

Title: The Moment I Experienced God's Love

Big Idea:

Text: Eph. 2:4 *But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,*

Introduction:

Eph. 2:1 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,*

Eph. 2:2 *in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.*

Eph. 2:3 *Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

Eph. 2:4 **BUT GOD...**

LAST WEEK you heard the story of someone standing on the other side. You saw him SQUIRM, ARGUE and DEBATE with God about 3 issues:

1. Our corruption to SIN (Eph 2:1)
2. Our captivity to SATAN (Eph 2:2)
3. Our condemnation to HELL (Eph 2:3)

These are perhaps the **MOST DISMAL VERSES** found in the entire Bible.

1. We are **ALL** corrupt to the core with this cancerous disease of **SIN**. By nature and by choice we **ALL** rebel against God's standards of holiness and insist on living life our way.
2. We are **ALL** held captive by **SATAN** and we are **ALL** enslaved by him. We speak his dialect of cursing and we partner with him in creating discord, division and disarray in this world.
3. We are **ALL** doomed to **HELL**. Because we insist on living a life without God over there, God grants our wish to continue that pattern in the afterlife. We are **ALL** headed for a Christ-less eternity.

This is **OUR** reality. This is **OUR** fate. This is **OUR** life's story. Folks, this is about as bleak as it gets. You **MUST** get this point. It is heaven's diagnosis on **OUR** soul. **ALL** of us. No exceptions. No family name. No amount of wealth. **No good deed will BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE DEPRAVITY OF MAN AND THE HOLINESS OF GOD.**

No celebration of Easter Sunday is possible without this prognosis.

GOD'S LOVING RESCUE:

THIS WEEK we focus on **THIS side of the room**, on **GOD'S HEART AND GOD'S RESPONSE TO THE PLIGHT OF MANKIND**. On **THIS side**, we gather His perspective, His analysis, His intervention. Over there is where we live without God. Over here, we consider the deliberation, the rescue plan, the risk and the reasons of God to even get engaged with the mess we all created over there.

Our text brings us to first to **God's MOTIVES**. Next week we will talk about **God's METHOD**. We pause **first must** consider heaven's vantage point and heaven's discussion on what to do with the mess that the human race created over there. It all hinges on two words.

BUT GOD...

These two words are perhaps the most important in **ALL of Scripture**.

The totality of the Gospel is in these words.

Our only hope is in these words.

The most amazing rescue story with the most formidable foe.

We were dead.

We were bound.

We were doomed...**BUT GOD**.

It is the story of every person here or should be the story of everyone here.

BC to AD is not a calendar date, but the moment Divine Intervention came to my life.

BUT GOD... I want us to take them **systematically** and **slowly**. Too often we race to the end. Too often we ignore the deliberation, the consideration, the tragic dilemma our rebellious choices put God. Too often, we say, *"Of course I know what God is going to do..."*

Stop and consider for a moment the options God had...**BUT GOD...**

1. Looked at the mess we created and said, **"They made their bed, they must now lie in it."**
2. Got **angry** at his rebellious creatures and decided to **stomp them into oblivion**.
3. **Turned him back on the human race** and walk away leaving their own fate in their own hands.

Eugene Peterson writes in the Message on Ephesians 1:3: *“It’s a wonder God didn’t lose His temper and do away with the whole lot of us.”*

4. **Took an affinity with whales** and said, “Perhaps I can refocus my affections on them and skip the human race.”
5. Saw the failure of this earthly experiment decided to **start anew with another race (on the far side of the galaxy with another race (perhaps the Na’vi Clan on Pandora)**
6. **Foresaw in His omniscience that most people would still reject Him in spite of all his efforts and make the logical accounting call**, the cost would not be worth the reward.
7. **Recoiled in horror** when He realized that to save mankind, He would have to sacrifice His Son, Jesus Christ. Deciding this cost was too much to pay, like any reasonable parent, He chose the safety and security of His Son rather than the rescuing rebellious mankind.

These options could have been our fate. They could have been our reality. The story of creation could have ended with the story of sin, Satan and hell.

In reality, most of us believe we are **ENTITLED** to salvation or that **GOD’S CHARACTERS** must save us. There is a sense of ego here that is quite appalling. It almost puts us in a place of demand to God about what He must do and How much He must pay. None of us go to our parents and demand they pay our mortgage no matter the sacrifice. Yet, for some of us we sit in church knowing the facts of salvation, but never entering into the dilemma of God to save.

But that is **NOT** what the text says.

