

## Introduction

I want you to ponder with me a question that, if someone were to walk up and ask you, think about how you might answer: What does the Resurrection mean to you? Do you know that they recently did a poll throughout the United States where 70% of the people said they believe that Jesus actually rose from the dead. I found that astounding. More than likely, not all of them were believers, and they probably have not all taken advantage of what resurrection means. But it's because they don't understand what it means. What does the Resurrection mean to us?

We're going to be in Ephesians 2:1–10, which is one of the most amazing passages of Scripture for many reasons that we're about to see. You know, Jesus said in John 11:25, *"I am the resurrection and the life."* He didn't say, "I will be resurrected." He didn't say, "My resurrection is coming." He said, *"I am the resurrection and the life."* We want to talk about what that means to us.

Open your Bibles to Ephesians chapter two. Before we get started (you'll understand my reason for doing this as we get into the text), I wonder if you've ever thought about the trinitarian nature of the Scripture. You know, in the Old Testament, the Jews divided it into The Law, The Writings, and The Prophets. When we were in Jerusalem one time, I had the opportunity to go into a bookshop and they had those three volumes very nicely bound in leather, which had been translated by Jewish scholars. I thought, how neat to have those volumes that had been translated out of the original Hebrew by the Jewish people themselves! If you stop and think about it, the Law introduces us to *Yahweh*, who is the Father of Israel. The Writings speak to us about how the Spirit of God works through the people of God. You think of Joshua and the judges—Sampson, Elijah, Elisha, and so on. You see these people doing mighty things through the power of the Spirit of God. Then you get to the prophets, who are all about, "He's coming—the Messiah is coming!" and they deal with the First and the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father, the Spirit, and the Son are looked at and emphasized—not that they're not all three in every one of the books and chapters of the Bible, but there's a little bit of a different emphasis in each one of them.

When we come to the New Testament, we find that we have the four Gospels, of course, that talk about the birth, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Then we start in the Book of Acts and go through the Epistles. What are we looking at? We're looking at the Holy Spirit, working through the Church—God's people. We get to Revelation, and Revelation brings us through the process of how the Lord Jesus Christ is going to subdue all powers and all authorities so that He can ultimately deliver up the kingdom to our God and Father, as Paul tells us in 1st Corinthians 15:24. So again, the trinitarian idea is observed. It is interesting that in the Old Testament, everything is moving forward to Christ and the New Testament is all moving back to Him—a very interesting perspective.

When you look at the Apostle Paul, his theology is built on the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And because of that threefold focus, there are words that pop up in his epistles over and over: faith, hope, and love. Faith, and what Christ has accomplished in the past; Hope, and the promises that we have for the future; then, because we're anchored both in the past (historically,) and in the future (prophetically), we have the ability and the power—by the Spirit of God—to demonstrate the love of Christ here on this earth.

You know, the early church picked up on the trinitarian nature of the Scriptures. Saint Patrick was one of those who really emphasized it: He picked a symbol that would be easily identified. By the way, what was his nationality? He was Scottish. Saint Patrick was captured as a boy by Irish pirates. He was enslaved in Ireland for several years. He was finally able to escape and go back to Scotland. He went back to Scotland, studied the Scriptures, and prepared himself to have a ministry in Ireland. The symbol he picked was the shamrock—the three-leaf clover. Why? Because it was something that the Irish people would always see and, since then, actually became a symbol of Ireland. But most people don't realize the way that it became a symbol. Saint Patrick encouraged people: “Every time you see the shamrock, think of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Isn't that amazing?

Then, we come to the book of Ephesians, which really has a threefold outline through the book. In the first three chapters, we're looking at the position that we have, “seated in Christ in the heavenly places.” Next, we go into chapters four and five, which we'll be dealing with a little bit more as we move along. And it's what? “Walking in the Spirit.” Finally, we get into chapter six, and we are “standing in the armor of God.” So once again, we see Christ, the Spirit, and the Father. In fact, the first 14 verses of the book of Ephesians are all one sentence. You have a hymn in three stanzas: The first stanza (vv. 1–6) is a hymn “to the praise of the Father's glory.” The second (vv. 7–12), is “to the praise of Jesus' glory,” and then the third (vv. 13–14), is “to the praise of the glory of the Spirit.” So, we find this trinitarian concept running a lot through the Scripture.

