trespasses and sins into new life in Jesus. And just as Jesus now reigns in glory, he's raised you into a life that is indestructible in him.

So you can understand, can't you, why the disciples got so excited about the resurrection. And according to the New Testament, it doesn't just refer to the beginning of the Christian life, but actually the living of the Christian life.

Did you notice the eye-opener prayer? That you might have the eyes of your heart enlightened. That you may know this.

[ 22 : 13 ] What does he pray, verse 19? What does he pray that they might know? That they might know the immeasurable greatness of his power working towards us who believe, according to the working of his great might. That he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

I was saying just a few minutes ago that the resurrection gives you the proof of our forgiveness, which it does. But I need to add to what the apostle says here.

He says the resurrection gives you proof, but the resurrection also gives you power. The resurrection supplies the power for our holiness. The proof of our forgiveness and the power of our holiness.

Because when God raises human beings from spiritual death, it's in order that God may take hold of you and recreate you into the glorious image of the Lord Jesus.

And so living as a Christian, by necessity, changes you. How does that happen?

[ 23 : 14 ] How does someone live the Christian life? How do you live as a Christian? You don't live it, do you, by some superhuman effort of your own. The transformation of our characters is not something that God leaves to ourselves.

It is the same divine power that raised Jesus from the grave, which is at work in you, says Paul. And Paul says this, May God open your eyes to see what's happened to you.

And that brings hope, doesn't it? That brings hope to the feeblest child of God this morning. Into the weakest Christian. That the very power of God that operated in raising Jesus is in you this morning. And if you are Christ, and if you are battling away with things that you cannot control without Christ, that is an awful, awful substitute for Christianity.

If you are there trying your best, making your lists, doing what you can, that is a terrible, awful substitute for real Christianity.

[ 24 : 22 ] The resurrection on the third day. The resurrection of the sinner in the present day. And then lastly, the resurrection of the body in the last day. So as you read this letter, which Ephesians is, you'll find there's a future focus going all the way through it.

Verse 18, he prays, Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope, that's in the future, to what he's called you. What are the riches of his glorious inheritance, in the sense, that's in the future.

Now the hope that the resurrection has brought, it's brought hope to a world that is gripped in despair. And we live in a world, don't we, that is gripped in despair in many ways.

Verse 21, he goes on to say, That the Lord Jesus has been raised, 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 then chapter 2, in verses 6 and 7, it says, We are raised, and God has raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages, the future, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace, and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

[ 25 : 36 ] The apostle Paul, he wants you to look back to Jesus' resurrection. He wants you to understand what has happened in the present, if you've trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he wants you to look forward.

And he's telling you that the resurrection that we've experienced in Jesus Christ is a foretaste of something that is infinitely more glorious, that we are yet to know.

And so that is why resurrection is so exciting. That Jesus' resurrection is not only an historical fact, it's a prototype. It's an *hors d'oeuvre*.

It is the first fruits, as Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians 15, of the Christian's resurrection. And Jesus' resurrection, it gives us a guarantee, but it's also a pattern of what is to come.

Because God is at work. God is moving on. He's not stopped with the resurrection of Jesus. He's not stopped with the resurrection of the sinner. He's going forward to the coming ages, to the hope of glory that lies before us.

[ 26 : 49 ] And Paul says, may God today open your eyes, that you might see it. That you may grasp the hope that is set before us, that has been guaranteed to you by a living, reigning Savior.

And that hope is not just the immortality of the soul, is it? It's not just that there's somewhere else up there, that we'll go on living forever and ever in heaven.

No, the hope of the children of God, is the resurrection of the body. That there will be a day, when our spiritual resurrection is matched by our physical resurrection.

And we will have perfect glorified bodies. And in those bodies, we will serve, and we will worship, and we will rejoice, and we will adore God, and we will enjoy fellowship with him fully.

Oh, the glory of that hope. Some of you have experienced what it is to lose a loved one in the Lord Jesus Christ. To stand in the crematorium, and watch the curtains close.

[ 28 : 05 ] Or to stand at the graveside, as the coffin is lowered into the ground. And you've been able to say, the Lord Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. And that is a guarantee, that one day, we shall be raised with him. It's a guarantee that the places of sorrow and sadness, will become places of overwhelming joy.

As the Lord comes, and says, come you blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.

And all our limitations, and all our weaknesses, and all our struggles, and all our rebellion, and all our brokenness, will be gloriously renewed.

And we shall reign with him. And that is the Christian hope. That he will change our lowly bodies, into his glorious body.

And that is something that our world, and it is something that you, desperately need to hear, this morning. It needs to hear, who Jesus is.

[ 29 : 22 ] And it needs to hear, what Jesus has done. And it desperately needs to, discover the resurrection power, of Jesus Christ. And it needs the hope, that the resurrection brings.

Because, if you haven't got that, it's a sad, sad world to live in, isn't it? It would be so sad, if you were just to drift out, these doors this morning, without knowing.

And really having this Jesus, risen. reigning. Coming. And I pray, that he being lifted up, may draw you to himself, in faith this morning.

Let's pray. Amen.