Eph. 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of **HIS GREAT LOVE** with which **HE LOVED US**,

God choose another path. It is the most amazing **RESCUE** mission in all of humanity. Taking on enormous odds. The disease of sin. The demonic realm. The selfish inclinations of us all. Without a guarantee that anyone would ever respond, would ever care, would ever walk over. **Why?** The text says, **“God loved us.”** *“because of HIS GREAT LOVE with which HE LOVED US,”* He looked over from here

saw you and I and said, “Your worth the risk”. “Your worth the cost.” “I’m all in.”

I stand here today to remind you that God believe YOU ARE WORTH IT. He looks across the gap, see you there in misery and says, “WE MUST FIX THIS.”

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

Paul not only tells us **WHY** he did it.

1. Love as the central motivation...*because of His great LOVE with which He loved us...For God so loved the world...*
 - a. **MERCIFUL Love** - *But God, being rich in mercy - Eph 2:4*
We were dead and so helpless to save ourselves, only mercy could reach the helpless for **MERCY IS LOVE** for the down and out. Mercy is NOT getting what we do deserve.
 - b. **GRACIOUS Love** - *by grace you have been saved, - Eph 2:5*
We were under wrath deserving nothing at God’s hand but judgment on account of our trespasses and sins. Only **LOVING GRACE** could save us from our “just desserts” for grace is undeserved favor. Grace is getting what we DON’T deserve.
 - c. **Loving KINDNESS** - *More than that, He saved us in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.- Eph 2:6*

The most fundamental need we all share as human beings is NOT food, water, shelter, sex or work. It is **LOVE**.

We draw our **SELF WORTH** from who loves us.
We draw our **IDENTITY** from who loves us.
We get our **SECURITY** from who loves us.
We find our **PURPOSE** from who loves us.

May I suggest to you that perhaps ALL of society ills stem from people who lost themselves and are fighting forces because they have not felt love.

Eph. 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of HIS GREAT LOVE with which HE LOVED US, EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN OUR TRANSGRESSIONS.

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Yet is it not only **OUR OWN CHOICES** that affect us. It is the choices of **OTHERS. Abandonment. Abuse. Addiction. Deceit. Doubt. Murder. Strife.** Choices to hurt. Choices to curse. Choices to taken advantage. That is the source of the story you are about to hear. **(IDA'S STORY).**

GOD'S LOVING REWARD:

Rather than rejection, anger or wrath, we are first **RESCUED** and then we are greatly **REWARDED**.

Eph. 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

Eph. 2:5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

We were DEAD in our sins...but now we are ALIVE in Christ.
We were CAPTIVE by Satan... but now we are RAISED UP
We were CONDEMNED and under wrath...but now we are SEATED in the heavenly places.

This is quite unexpected. Normally, one would expect justice and from justice, judgment. We made our mess. We now need to live in it. Rather than punish us, God saves us. Rather than banishment, we get reward.

BUT GOD...we must learn the reality what God has done for us. He is the HERO in the story. This is perhaps the most difficult, **yet important** concept in the Bible. Let's look at God's loving reward.

1. Not talking about, Jesus but YOU AND I.

This is Christianity: When we were dead in our sins, but God **MADE US ALIVE, RAISED US UP** and **SEATED US IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS**. All three follow Jesus' life - Resurrection, Ascension and Seated in Heaven. **In a sense, what has happened to Jesus has HAPPENED to us. Like Christ, we have been MADE ALIVE. Like Christ, we have been RAISED. Like Christ, we have been SEATED.**

2. Not just a future promise, but a PRESENT REALITY.

Some look at these verbs and say, "What a wonderful promise we have in heaven." But the grammar is telling us that Paul is emphasizing the **PRESENT** more than the **FUTURE**. The verbs are **AORIST** meaning a **PAST ACTION WITH A PRESENT RESULT**. In English we translate such a tense with "**have**" or "**have been**". We **HAVE BEEN** made alive. We **HAVE BEEN** raised up. We **HAVE BEEN** seated with Him in the heavenly places. It is the **HERE** and **NOW**, **NOT** just the **DISTANT FUTURE**. It is not only **PAST**, but it is **COMPLETED**. It is a finished work.

Paul is writing to a struggling church to encourage them in their difficulties. In order to do that he tells them **NOT TO FOCUS** on their situation without **SEEING IT**

FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE. The biggest question you and I face is NOT what happens with our mortgage, our job, our health or even our family. It is...