We're going to look at Ephesians 2:1–10, and guess what? We're going to break it down in three lines. First, “what we were without Christ” (vv. 1–3). Then we're going to look at “what God has done through Christ” (vv. 4–7). And then we're going to look at, “what are we now in Christ, and why” (vv. 8–10). That last question is important.

## What we were apart from Christ

In Ephesians 2:1–3: What we were apart from Christ. “*And you, He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins ....*” The little phrase, “*He made alive*” has been added by the translators. It actually comes from later in the text, and it really destroys Paul's purpose. Paul's purpose is to keep us in suspense. So, you know, it's kind of like a surprise is not a surprise if you tell someone you're going to give them a surprise. Paul wants to give us a surprise and it's coming up later. And, as so often is the case in Scripture, even in witnessing to people, the bad news must precede the good news. The bad news prepares us to receive the good news, so Paul wants to give us the bad news first. Then he's going to give us the good news. And so that little phrase (“*He made alive*”) I prefer to just delete.

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*“And you who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power, of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”*

**Ephesians 2:1–3**

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I want you to get three points out of this. We're going to get a lot of threes; there are actually ten sets of threes in this simple ten-verse text. You may not pick up on all of them. I just gave you the three-fold outline. There are three things here in what we were apart from Christ: 1) We were dead, 2) We were enslaved, and 3) We were children of wrath.

Let's work our way through these. What does he mean when he says, "*we were dead*"? Well, this takes us back, of course, to the Book of Genesis. Remember that in Genesis 2:17, God gave a command to Adam, "*Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*" The Hebrew is a little bit stronger. It says "*dying, you will die.*" In other words, you're going to die on the day that you eat of it. And because you die on the day you eat of it, you are going to die sometime later. The first death is spiritual death. The second death is physical death.

What is spiritual death? We need to define it a little bit because the Bible talks a lot about death. You know, Paul brings us from Genesis 2 into our own experience in Romans 5:12. He says, "*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.*" All the way from the Garden down through the ages, coming into your life and my life. When we entered this world, when we were that squirming little —people always say, "cute baby—Doesn't he look like his mom? Doesn't he look like his dad?" You know, I could never tell. I mean, we've had five kids. They always just look like wrinkled little prunes to me. But on that day that that life entered this world, that baby was born physically alive and spiritually dead. By spiritual death, we mean separation from God.

Do you know what is the first question asked in the Old Testament? The first question asked in the Old Testament and the first question asked in the New Testament are very important because they encapsulate the whole redemptive plan. The first question asked in the Old Testament was asked by God, and you find it in Genesis 3:9. The question was, "*Adam, where are you?*" indicating, of course, that a separation had taken place. Here's Adam trying to hide himself, trying to cover his nakedness, trying to avoid contact with his Creator and his Lord because a separation had taken place. Do you know what the first question in the New Testament is? Matthew 2:2, "*Where is He who is born the King of the Jews?*" "*Adam, where are you*" and "*Where is He?*" The problem of the human race and the solution are posed in the first questions of the Old and New Testaments.

When we talk about death, we need to understand that death can be used in several different ways. It always indicates separation, and it always indicates inability to operate. Think about those two things—separation, inability to function. In Romans 4:19, we see Abraham looking at himself and at his wife, sexually dead: the deadness of Sarah's womb, the deadness of his own body, sexual death being the inability to reproduce. It's called "death." In Hebrews 6:1, the author talks about the things that we go through as we come out of unbelief and into faith in Christ. One of them is, "*repentance from dead works.*" What are "*dead works*"? Well, dead works are anything that you or I try to do to earn our salvation. You know, all around the world today, in many, many different religions, there are people who are doing all kinds of things, trying to earn salvation. And the author of Hebrews tells us that those works are dead works.

