

What Does the Resurrection Mean to You? **Ephesians 2:1–10**

Introduction

In John 11:25, Jesus said, “*I Am the resurrection and the life.*” Resurrection was not something that would happen to Him, or that He would do. Resurrection is who He is. On this Resurrection Sunday, what does the resurrection mean to you?

The very finest exposition on this subject is found in Ephesians, as written by the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

What we were without Christ (vv. 1–3)

In these verses, Paul identifies the three-fold condition of those who are lost:

1. We were **spiritually dead**.
As we are told in Romans 5:12, when Adam sinned, he died spiritually, and that death was passed on to every member of the human race. Spiritual death is separation from the God who created and who loves us.
2. We were **spiritually enslaved**.
This enslavement was threefold: It was to the course of this present world; it was to the prince of the power of the air (the devil); and it was to the lusts of our flesh (1 John 2:16). The devil, ruling over this world and enticing our flesh, was our master. This is why Jesus said, “*you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free ... if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*” (John 8:32, 36).
3. We were **under the wrath of God**.
The wrath of God is the just judgment pending for all that falls short of the holiness of God (Rom. 3:23). Apart from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no escape from this awful wrath (John 3:36).

It is critical to note that Paul identifies the one factor that these three conditions above rest upon. It is that we were “*the sons of disobedience*” (v. 2b). The Greek verb *peitho* means “to be persuaded, convinced, to believe.” The letter *alpha* (a) is used as a prefix to negate the verb. Thus, in our lost condition, we were not yet persuaded of the truth of the Gospel, i.e., we were in the state of unbelief (John 3:18–19). Unbelief, the rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior, is the only unforgivable sin!

What God has done for us through Christ (vv. 4–7)

Paul now contrasts the condition of those of us who have trusted in Jesus Christ. He begins with the greatest contrast and intervention in history: “*But God.*” This leads to the “*But now in Christ*” of v. 13.

The Intervention (v. 4)

The great and infinite **love of God** goes into action through the riches of **His mercy** (the act of God by which our justly deserved condemnation was placed on Christ at the cross), resulting in the offer of His **unmerited grace** (the provision of all that we do not deserve) in verses 4–6.

The Effects (vv. 5–6)

For all those who, by simple childlike faith, receive the **gift of God** (v. 8b), a threefold spiritual re-creation takes place:

1. First, **He made us alive** together with Christ. That is, we have “*passed from death into life*” (John 5:24).
2. We are **raised up together** in spiritual newness of life. We become possessors of the resurrection life of Christ Himself.
3. Finally, we were **made to sit together** with Christ—seated with Him in the place of power and authority (Col. 3:1–4).

Paul summarizes both the intervention of God on our behalf and its effect in and for us, by saying, parenthetically, “*by grace you have been saved*” (v. 5b).

In verse 7, he explains the eternal ramifications of this glorious deliverance, telling us that the revelation of just how great this saving work is will be increasingly and constantly revealed throughout all the ages to come.

What we are now, and what we ought to become (vv. 8–10)

1. **A divine love story.** “*For by grace you have been saved, through faith.*”
The story of redemption is repeatedly told in terms of a great love story, in which the great Lover of our souls brings about a great deliverance of His beloved by His own sacrifice (read Ruth, Song of Solomon, and Hosea).
2. **A masterpiece of God.** “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.*”
The word for “*workmanship*” in Greek is *poema*, from which we get “*poem*.” It was a word used for a great work of art, music, or a sculpture. Our God has undertaken to make each one of us a trophy of His grace and an eternal work of indescribable beauty.
3. **A high and holy calling.** “*For good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*”
God has a plan for every one of His children. The outworking of this plan is brought about as we surrender to His will and purpose, and in partnership “*as workers together with Him*” (2 Cor. 6:1), “*walk in good works.*”

How are we to fulfill such a high and holy calling? It is of this that Peter was speaking of when he said, “*Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure*” (2 Peter 1:10). The issue was not salvation—which they already had—but sanctification, which they, and we, are always in need of.

Paul explains the “how” in the rest of Ephesians. We are to walk:

1. worthy of our calling (4:1),
2. in love (5:1–2),
3. in the light of God’s Word (5:8–10),
4. not as the world walks, (5:17–19),
5. in wisdom (5:15–17),
6. in the power of the Spirit (5:18–20), and
7. as soldiers armed for battle (6:10–18).

This is what the resurrection ought to mean to each and every one of us!