The non-Christian is one who is dead in their trespasses and sins. He is led according to the course of this world. He is subject to Satanic powers. He fulfills the desires of flesh and of the mind. Because of this, He is under the wrath of God.

The Christian is ALIVE, RAISED and SEATED. The contrast **BUT GOD...** brings all this about.

3. Not alone, but UNIFIED WITH CHRIST (4x)

How has all this happened?

Heart, mind and will all changed. Whole new disposition. Our affections, desires and longings are on heavenly matters.

4. Not without hope and power, but SEATED WITH CHRIST

Finished Work
Position of Authority

5. Not without influence, but “AUTHORITY IN THE HEAVENLIES”

Far above principalities and powers.

The Apostle’s Prayer:

Eph. 1:18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Eph. 1:19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

Eph. 1:20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

Eph. 1:21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

Eph. 1:22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

Eph. 1:23 which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

IN CHRIST (LIVING IN A NEW REALITY):

Fundamental to New Testament Christianity is this concept of the union of God's people with Christ. By virtue of our union with Christ, we share in His resurrection, ascension and session. Jesus said, "I am the vine and you are the branches" (John 15:5). Double failure. We don't comprehend the depth of sin and we don't embrace the greatness of our salvation. How does this GREAT SALVATION work?

1. New MIND, WILL and EMOTION

Our minds corrupt. Our choices selfish. Our emotions extreme, erratic, and eccentric. Indeed we were like spoiled children. We were dead to anything of God. We did not want to know Him or His ways. We were dead, so what does He give us...

New life. New Person. New Disposition. We are ALIVE in Christ. We were dead and now we are imparted with new life. Our **MINDS** have a new focus. Our **WILL** or **DESIRES** are changed. Our **EMOTIONS** are more centered and positive. Literally, we are made alive in Christ. We don't get a new brain or new intelligence, but a new disposition on life that affects our entire being. It is not something easily explained. Perhaps the great hymn says it best, "I once was lost, but now I am found, once blind, but now I see."

New Mind - Eternity, Pure, Filtering and Focus on the Bible as a means to hear from God.

New Will - Choices, Direction, Holiness, Church, Friends, Prayer all different

New Emotions - Peace, Joy, Satisfaction and Grief for sin.

2. New AUTHORITY

For those who have shown that whatever power they have they use it for selfish means and destructive manners over others, you would think God would take away all authority and responsibility. We have a horrible track record. Our "Midas touch" is destructive. Whatever we touch, we destroy. To such people, God gives...

The privilege to sit next to Him in authority on thrones reigning with authority.

The idea of being Seated in the heavenly realms the place where principalities and powers exist infers that in Christ we have an authority to combat all demonic intrusions and place them in subject to Christ.

"In the heavenly places"

ruling and reigning with Christ on thrones (1:20)

realm in which principalities and powers operate (3:10; 6:12)

No longer belong to this world. No longer under Satan's control. No longer under God's wrath.

We belong to the kingdom of God. We are near God. We are in authority over demonic powers. We are seated in victory, not longer seen as under wrath and punishment but favor and trust.

3. New CERTAINTY

We were captive. We gave into the Tempter and allowed him to move into our lives. He filled our hearts with fear, worry, lust, anger, greed and pride. We claimed we were our own men, but in reality we were his. He knew which buttons to push. He know how to manipulate us. We were in concert with him to destroy ourselves and others.

I have been put “in Christ” and joined in Him and His victory is now mine. This brings: Certainty for our future. Security, even before we respond (which we get to). The tenses in these verbs - made alive, raised up and seated up show that God wants a level of security. Rather than wait and see if we will be faithful, if we will be fruitful, if we live any life worthy of the price of having His son die on a cross, He offers security. No faith, no religion, no God does this.

What constitutes members of God's new society? It is NOT...

1. That they admire or even worship Jesus
2. That they mentally ascent to certain belief, dogmas or creeds
3. That they live by certain standards

No, what makes distinctive members of God's new society is that they are **"in Christ."** Fundamental to New Testament Christianity is this concept of the union of God's people with Christ. By virtue of our union with Christ, we share in His resurrection, ascension and session.

This talk of solidarity in Christ is not meaningless Christian mysticism, but bears witness to a living Christian experience of a new life (with the reality of God's love for us and others, a sense of our love for him) and with new victory (enemy under our feet).

We were **DEAD** in our sins but now in Christ we are made **alive** and **alert**.
We were **CAPTIVE** by Satanic forces but now in Christ we have been **set free**
We were **CONDEMNED** to hell but now in Christ we have been **enthroned**.