Here's one that many people stumble over: James 2:17 tells us that "*faith without works is dead.*" So many people misunderstand the meaning of this statement. They say, "Well, this is a professing believer. This is a fake believer." No—look at the example James gives. The example he gives is to

believers. And he's building on what he told them in James 1:22 where he said, *"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only ..."* So, what's the problem in James chapter two? "If any one of you (fellow believers) see a brother or a sister who is destitute, without daily food, and you say to them, 'Go your way. May God bless you; I'll pray for you; be warmed; be fed.'" What's the problem? They have faith, but the faith is dead. It's nonfunctional. We call it "carnality." Paul deals with it a lot, of course, in the book of 1st Corinthians. A believer out of fellowship is incapable of producing spiritual good.

You might remember the story in Luke 15:24, the most popular parable that Jesus ever taught—the parable of the Prodigal Son, of course. Do you remember what the father said? *"This my son was dead."* Now, I bring this up because there are two false teachings, two false theological positions, that people get into. They are very popular today. One of them is: if you're spiritually dead, you can't exercise faith. Have you ever heard that? Some even go so far as to say God must regenerate you before you can believe. Well, we need to understand the Scripture and we need to be clear in our thinking on the truth of God's Word. That son never stopped being the son of the father, did he? When that son was "dead," what did he do in that pigpen? *"When he came to himself, he said, 'I will get up and I will go to my father.'"* And when he went back to his father, what happened? All the outpouring of the father's grace was given to him: the robe, the sandals, and the ring. They killed the fatted calf and so on and so forth. I simply give these to you as an illustration of the fact—don't think that words always mean the same thing. We have to look at words in light of their context. The old dictum of exegesis is, "the meaning of a word is determined by its use in the context."

So, we were dead, separated from God. We were slaves. And believe it or not, we were slaves three ways. Do you see it there? *"According to"* (Eph. 2:2) is a preposition that means "down, upon, or over." It has the idea here of dominion, of oppression. We were slaves—walking. I want you to hang on to that word "walk." It's coming back later. Walking *"according to"*: 1) *"the course of this world."* We were enslaved by this world system. 2) *"according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience."* We know this to be the devil. 3) v. 3, *"among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath."* So, our slavery is 1) in the world, 2) under Satan, and 3) to the flesh. We come up with what we often speak of: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

So, we were dead, we were enslaved, and we were children of wrath. You remember John 3:36? *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."* The word *"wrath"* here is not a word that speaks of emotional anger. It's a word that speaks of the settled opposition of the holiness of God—to all that is sin, all that is defilement, all that is transgression. God could not be God and have any other attitude toward sin. And so, we have a holy God who looks down on a world of lost sinners and His wrath is abiding on them. Not a very pretty picture. Thank God we're not just studying verses one through three. It's going to get better. But I want you to see something very important here. Why were we dead? And why were we enslaved? And why were we children of wrath? Look at the text and look at the little phrase *"sons of disobedience."*

The word *"disobedience"* can mean disobedience, but it comes from the Greek verb *peithō*, which means "to be convinced, convicted, so as to trust in." In other words, you are persuaded, you are convicted, and therefore you trust in. In the Greek language, if you take a verb and you put an *alpha*,

which is our letter A, in front of it, it negates it. We do the same thing. If I say something is atypical, you know that I don't mean it's typical. It is not typical. So, when we have the same thing here with the alpha privative (*apeithēs*), what it's telling us is, rather than being persuaded, convinced and trusting, they are unbelieving. Remember the verse that I shared with you just a moment ago, John 3:36? *“He who believes has eternal life, but he who does not believe ...”* Do you know what the verb is? The exact same verb that we have here translated *“disobedience.”* What is the greatest disobedience to God? Rejection of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul writes in Romans 1:5, summarizing his whole Apostolic ministry in that he is going to the nations to bring them *“to the obedience to the faith.”* What is *“obedience to the faith?”* It is when the Gospel is presented: we hear the Gospel and there's only one way you can obey—you believe it! You receive it. You trust it. To tell a person, *“Christ died for you. Christ took your sins upon Himself on the cross. He died in your place. He took your sins so that He could give you His righteousness.”* How can you turn away from that? And yet people do it all the time. Not only does Paul talk in Romans 1:5 about the *“obedience to the Gospel,”* but in 2nd Thessalonians 1:8, he talks about those who *“do not obey the gospel.”* He uses this same word (*apeithēs*)—unbelief. We were dead, we were enslaved, and we were children of wrath because we were living in unbelief. Sons of unbelief, *“sons of disobedience.”* That's what we were apart from Christ.

