

**Ephesians 2: 6 and 7; “To Sit Together with Christ”, Message # 12 in a series
entitled – “The Exceeding Greatness of His Power”, a Bible Study
prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 7th, 2019,
for those gathered at his home.**

We are told here that God is rich in mercy. What is God’s mercy? Well, God’s mercy, as we find it defined and displayed for us here in these verses, is His loving consideration of our lost estate as sinful human beings, not to give us what we so richly deserve – His eternal judgment because of our sins, and our refusal to repent of them. It is according to our fallen nature in Adam that we refuse to do God’s will in accordance with His word. He offers this in the gospel, and He grants it effectually in our experience when we believe in Christ. By nature we are not willing to come to Him for eternal life, so He must come to us if we are ever to be saved. According to His eternal purpose in election, He will show grace to those persons who are not worthy to receive grace; and mercy to those who deserve to be punished. He does not save all men, but He does save some. He saves them on the basis of Christ, and His finished work on their behalf. The Lord Jesus gave His life as a ransom for many. And so, God will save them by His merciful intervention in their lives, based upon what Christ has done, as we saw in our last study.

God is rich in mercy it says here in verse 4, because of His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ. Now, this evening we want to examine the phrase in verse 6 – “He made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ”. What does this mean? For we are not now literally physically sitting together with Christ in the heavenly places. And so what can Paul mean by his speaking in this way? It means 3 things I believe. 1st – It means that God has literally spiritually raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly places. 2nd – It means that God will someday literally physically seat us with Christ in the Day of the Resurrection. And 3rd – It means that God’s seating us with Christ is the prelude for what He will do for us throughout all eternity. I pray that together we might grasp the greatness and the glory of all that God has purposed to do for those who He has had mercy upon.

1st of all – God has literally spiritually raised us up with Christ and has seated us with Him in the heavenly places.

It says here in verses 4-6 that it was the merciful God, who because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. That is, the Triune God sovereignly chose to give us spiritual life in the New Birth because He loved us with an everlasting love. In demonstrating that love in the giving of Christ, and drawing us to behold it through the preaching of the gospel, He opened our spiritual eyes to what He purposed to do for us in Christ. His purpose was, to provide in Christ, a substitute for our sins, and a substitute in righteousness, One who would perfectly fulfill His holy law, and thus become a suitable Savior for sinners, to give them spiritual life; to be the basis of all of His elect people being spiritually raised from their death in trespasses.

Turn with me over to Romans chapter 5, verse 18 – “Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.” Now, the one man’s offense is speaking of Adam’s eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil at the beginning of the world. He was the representative head of our whole race, and so when he ate, he immediately spiritually died. And so, all those descended from Adam, coming into the world, are dead in their trespasses and sins and children of wrath, because they are sinners by nature and confirm their sinfulness by their practicing sin and walking according to the flesh. But through Jesus Christ’s righteous act of laying down His life for our sins, justification of life being given to all those chosen by God the Father, is established.

God’s express purpose in giving the free offer of the gift of salvation to all who will believe, and His purpose to really give spiritual life to all of His elect, was to bring all who will believe, into

spiritual union with Jesus Christ, in terms of His (that is Christ's) being presently seated in the heavenly places. Look with me over at Romans chapter 6, verses 3-5. "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection."

What does it mean to us when we believe in Jesus Christ? It means that we die together with Him to sin, and we live to righteousness. In other words, we become sharers of His life; His life being in our life, because we have been raised spiritually from our death in trespasses, because of His being raised from the dead, and we can now walk in newness of life, because we have been spiritually baptized into His death and resurrection. Because of these real spiritual acts by God, which take place spiritually in our soul, we are now spiritually seated together with Him in the heavenly places. We are "in" Christ now, and with Him spiritually, now. We are participating in His life now, and His resurrection power now, so that we might not live to sin, but live to God. And we know that He is presently paving the way for us to be with Him forever.

Our position of being spiritually seated with Christ now in the heavenlies, is meant to cause us to seek Him more and more for everything that we need for life and godliness, until we see Him face to face. Turn with me over to Colossians chapter 3, verses 1-3. "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God." "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." We see here, in connection with what we have already studied in Romans 6, that we Christ died, we died to sin, and when Christ was raised from the dead, we who would believe in Him for eternal life, were also raised with Him. Therefore, in His ascension to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, we are presently spiritually seated with Him there. And since this is so, since this is the reality of our spiritual life, Paul exhorts us to keep seeking those things which are above where Christ is.

