

Ephesians 2:1-7

From the Graveyard to Glory

I read an article this week that stated that Statistically, Stanford University ranks as one of the toughest schools to give an acceptance letter.

A)The university recently updated their admission standards and stated that only five percent of applying students are accepted.

B) In 2017, 42,497 students applied, and 2,140 were accepted.

C)The article went on to say that the accepted students needed an ACT score of 35 – Perfect is 36
1)Or the highest

They needed an SAT score of 1520 out possible 1600

A)And average GPA of 4.18 out of a possible 4.0

B)I graduated with a 3.2

C)Plus a robust "resume" of extracurricular activities, leadership qualities, references, and recommendations.

D)On top of that, new students also have to pay for Stanford at \$70,000 per year.

1)**In conclusion**, if you want to get into Stanford you better be perfect or just amazing.

You know what is harder to get into than Stanford?

Heaven! You literally have to be perfect.

A)But Paul here in Ephesians 2 is going to describe something that God did for us – **in His grace**

B)Grace = getting what you don't deserve

1)it is something more *real* and more *amazing* than we could ever imagine.

C)God did something for us that we didn't deserve

1)He made a way for imperfect people like us to be accepted into his presence.

If you go to buy a diamond the jeweler first lays down a black background on top of the display case.

A)Then he sets the diamond on the black backdrop

B)because it is against the contrast of black backdrop that you can see the brilliance of the diamond.

C)Paul wants us to see the amazing brilliance and beauty of this thing called grace.

1)He is going sets our new identity in Jesus against the black backdrop of our old identity.

D)**Abbreviated version** of what we have been looking at in Romans 1-3

1)Rebellious / Moralistic / Religious all need Jesus

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 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, 3 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. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

So in this one long sentence Paul is going is going to explain how the Gospel takes us from death to life —

A)from the graveyard to glory.

B)In verses 1-3 he tells us WHO WE WERE

1)In verses 4-6 he tells us WHO WE ARE

C)In verse 7 he tells us WHY HE DID IT

WHO WE WERE

A)Here's the broad stroke: (write these down)

B)**We were** ^{1.} Without Life — ^{2.} Without Freedom — ^{3.} Without Hope

C)We were ^{1.} Without Life- **DEAD in trespasses and sins**

Please note the TENSE of the verbs.

A)The first verb in this long sentence is *Were* — the verb that denotes the **state of being**.

B)It is in the **past tense**. *Dead* was our **old state of being** — *Dead* is what we **used to be**.

C)Paul’s diagnosis of man’s condition is **not in keeping with the sociologists, psychologists, humanists today**

D)They say we are a little **misguided**.

1)They say we are a little **culturally/socially deprived**.

E)They say man’s **temporarily flawed condition can be changed** —

1)that given enough time and education; given the right environment —

2)man will eventually become the best version of human.

God’s diagnosis and prognosis isn’t even close to man’s.

A)God says we were *Dead* and *Dead* is a strong word!

B)Man’s deadness started in the garden –Adam....

1)Eat die - separated from God – from the life of God

C)Dead = without life.

1)Jesus said that He came so we might **have life**.

D)He said that to men and women who were biologically alive.

1)**They were existing — but not living.**

E)Real life has it’s reality in God

1)Without God man is DEAD!

Dead = Separated from the life of God Without life

A)*Dead* = powerless.

Romans 5:6 when we were powerless

B)So we were Dead – separated from the very life of God – relationship of God –

1)we were powerless to fix that.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death

Ezekiel 18:20 The soul who sins shall die.

C)All have sinned and fallen short of the glory...

Sin = missing the mark.

A)It is failing to live up to the standard of God’s holiness.

B)Trespasses = wrong steps taken, deliberate breaking of the law — willful disobedience.

1)No trespassing – do it anyway – Will disobedience

D)THAT is exactly what Adam and Eve did in Genesis 3.

1)THAT is exactly what all of us have done.

E)Trespasses speaks of us as “rebels”. Sins speak of us as “failures”.

1)We were all “*dead in trespasses and sins*”.

1. We were WITHOUT LIFE

2. We were WITHOUT FREEDOM

dead in the 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,

A)Walk is often the Biblical way of describing a way of life.

B)Life is a walk, an active process that moves along step by step.