## What God has done through Christ

But what is God done? There are two words in this passage that just make the sun shine for me. It is just like the sun breaking out from behind dark storm clouds. And you see them there in verse 4: *“But God.”* What a glorious and blessed conjunction of contrast: *“But God.”* What has God done through Christ? Well, let's read it here in vv. 4–7.

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*“But God, who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us, in Christ Jesus.”*

**Ephesians 2:4–7**

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What has God done? Well, we see three things. Are you surprised in these verses? We see the source of what He has done. We see the great work of what He has done, and we also see the eternal purpose of what He has done: the source, the work, and the purpose. What is the source? Well, you might be surprised to find that it's threefold. Notice again, *“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us.”* Love, mercy, and grace—I'll touch on those in just a moment. But I want to notice that He did this (v. 5), *“even when we were dead ...”* even when we were lost in our sin and unbelief. And that tells me something. That tells me that God loves all sinners. That tells me that Jesus Christ died for all sinners.

As a matter of fact, when I mentioned earlier that there are a couple of false teachings that are prevalent in the time in which we live. None of them can be supported by Scripture. In fact, not only does Scripture not teach them, but Scripture teaches just the opposite. So, what do you do if you

hold a theological position that is opposite of Scripture? Well, you have to resort to things like this: “Well, that text doesn't really mean what you think it says.” Or “when he says ‘all,’ he really doesn't mean ‘all.’” Have you ever heard that? Very interesting, in Romans 11: 32, the Apostle Paul says that “*God committed all to disobedience.*” That’s the same word, (*apeithēs*) unbelief. “*For God has committed all to disobedience, that He might have mercy ...*” on some? Is that what your Bible says? Some of you are shaking your head. You must have a different text. You must have the same text I have: “*God has committed all to disobedience so that He may show mercy to **all.***”

Now, how do love, mercy, and grace work? Well, love is the source. The Bible tells us “*God is love.*” And the Bible tells us that God loves sinners. The best-known passage in the entire Bible: John 3:16, “*God so loved ...*” a few people, right? No. “*God so loved **the world** that He gave His only begotten Son.*”

So, as we look at this, we see that love is the source. Paul calls it here a “*great love*” (*Eph. 2:4*). How great is it? It's impossible to measure. It is infinite and unlimited. The love of God is unsearchable and unfathomable. And it's because of the love of God for sinful men and women, boys and girls, that His mercy goes forth.

What is the difference between mercy and grace? Well, the general idea of mercy is the idea of a person being moved to compassion for someone in need. You can go to Luke 10, and you could read the story of the Good Samaritan again. While others passed by this man who was beaten and battered and in need, he was moved with compassion. You see the same thing at the end of Matthew 9 as Jesus is talking to great multitudes, “*When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were ... like sheep having no shepherd.*” That's mercy. But mercy does something specific. Mercy removes from us that which we deserve. When Jesus Christ went to the cross, He took the sin of the world upon Himself—not just on His shoulders, but into His soul. Isaiah 53:12 says, “*He poured out His soul unto death.*” Why was that? Because on the cross, He had to pay the penalty of Adam's and the world's sin. And what was that penalty? “*In the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.*” And that's “*spiritual death.*”

We magnify Jesus' physical sufferings. We talk about the beating. We talk about the crown of thorns. We talk about the scourging. We talk about the nails in His hands and feet. Could I suggest to you that was not what Jesus feared as He grappled with what was coming that night in Gethsemane. What Jesus dreaded that night in Gethsemane was that He was going to experience spiritual death on the cross? “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?*” Have you ever thought about His address to the Father, “*My God?*” His address to the Spirit, “*My God, why have you forsaken Me?*” A separation of unutterable anguish was taking place in the soul of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's impossible for us really to understand it. But what did it do? It took away from us what we deserve: our judgment, the wrath of God, the penalty for our sin. Once mercy plays its part, then grace comes in.