What are those things that he is referring to? To keep seeking, is to pray and to hold fellowship and communion with the Lord Jesus in our heart. The things that we seek are the things which He alone can give, and which we cannot provide for ourselves. They are – His grace in order to live a life focused upon Him and what He would have us to do for Him. Our life as a Christian is "hidden with Christ in God", it says here. They are listed for us in the rest of this chapter. They are asking and seeking for grace to put to death our sinful members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry. They are asking and seeking for grace to put off the old man and to put on the new. They are putting on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering, so that we can bear with other Christians and forgive one another when they sin against us.

They are our having regular fellowship with Christ in relation to the word of God, fellowship with Christ over the word which we daily pray will dwell in us richly in all wisdom. They are wives praying for grace to submit to their husbands, and husbands to be able to love their wives and not to be bitter toward them. They are children asking for grace to obey their parents in all things, for this is right. They are Fathers asking for grace to so that they will not provoke their children, but rather learn to encourage them. It is asking and seeking Christ for the grace so that peace will rule in your heart so that you might promote unity in the church, and to be thankful in everything that you have Christ with you always; Christ the hope of glory.

2nd – To be seated with Christ in the heavenly places means that God will someday literally physically seat us with Christ in the Day of the Resurrection.

Verse 7 – "He has 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." I want you to see from this verse that since we as Christians are seated together with Christ in the heavenly places, we can expect that He will be showing us, as

His Church, all together, the riches of His grace and kindness all during this age and in all the successive ages to come. In all the ages of time, those chosen by God have known the benefits of Christ's grace, leading them on to eternal glory. All of Christ's Church together, in every generation have beheld Him by faith, even though they have not seen His physical Person at the time they lived upon the earth. Those in Old Testament times looked forward to His first coming in His Incarnation. We in New Testament times look forward to His 2nd Coming to complete the redemption of His Church; that time when we will physically be raised from the dead and take our place with Him on His throne.

So there is the prospect, for every faithful saint; of sitting down on Christ's throne with Him; that is reigning with Him in the eternal state. Look with me at Revelation chapter 3, verses 20-21 – "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." "If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." Do you see what gives the Christian instruction here, on how they can overcome temptations to sin and lukewarmness? It is by their opening the door to greater fellowship with Christ. He knocks at the door of your heart, dear Christian, seeking entrance to have fellowship with you so that you will be strengthened and refreshed by His grace and presence in your life. Having that, you can overcome the lukewarmness in your walk with Him, and He will reward your greater more steadfast faith in Him, and your obedience to Him, by His granting you to sit down with Him on His throne, just as He overcame the world, and sat down with His Father on His throne.

But in our mind's eye we see Him now as having gone before us into heaven, preparing a place for us, so that He might receive us to Himself. There has been, and there is the prospect of what we look forward to; what we press on to know the reality of, because He is seated in heaven at the right hand of the Father. This glorious truth of His Ascension and Session is not meant to trouble you, dear Christian. Christ having run His race perfectly and His sitting down at the Father's right hand, having accomplished redemption, is intended by God to encourage and strengthen your faith, to behold the great things that God is doing for you in mercy and grace; and what He will do for you in the future, through and by means of your spiritual union with Christ in His life.

Turn with me over to John chapter 13, verse 36. (John 13: 36-14: 6) "Simon Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, where are You going?'" "Jesus answered him, 'Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.'" "Peter said to Him, 'Lord why can I not follow You now?'" "I will lay down my life for Your sake." "Jesus answered him, 'Will you lay down your life for My sake?'" "Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times." "Let not Your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me." "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." "I go to prepare a place for you." "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." "And where I go you know, and the way you know." "Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'" "No one comes to the Father except through Me."

I want you to notice that Jesus tells Peter that even though he cannot follow Him to heaven at that time, that he would in the future. Peter wanted to lay down his life for His Lord then and there, but he did not realize that the Lord Jesus was actually on a mission that He could only accomplish by Himself; to save Peter and all those believing in Him, so that He could bring them all to heaven. And so, He has to tell Peter that where He was going that Peter could not come at that time, but he would follow Him later on. He prophesied Peter's denial of Him, but then He gently and graciously followed it up with the statement that Peter and the other disciples should not let their hearts be troubled; that if they believed in God, they should also believe in Him, when He told him that in His Father's house, there were many mansions, many dwelling places. And He was going to prepare a place for all of His disciples, that where He was, there they would be also. It

is good for us to know that at the end of our earthly journey, we will someday sit together with Jesus in a more literal way. In that day we shall be glorified.

And then 3rd – To be seated with Christ in the heavenly places means the prelude for what He will do for us throughout all eternity.