1)In our old state of being — when our trespasses and sins separated us from God, who alone is our life

C)We **walked, following the course of this world.**

2 Chronicles 34:2 And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Was it not the LORD, against whom we have sinned, in whose ways they would not walk, and whose law they would not obey? Isaiah 42:24

Walked means “to have wandered aimlessly; to have meandered”.

A)Big difference between walk and meander.

B) Walk implies purpose — meander implies moving without purpose.

C) Often the description of the way men and women approach the mall —

1) Men on a Mission { In & out — I know what I want / I know what store to go to { How much I want to pay

D) Women Meander — it is not a Mission it is an Experience —

1) I don't know what I want exactly — I am just looking for something — good deal

That is a lot of people's approach to life

A) Wandering aimlessly from one thing to another — like some women wander from store to store

B) Before Jesus we were meandering — shopping for replacement identities.

C) We walked, following the course of this world.

1) The word “course” is the same word used to refer to a “**weather vane**”.

A weather vane can't determine the direction it moves.

A) It's moved by the prevailing winds. — Spinning thing in our backyard — this way that way — wind direction

B) That is who we used to be — we were controlled by the values and attitudes of this world.

D) We walked, following 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,

Air = Spiritual realm

A) Paul tells us that behind the visible world there is an invisible world.

B) Behind the course of this world is *the prince of the power of the air*.

1) The Bible refers to this superhuman, super powerful entity as Satan.

C) In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Paul called him the “*god of this age (world)*”.

1) Jesus referred to him as “*the ruler of this world*” (John 16:11).

D) We're told in 1 John 5:19 that “*the whole world is under the control of the evil one*”.

The god of this world is at work in the hearts of men who disobey the truth.

A) His goal is to get men and women to live to please their own lust, desires and flesh.

B) Prior to come to Christ a person is driven by the desires of flesh to please self!

C) A Desire to make themselves happy — to fulfill their goals, desires and dreams!

Think in terms of a compass — A compass points at True North —

A) You are able to make a determination about where you are headed based on that compass point

B) Prior to coming to Jesus the true north point on our compass is pleasing ourselves and making ourselves happy

C) But when you come to Christ your compass setting is changed — the setting **WAS I want to make me happy**

1) **NOW** it is set to I want to honor God!

1. We were **WITHOUT LIFE** — Dead in sin

2. We were **WITHOUT FREEDOM** — influenced by Satan — controlled by lust

3. We were **WITHOUT HOPE**

and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

The NIV translates “children” as “objects”. Without Jesus we were the objects of God's wrath.

A) Without Jesus, we had a “close relationship” with God's wrath.

B) Wrath is the holy revulsion of God's being to anything and everything that is contrary to his holiness.

John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

Colossians 3:6 ...the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience...

C) That is who we were **by nature! That is who we were “**naturally and innately.**”**

1) Here's the point — We did not become sinners because we sinned;

2) instead, we sinned because we are sinners.

1. We were WITHOUT LIFE — Dead in sin

2. We were WITHOUT FREEDOM — influenced by Satan — controlled by lust

3. We were WITHOUT HOPE — under God's wrath.

D) THAT IS THE BLACK BACKDROP of WHO WE WERE.

Then Paul uses one of the most powerful words in the Bible —

A) in one of the most powerful phrases of the Bible

B) to introduce how God changed us from WHO WE WERE to WHO WE ARE *in through with and by Jesus.*

C) After taking us to the graveyard — he is now going to take us to glory -

1) And it all starts with these two words in v. 4 ***But God***

The word *BUT* - is the conjunction.

A) That little word means that everything that follows it stands in stark contrast to everything that's come before it!

B) We were WITHOUT LIFE (Dead in sin).

1) We were WITHOUT FREEDOM (influenced by Satan, controlled by lust).

C) We were WITHOUT HOPE (under God's wrath).

D) Here comes the contrast

- **v.4 BUT GOD** is rich in mercy
- **v.4 BUT GOD** Loved Us
- **v.5 BUT GOD** Saved Us
- **v.6 BUT GOD** Seated Us with Christ

Romans 5:20b-21 where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹so that, as sin reigned in

death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

WHO WE ARE V.4-7

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 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.

We have been made Alive!

