

## The Amazing Grace of God – *Ephesians 2:4-10*

**Introduction** – We jump into the middle of a sentence when we pick up at verse 4. This part of the sentence is the good news and the stark contrast to the previous bad news is the heart of the greatest story in all of creation. The origin of salvation is God, the basis is grace, the means is God's Son, the instrument is living faith, the cause is the immeasurable and merciful love of God, and the purpose is the showcasing of the amazing grace of God to His entire creation.

**The Amazing Grace of God** – We were completely, hopelessly lost in our spiritual death – “...but God.” God, who is *rich in mercy* (*rich*: fully capable of paying for all of our transgressions/debts – and *mercy*: steadfast covenant love, sensitivity, and actions of lovingkindness), did something about it. He did so because He loved us with a great love and He did so even when we were His sworn enemies, dead in our transgressions and sins. In that state of death, He made us alive, and this is the doctrine of the new birth. The entire work of our salvation and our new life is by grace (v5b, 8-9) – God's unmerited favor upon us. It is all a gift and there is absolutely no part of it, including our act of believing, upon which we can boast. If there was, then our flesh would go there and boast away and the display of the gracious glory of God would be lost.

**He Loved Us** – Why did He love us? People often ask why He did not love the non-elect, but that question is actually easier to answer (consider again 2:1-3). The question that is beyond us is why He loved us – and why with so great a love? Why me and why not someone else? This is a mystery (Deut 29:29) and God says that we are incapable of knowing; we would have to be God Himself to fully understand (Rom 11:33-36).

**An Extravaganza of Grace** – God did this and is doing this for a reason. He wants to show forth “*the exceeding riches of His grace*” in this Gospel Age and in all ages to come. He wants to show off His grace “*to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places*” (3:10). He wants you and everything in His creation connected to you (and everything is) to see how glorious His grace truly is – and He wants this to go on forever.

**Together with Christ** – But that is not all. There is so much more to this saving act of God. He saved us, which includes three things. First, *He made us alive together with Christ* (the Greek verb is translated in the four words “*made us alive together*” and the same verb construction is used in the next two). Second, *He raised us up together with Christ*. And third, *He made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*. We declare in our creed that Christ rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father. But what is so incredible is that by the instrument of the evangelical, life-giving faith given to us, we are raised, ascended and seated together with Christ. That creed is about Christ – and all who are in Him, all who are with Him.

**Alive with Christ** – If you are in Christ, it means that you died with Christ and that you have no life apart from Him. In fact, this life you are living is Christ in you, a life of faith (Gal 2:20). Your life was death apart from Christ, a life without hope. “...but God...” Now, Christ is in you – Christ, the hope of glory (Col 1:27).

**Ascended and Reigning with Christ** – What does it mean that Christ is reigning over all things in heaven? What is He doing? Is He waving His hands, throwing down thunderbolts, speaking magical incantations? How is He doing it? And what are we doing if we are *made to sit together* with Him in this position of reigning? It's not quite as mysterious as all that. It is just as earthy as all things you will do tomorrow. All those things you will do, you will do *together with Christ*. Do you ever think that when you get to heaven, then you will not sin in this way or that way anymore? You think that it just wouldn't be appropriate there to do that. All true. But did you know that, in some sense, you are already in heaven with Christ?

**Reigning with Christ in Good Works** – Now consider verse 10 in light of all this. We are His workmanship, and in Christ we walk in good works He has prepared. This is in direct contrast to the walking we did according to the course of this world, our flesh, and the devil (vv1-3). The walking in the good works is the reigning with Christ. And this means that we reign with Christ when we do the works prepared for us, described in chapters 4-6. Wives are co-reigning with Christ when they submit to their husbands. Husbands are co-reigning with Christ when they sacrificially love their wives. We all are co-reigning with Christ when we put off the old man, when we put off lying, when we put off bitterness and fleshly wrath, evil speaking and sexual immorality. We all are co-reigning with Christ when we put on forgiveness, tenderheartedness, when, filled with the Holy Spirit, we sing psalms to one another. These are the works prepared for us – just a few examples.

**Walk, Don't Work** - Notice that we walk in these good works, we do not work in them. God does the working, we do the walking. This is because we are alive, ascended, and seated with Christ. We have not been saved and sent off to now go do some good works for God (go – be better). We have been united by God with Christ and with Him we reign over the world, walking through this world with His amazing grace, mercy and love already prepared.

*What are you doing tomorrow?*