I look at mercy and grace as two sides of the same coin. But they really emphasize a different work. Grace emphasizes, as I illustrated a little while ago, the Prodigal Son coming home. The father is lavishing all of his wealth and all of his riches on him. Do you want a good theme for the entire book of Ephesians? Ephesians 1:3, “*Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with ...*” a few “*... spiritual blessings in the heavenly places.*” Right? No, no, no. “*... Who has blessed us with **every** spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*” May I ask you a

question? How much of your spiritual blessings have you appropriated? How much have you taken advantage of? I think we barely scratch the surface! It is coming up in our text where we are going to fully realize the greatness of the grace that has been given to us.

So, the source is God's love, which sends out His mercy, which results in freeing up His grace, which He is able to pour out on us. That's the source. What is the work? Look at the work here. Three things: *"He made us alive," "He raised us up,"* and *"He seated us together."* These are what we call "co-verbs." They use the preposition "soon." "Soon" has the idea of association, fellowship, something that we're doing together. It emphasizes our union with the Lord Jesus Christ. If you want to do a little exercise, go to Romans 8. There are eight "soon" verbs in Romans 8. Eight things that Romans 8 tells us we share with Jesus Christ. Go through and see if you can find them. And if you don't find them all, come and ask me and I'll show you where they are. But these are marvelous, marvelous words because they really pick us up from where we were without Christ to where we are now in Christ.

**RESURRECTION LIFE. RESURRECTION POWER. RESURRECTION AUTHORITY.**

God *"made us alive together with Christ."* And He *"raised us up together"* with Christ. And *"He made us sit together in heavenly places."* We have regeneration, we have resurrection life, and we have heavenly authority. *"Made alive"*—regeneration. *"Raised up"*—resurrection. And then, of course, *"sit together"*—we have the heavenly power and the heavenly authority. Resurrection life. Resurrection power. Resurrection authority. How amazing that God would take someone like me. I asked you earlier, what does the Resurrection mean to you? I don't know what it means to you, but I know what it means to me. I never stand in this place; I never open the Word of God, without realizing I have absolutely no right to stand here and speak these words. The incredible honor—the incredible privilege—of letting the Word of God go through my mind, my mouth to your ears is not only an overwhelming privilege, but it is a terrifying responsibility. It is such a great and awesome task. I hope that you always pray for your pastor and for all those who are teaching, because if they're like me, I always approach the pulpit with fear and trembling, lest I should fail to do what I've been called to do on this occasion.

So, *"made alive," "raised up"* and *"seated."* Next, he includes this little parenthesis, *"by grace you have been saved"* for a reason, because we now see what God has done and we see that there is a purpose in what He's done. Verse 7, *"that in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ."* One day, you and I will exploit the treasures of the storehouse in Heaven. One day, we will fully understand. And, you know, after 50 years of studying this book, I tremble when I think of stepping into the presence of the King of kings and the Lord of lords, realizing how little of my resources I appropriated and utilized. There is so much there. It is so vast. You know, Paul talks about, at the end of the book of Romans, how unsearchable are God's ways, how infinite, and without our capacity to even understand. I feel like Job so often as he went through all those 39 chapters in the Book of Job: he's questioning, he's agonizing, he's wrestling ... And finally, God speaks a few words to him, and he says, "I think I'll shut up and sit down. I spoke things I did not understand." I think we'll all be there to one degree or another.