In verse 7 it says that in the ages to come He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. You should know that according to the Scriptures that there is only one Church age which began when Jesus Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to sit at God's right hand. And it will run on until Christ returns. Spiritually we are at the present time seated with Christ in the heavenly places. Christ is presently reigning over all people and nations from His exalted position at the right hand of the Father. And, we are told in the Scriptures in Psalm 110 and in Hebrews chapter 2, that He will remain there at God's right hand, until the Father puts all of His enemies under His feet.

Psalm 110, verse 1 – "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." Hebrews chapter 2, verses 5-8 – "For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels." "But one testified in a certain place, saying: 'What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him?' "You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set Him over the works of Your hands." "You have put all things in subjection under his feet." "For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him." "But now we do not yet see all things put under him." (that is – man) Because "him" it's not capitalized here as to refer it to Christ. It's not speaking about Jesus, although it does refer to Him in the first and greatest sense in terms of its fulfillment. Christ accomplished the Father's purpose in redemption, by His righteous life and sacrificial death, God has crowned Him with glory and honor in His resurrection and ascension. All things have been placed under His feet.

But, we do not yet see all things put under our feet yet. Christ is reigning presently, but Christ's Church is not presently reigning and ruling spiritually on the earth. I have tried to explain this at numerous points in my ministry, but I will try here once again in relation to these verses. It is God's purpose that Christ's Church shall someday rule and reign spiritually on the earth. (Revelation 5: 10) Notice that I said –"spiritually" on the earth, because that is what the context is, of all the verses which speak of the Millennium in the Bible. Christ's kingdom is not of this world and we know that. If that was the case we would all be fighting literally to see His kingdom go forward and to see His cause advance. But we do not do that, do we? What we do is that we fight spiritually and our battles are fought spiritually with powers in the heavenly places; those powers in the heavenly places.

So we need to understand that God has to do something very great before Christ's Church can reign spiritually upon the earth. But it began when Christ was raised from the dead. And He presently sits at the right hand of the Father. All of Christ's enemies are going to be put under His feet; notice, before His return. All of His enemies and ours have been overcome by Him by the power and purity of His life, death, and resurrection, and therefore the victory is ours now, spiritually, and that victory will continue to be applied to people and nations until Christ's kingdom someday comes to reign upon the earth. Christ's spiritual kingdom will reign upon the earth someday because Christ presently sits at the right hand of the Father and all His enemies are going to be put under His feet before He returns. Therefore, we can expect that the Millennium, Christ's kingdom's spiritual reign, will take place, before Christ's Second Coming.

Let me explain: The Millennium cannot be equated with this whole Church age, for the Church is not yet reigning among the nations. Revelation 20, verse 4: "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them." "Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands." "And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." These martyrs who come to life at this point in

Church History are not the bodies of those who died under Pagan and Papal Rome but their souls, the cause for which they died; that is the cause of Christ, and the gospel prevailing and triumphing among the nations. So the Millennium is rather a time within this age when Christ's kingdom flourishes greatly and becomes great in all the earth.

It will be a particular time in the latter days of this present Church age which will be a prelude to what God will do for all of His people in the eternal state. There will be a greater holiness which will prevail among the people of many nations during that time, and the exceeding riches of God's grace in Christ will be displayed to the whole world in that day. Many people from many nations will be saved. The Millennium will be the fulfillment of a thousand years being a day, and a day as a thousand years. It will be a thousand year day which will seem to many as days out of eternity, so to speak, in an earthly sense. And although it will not be a different age, it will seem to be so to those who are living in it, in many ways. It will be a prelude of heaven and the eternal state because of the holiness that will prevail among the nations. It will be a prelude of what it will be like in the ages of eternity when the exceeding riches of God's grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus will be more fully revealed and go on forever and ever!

I will close by reading Psalm 72 to you to convince you of what is coming, yet in this present age – "A Psalm Of Solomon." "Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to the king's Son." "He will judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice." "The mountains will bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, and will break in pieces the oppressor." "They shall fear You As long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, like showers that water the earth. In His days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more." "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." "Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust." "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts." "Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." "For He will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him who has no helper." "He will spare the poor and needy, and will save the souls of the needy." "He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; and precious shall be their blood in His sight." "And He shall live; And the gold of Sheba will be given to Him; prayer also will be made for Him continually, And daily He shall be praised." "There will be an abundance of grain in the earth, On the top of the mountains; Its fruit shall wave like Lebanon; And those of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him; All nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things!" "And blessed be His glorious name forever!" "And let the whole earth be filled with His glory." "Amen and Amen." "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."