Now I want you to notice WHEN God reached out to you / WHY He reached out to you

A) 1st when – V. 5 *You were dead in your trespasses* (rebellion) *and sin* your Failures -

B) Now guys I want you to think back to when you **first noticed your wife**

1) Chances are there was something that attracted you to her – you liked the way she looked that day/
Outfit / hair style / voice

C) Something that made you think – **I have got to find out who that is – I have got to find out more about her**

Chances are you didn't see her in her bath robe / cold cream / curls / bad breath /

A) You didn't see **that picture for yrs – long after she hooked you right?**

B) First impressions mean a lot – There was something that attracted you to your spouse

C) Well Paul is saying that when God reached out to us there was nothing attractive about us at all!

1) Complete opposite – Dead – rebellious lost
When we were at our worst –

Leads us to consider why He would do such a thing ? Mind boggling – why ?

A) Because of who God is V.4 Because He is Rich in Mercy & HIS love is great / v. 5 Full of Grace

B) He is not a one dimensional God — only a God of wrath only.

1) He is also a God of Mercy!

C)The word **Mercy** speaks of emotion aroused by someone in need

1) **and** the attempt to relieve the person and remove his trouble.

D)It is our condition that moves him to be merciful.

1)**Mercy** = Not getting what you do deserve /
Grace is getting what you don't deserve /

Saw WHO WE WERE evoked his mercy.

A)God saw us lifeless and powerless; decaying in bondage, blindly stepping in holes

B)Hopeless in the face of the wrath we deserved.

1)That evoked His **rich mercy**

C)That is why? **It is the essence of who God is –**

When we grasp this it only magnifies – His Brightness

A)In Psa 136 The Psalmist makes the degree 26 times that his mercy endures forever

B)Answer to why ? Just Because – it is who God is – He is Holy yes / Righteous / Yes / Also Gracious Loving and merciful

C)Mercy and Grace seen in light of His Holiness & Righteousness – the **most at the Cross –**

1)Him Punishing His Son – So you could live

Paul continues – **Not only are we alive – but we are DESTINED - V.6 and raised us up together, and made us 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.**

Seated in the Heavenlies – Speaks of our Present Position – and our Future inheritance

A)We have been united with Jesus in His resurrected life.

B)Identity thing: **Throughout this letter we are tethered to the opening words of Chapter 1 — IN CHRIST.**

C)We are forever united with Jesus — forever identified with Jesus.

1)What happened to Jesus WILL happen to us!

D)WE WERE DEAD and DOOMED — but now WE ARE ALIVE and EXALTED.

In verse 7 tells us the 2nd reason **WHY HE DID IT that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**

A) God has saved us, and you know what He's going to do for all eternity?

1)He's going to display the riches of His grace and His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

B)Another way to translate DISPLAY is *in the ages to come He will pile them one upon another in succession*

C)In other words - God is going to spend eternity piling up blessings / showing all He has for you in Christ!

D)Kids at Christmas time - opening presents –

1)sparkle in eye - that is what we are going be like - wow!

E)God will be like a loving parent watching our faces! Smile

You ever wonder what heaven is going to be like? Well here's a description of it:

A)Forever God is just going to be revealing more and more and more of His grace to us,

B)Notice the words Paul uses: *exceeding riches OF his grace*

1)We're talking about riches beyond riches.

C)Exceedingly abundantly beyond what we could ever ask thing or imagine

Close with this:

A poor woman from the slums of London was invited to go with a group of people for a holiday at the ocean. **She had never seen the ocean before, and when she saw it, she burst into tears.**

Those around her thought it was strange that she should cry when such a lovely holiday had been given her.

They asked her, "Why in the world are you crying?" Pointing to the ocean she answered,

“This is the only thing I have ever seen that there was enough of.”

My friend, God has *oceans* of mercy. There is enough of it. For all of us – never runs out

Our redemption is complete. Jesus said, “It IS finished.” It is a done deal!

A)But we are waiting to experience the redemption of our bodies —

B)The moment when we receive a new body that is fit for the heavenlies, that will never grow old,

1)Never get sick, never get tired, never fail us.

C)But while we are waiting for that — we are RIGHT NOW seated with Jesus in the heavenly places.

QUOTE: Wiersbe — “Our physical position may be on earth, but our spiritual position is ‘in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.’”

D)There is a very REAL and PRACTICAL application of this!

1)We should live on earth with our hearts in heaven.

Turn to Colossians 3

SINCE - then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

⁵Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

⁸But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Be who you are in Christ – instead of who you were in the flesh.