*"That in [all] the ages to come,"* (Eph. 2:7)—ages without end, Eternity without end, learning more and more. Can you imagine a continual revelation of the grace of God in His kindness to us? Where? In Christ Jesus. Only in union with Him. You know, as I asked tonight, "what does the resurrection

mean to you?" We never know what unbeliever may be sitting there, possibly in a situation of tremendous grief or affliction or burden. Life is not getting easier. History is not on a great arc from the standpoint of an unbeliever. For us, it's great! Christ is coming again. He's going to establish His kingdom. We have all the hope in the world. They don't. My prayer is that somehow, God the Holy Spirit can get into that hardened heart and that closed mind and open those ears that they might begin to listen, to consider, to ponder as the Holy Spirit works on them, convicting them of sin, righteousness, and judgment, to bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

## What are we now in Christ and why?

Well, we've seen what we were. We've seen what God has done through Christ. Now let's see what we are in Christ. And the little question, "why?" You know "what" and "why" are important. Because they're two of the six little friends of Longfellow, the poet? He said,

*"I have six little friends.  
They taught me all I knew.  
Their names are what and where and when  
and why and how and who."  
Longfellow*

So, a good idea is you study the Scripture, jot down on a piece of paper those six little friends and ask the questions. As you go through the text, you'll be surprised at what comes up. We're going to ask what and why? What are we in Christ and why?

Number one, we are a love story. You say, "I don't see that there." Well, just hang on. We are a poem or a work of art, and we are a company called to a high and holy calling. We're a love story, or a poem, and we're a company that has been called to a high and holy calling. Look at verses 8–10. "*For by grace you have been saved through faith.*" There's the love story. "... *and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest any should boast. For we are his workmanship ...*" There's the poem. "... *created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*" Remember I told you up there in verse one, "hang on to that word 'walk'?" We once walked according to the course of this world, under the dominion of the devil, after the lust of the flesh. That was the way we want to live our lives. God has a predetermined plan—originated, devised, orchestrated in eternity past—a plan for your life and for my life. We are to walk. Too many Christians aren't walking with the Lord. Too many times you and I fail to walk with the Lord. We need to walk, and we need to walk daily, and we need to walk what we talk.

So here it is, a love story. "... *by grace you have been saved.*" And literally, I must tell you that this is a perfect paraphrastic. I know that just thrills you to the bottom of your shoes. But a perfect paraphrastic is a present tense of the verb *eimi*, which is the verb to be connected with a perfect tense verb of the word "*to save.*" If I put it in English the way that it comes through in the Greek, "by grace, you have been saved in the past with the result that you're saved today, with the result that you will be saved forever." Past completed action having present and ongoing future results. Is that not amazing? In two words. "*For by grace you have been saved.*" It is done. You know, when Jesus said "*it is finished*" on the cross, He wasn't just talking about His suffering. He wasn't just talking about the payment of the penalty of our sin. He was talking about the purchase of our "so great



salvation.” And when we receive that gift, it is, as we say, “a done deal.” *“By grace you have been saved.”*

Why do we call it a love story? Because over and over throughout the Bible, the plan of redemption is couched within romance terminology. We don't have time to go into all of it but think of Rahab. Here you have a Canaanite prostitute who hears a message of what God has done for the children of Israel, and she believes in that God. Then, a couple of spies come into her house, and she chooses, because of her faith, to hide them. She hides and protects them and sends them out another way. And one of those guys becomes her husband. His name was Salmon. They were Boaz's ancestors. Then Ruth comes out of Moab, comes to faith, enters into Bethlehem—of all places, the city of David—humbles herself to lowly service and catches the eye of the champion of the village, Boaz, the descendant of Salmon and Rahab. You can go through many, many passages: read the book of Hosea. Over and over again, redemption is couched in romance terminology. *“Delight yourself in the Lord,”* David tells us in Psalm 37:4, *“and He will give you the desires of your heart.”* But did you know that the word *“delight”* refers to the intimate embrace of a husband and his wife? Delight yourself, fall in love with your Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. I've seen that happen so many times throughout my life. So, we are a love story.