Heaven will be filled with the exploits of Christ and praises to God. Their will indeed be a **DISPLAY** in heaven. Not self-display, but rather a display of incomparable wealth of God's grace, mercy and kindness in Christ Jesus - a **DISPLAY** of His love.

BUT GOD...

And

YOU

were dead in your
trespasses and sins.

Our corruption to Sin
Ephesians Two:One

in which YOU formerly walked
according to the course of this
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THE PRINCE

OF THE POWER OF THE AIR.

of the spirit that is
now working in the
sons of disobedience.

Our captivity to SATAN

Ephesians Two:Two

**YOU live in the lusts of your flesh,
indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind,
and are by nature a**

CHILD OF

WRATH

even as the rest.

Our condemnation to HELL

Ephesians Two:Three

DARKNESS
GREED
ANGER
BETRAYAL
ADULTERY
ABUSE
FAILURE
JUDGMENT
CRUELTY

BUT GOD

IMMORALITY
SHAME
LIFE LIGHT
LOW
INTEGRITY
PURPOSE

REBELLION
WISDOM
RUTH GRACIOUS
BY FAITH
HUMILITY
GRATITUDE

STRENGTH
FREEDOM
OBEDIENCE
GENEROSITY
ASSURANCE
GENTLENESS
FULFILLMENT
COMPASSION
SELF-CONTROL
JUSTIFICATION
FAITHFULNESS
ACCEPTANCE
FORGIVENESS
CONFIDENCE
CONSIDERATE
PURPOSE
CHARITY
ETERNAL LIFE
HONESTY
WISDOM
OBEDIENCE
PURITY

**the moment B.C.
became A.D.**

GOD'S LOVING

RESCUE

Ephesians Two:Four



BUT GOD...

1. Looked at the mess we created and said, “They made their bed, they must now lie in it.”
2. Got angry at His rebellious creatures and decided to stomp them into oblivion.
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4. Took an affinity with whales and said, “Perhaps I can refocus my affections on them and skip the human race.”

BUT GOD...

5. Saw the failure of this earthly experiment decided to start anew with another race on the far side of the galaxy with another race (perhaps the Na'vi Clan on Pandora).
6. Foresaw in His omniscience that most people would still reject Him in spite of all His efforts and so He made the logical accounting call - the cost would not be worth the reward.
7. Recoiled in horror when He realized that to save mankind, He would have to sacrifice His Son, Jesus Christ. Deciding this cost was too much to pay, like any reasonable parent, He choose the safety and security of His Son rather than the rescuing rebellious mankind.

BUT GOD...

being rich in mercy,

because of **HIS GREAT LOVE**
with which **HE LOVED US.**

even when we were dead in our transgressions,

Ephesians Two:Four

GOD'S LOVING

REWARD

Ephesians Two:four-Five



BUT GOD...

being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions,

① **MADE US ALIVE** together with Christ
(by grace you have been saved),

② and **RAISED US UP** with Him,

③ and **SEATED US** with Him
in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,

BUT GOD...

Ephesians Two:Four-Five

being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, **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**,

1. Not talking about Jesus, but YOU AND I.
2. Not just a future promise, but A PRESENT REALITY
3. Not alone, but UNIFIED WITH CHRIST (4x).
4. Not without hope and power, but SEATED WITH CHRIST.
5. Not without influence, but AUTHORITY IN THE HEAVENLIES.

I PRAY...

¹⁸ that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ^{19a} and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

^{19b} These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might ²⁰ which He brought about **IN CHRIST**, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. ²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things **TO THE CHURCH,** ²³ **which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.**

The Apostle's Prayer - Ephesians 1:18-23

IN CHRIST

LIVING A NEW REALITY

1. New MIND, WILL and EMOTIONS.
2. New AUTHORITY
3. New CERTAINTY



DARKNESS
GREED
ANGER
BETRAYAL
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JUDGMENT
CRUELTY

BUT GOD

IMMORALITY
SHAME
LIFE LIGHT
LOW
INTEGRITY
PURPOSE
REDEMPTION
CONDEMNATION
ARRIVANCE
GRACE
COURTESY
CARING
STRENGTH
FREEDOM
OBEDIENCE
GENEROSITY
ASSURANCE
GENTLENESS
FULFILLMENT
COMPASSION
SELF-CONTROL
JUSTIFICATION
FAITHFULNESS
ACCEPTANCE
FORGIVENESS
CONFIDENCE
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**the moment B.C.
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