I want to deal with one issue. *“For by grace you have been saved through faith and **that** not of yourselves.”* What does the *“that”* refer to? Here's our second false teaching. The first is if you're spiritually dead, you have no capacity to believe. That's totally false. The one that we see before us is: does *“that”* refer to faith as *“the gift”*? There are those who teach from this passage that until God gives you faith, you don't have the ability to believe. And therefore, *“by grace you have been saved through faith, and that ...”* meaning *“faith,”* they take it because it's the latest antecedent to that little word *“that,”* which really should be translated, *“this.”* *“... **this** is not of yourselves. It is a gift of God ...”* Well, let me just tell you, it's impossible for the word *“that”* to refer to faith. It's impossible for two reasons. Number one, words must agree in gender and *“faith”* and *“grace”* are both feminine. The word *“that”* is neuter. Therefore, it cannot be referring to them. But is a use of the neuter that is important. It's called the *“distant”* or the *“conceptual”* antecedent. In other words, it's not talking about one thing. It's reaching back and it's gathering up a bundle of things that have been said and it's bringing them in and it's saying, *“this”* is what I'm talking about. And what *“that”* refers to is: *“made alive ... raised up ... and seated with Christ.”* It's all summarized by the word *“saved.”* But we need to understand *“saved”* in those terms. *“By grace you've been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is a gift of God, not of works, lest any should boast.”* That's our love story.

Quite a few of you are married, aren't you? You know, the fact you're still alive, your love story is still being written. Do you realize that? Do you consciously make sure that it's a good story? Being told each day because the story is not finished? Write a good story! Make sure it has a good ending because the ending is not written yet. But you're also writing a poem. *“We are His workmanship.”* You know, the word for *“workmanship”* is? *Poema*. Sounds like our word *“poem.”* That's exactly where we get it. It refers to a poem, a work of art, a painting, a sculpture. You could think of any one of those things, but we're work in process, aren't we? We're not finished. That work is going on. And now it is a work of cooperation. When it came to giving us life, raising us up and seating us with Christ, God didn't need our help. But you know what? To finish the masterpiece, He wants us

involved. So, from the love story that's not finished to the poem that is still being written, God wants you and I involved. He wants us involved to finish the story.

Finally, a high and holy calling. *"We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus."* The verb "created" is the same word that we find in 2nd Corinthians 5:17, *"If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation."* It means "to create something out of nothing." *"Created in Christ Jesus for good works, that God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."* How was your walk today? Did you have a good walk, was it a walk of fellowship? Was it a walk of obedience? You say, "Well, I would like to walk in good works, but I don't know how." Are you ready? Paul tells us how in the rest of the book.

Turn with me to Ephesians 4:1. *"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called."* The word "worthy" is a word that means "balance the scales." Balance the scales. You have a "calling." Make sure that your life measures up to the calling. That calling is *"in Christ."* That's number one. Number two, "walk in purity" (Eph. 4:17). *"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind."* We saw earlier that this is how we used to walk. It is not the way that we should walk now. We want to move on from that. Then, in Ephesians 5:1–2, *"Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us."* By the way, this is not just emotional love—this is sacrificial love. To love this way hurts. It hurts to love with the love of Christ. Sometimes it's wonderful, but sometimes there's a price. *"Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma."*

You know, when that Good Samaritan came along and found that guy beat up in the ditch, it cost him. He had to give the guy his seat on the donkey. Maybe he had to unload things he was carrying and leave them by the side of the road. He took him to the inn. He paid to get him patched up. He poured oil and wine—very expensive commodities—into the guy's wounds. He left word with the innkeeper, "I'm coming back this way. Anything more that is by way of expense, let me know and I'll cover it." It was costly. Can you love the unlovable? Are there people in your family you don't like? Are there neighbors that you don't like? You know what? That's when we *really* love—because Jesus loves the unlovable. Jesus loves the hopeless cases that He gives hope to. It's the love of Jesus that delivers the sinner and makes him a saint. The love of Christ—"Walk in love." You can't do it unless you're filled with the Spirit, because the fruit of the Spirit is love. There you have it.

All right. So, we're walking worthy. We're walking in purity. We're walking in love. Look down at Ephesians 5:8, *"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light."* The "light," of course, is the Word of God. We walk in the light of the Word of God. Drop down to Ephesians 5:15, *"See then that you walk circumspectly."* What does "circumspectly" mean? We don't even use this word anymore. It means "cautiously." *"Walk [cautiously], not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."* Every day, we have 24 hours. Every day, we are going to "buy up" a certain amount of that time for eternity. The time that we spend in fellowship with the Lord, in the filling of the Spirit, bearing the fruit of the Spirit—that section of time has been laid up for eternity. How much time are we going to have in our bank account when we get to Heaven? Redeem the time! Walk in wisdom.

Then, while the word “walk” is not used in the last two verses, I think we can apply it. Verse 18, “Do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” So, I would say, “walk in the Spirit.” Galatians 5:16 says, “Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” How can I overcome my addictions? By the way, I am of the opinion that every one of us is an addict. We're all addicts. We're just addicted to different things. And some people's addictions are “acceptable,” socially, and some people's addictions are not. But you know what? If you give in to your “acceptable addiction,” you're just as bad off as the guy on Skid Row. How do we break them? I can't! That's the great lesson Paul learned in Romans 7: “Who will deliver me from this body of death?” Maybe the Guy that went to the cross and died for me—maybe He has the power. “I thank God through Jesus Christ, my Lord ...”

And then the last one. Again, reading the word “walk” in Ephesians 6:11, “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” We need to walk in this world as soldiers armed for battle. We are in a fight. It's worse than a fight for life. It's a fight for eternity. It's a fight for souls. And the more we engage the enemy in that fight, the greater the toll we sometimes must pay. We can't do it unless we're armed with the armor of God.

Let's consider that the Resurrection may mean a whole lot more than we thought it meant. What does it mean? It means a transformation of your life and my life. There's a great little poem that says:

*I am my neighbor's Bible. He reads me when we meet.  
Today, he'll read me in my home, tomorrow on the street.  
He may be friend or relative, or slight acquaintance be,  
but I am my neighbor's Bible, and he is reading me.*

*You're writing a gospel, a chapter each day  
by the deeds that you do and the words that you say.  
And men read what you write, whether faithless or true.  
So, what is the gospel according to you?*

What does the Resurrection mean? So much more than we often consider. May God bless His Word to us in our lives and transform us into the likeness of our Savior. Let's pray ...

*Father in Heaven, Your Word is so powerful, so rich. It fills us with, sometimes, alarm. How far we fall from what we ought to be. How little we have laid hold of the riches of grace that You have given to us. How much more we could know, how much more we could do. But Father, Your plan is never for us to grovel in despair and disappointment.*

*Every day is a new day, and every day Your grace is renewed. And the Spirit stands by, ready to fill us, to lead us, and to empower us to do the things that You would have us to do. Our problem is not lack of intellect, lack of knowledge. It's just lack of simple, childlike faith—what You can do for and through us if we simply come to You in humility and allow You to cleanse us, allow You to fill us and allow You to guide us day by day in the steps that You have already planned for us to walk in.*

*So, Father, I know that with this group gathered here, there are people who have burdens and people who have physical ailments. There are people who have cares and concerns for friends, for neighbors, for relatives. Father, touch every heart from something of the treasure that I have just, in*

*this stammering tongue, struggled to try to make real and alive, and just to challenge us to recognize that we have the storehouse of Heaven—open and available to us, if we would just use the key of faith and open that door and draw from the resources that are ours.*

*Thank You, Father, that what we were, we are no longer. Thank you that the work You did is a work that is eternal. And thank You that what we are in Christ, and why, is because we are here to serve You, to the glory and the honor of Jesus Christ, to the saving of souls and the building up of those who are in Christ.*

*Let us be more diligent, we pray in Jesus name. Amen.*