



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: Eph. 2:1-7

1. God's Mission – to bring everything under Christ – Eph. 1:10

“The mission of God...is to bring people from the realm of sin, death, & alienation governed by anti-God powers into the realm of forgiveness...life, & peace ruled by Jesus the Messiah and Lord.” [M. J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel*, p. 192]

2. The Situation of Humanity – Eph. 2:1-3

“The description of their pre-Christian state is significant—‘dead in trespasses & sins under the domination of evil powers (angels) who led them astray’ [James D. G. Dunn, *Neither Jew Nor Greek*, p. 535]

- a. “Dead” in trespasses & sins “Human beings as sons & daughters of Adam enter the world spiritually dead. They have no inclination or responsiveness toward God & no ability to please God.” [ESV Study Bible]
- b. Defeated – under the ruler of the power of the air
 - a. “You...walked...according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit...working in the disobedient’ (Eph. 2:2)
 - b. “The ruler...’—“This refers to the devil, whom Paul understands to exercise a power in the ‘air,’ that is above the sphere of human activity but below God’s supreme power in heaven.” [Peter S. Williamson, *Ephesians*, p. 57]
 - c. “In [Eph. 2:2 Paul] shows that there are forces which pull you, lure you, compel you to go in the wrong direction The way the world is now is not the way God intends it to be...What seems right, especially to those who are simply ‘going with the flow’ of the world around them, actually isn’t.” [Tom Wright, *Paul for Everyone*, p. 19]
- c. The devil controls the ways of the world
 - a. There’s a spirit that’s at work (Eph. 2:2) “This seems to be a way of referring to the Satan, the devil & a way of suggesting that his deadly ideas, his schemes for defacing God’s beautiful creation & particularly his image-bearing human creatures, are, as we say, ‘in the air.’ You can sense their power ‘in the atmosphere’ of a place, of a room full of certain people, of a city or college, or shop. The Satan is a spirit, at work among people who see no need to behave any differently.” [Tom Wright, *Paul for Everyone*, p. 19]
 - b. Results in living by inclinations of flesh & mind “It’s been...very popular to argue that the desires & aspirations that people find deep within themselves are obviously God-given & are, for that reason, to be followed. This is so particularly in discussions of sexual morality. (‘This is how God made me, so he must want me to live like this.’) [T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone*, p. 18]

- c. Hopeless & helpless in ourselves “‘God helps those who help themselves’ is not from the Bible but from the ancient Greeks. As Paul emphasizes in this section the truth is the exact opposite: God helps the helpless! Even more, he helps his enemies who have transgressed his holy law.” ESV Study Bible

3. God’s Salvation – Uniting us with Christ

“The Christian believer...has been joined to Christ in an organic, vital, spiritual & indissoluble union. The Christian mind [can] now...function within the orbit of...that union.” [Douglas Vickers, *Discovering the Christian Mind*, p. 108]

a. Christ our Substitute & our Victor

- a. As our redeemer – He is our substitute—“the Son of God...loved me & gave himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20b)
- a. Substitution: “Christ’s death [was] in our place, instead of us...Christ did something, underwent something, so we did not—and never will—have to...When Christ was bearing our sins, that meant that we were not bearing our sins & do not have to do so.” [Simon Gathercole, *Defending Substitution*, pp. 15, 17]
- b. As Victor we participate (are united) with him—God “made us alive with Christ... He also raised us up with him & seated us with him in the heavens” (Eph. 2:5-6)
- a. Union, participation: “To do justice to...Paul’s thought... the terms union, participation...are adopted – ...“Union [means] faith union with Christ...Participation conveys partaking in the events of Christ’s narrative [his death, resurrection, etc.]” [K. J. Vanhoozer, “From ‘blessed in Christ’ to ‘being in Christ,’” p.]
- c. As Victor – He defeated Satan, sin & death
- a. “The Son of God was revealed for this purpose: to destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3:8 ESV)
- b. “Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out...” (Jn. 12:31-32)
- c. “the ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over me.” (Jn. 14:30) “...the ruler of this world has been judged.” (Jn. 16:11)
- d. “Jesus also shared in [flesh & blood], so that through his death he might destroy the one holding the power of death—that is, the devil— 15 & free those...held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death.” (Heb. 1:14-15)

b. Christ the victor released us from bondage to Satan & the cosmic powers

- a. As the victor He’s our representative, He fought for us & we share in His victory E.g. David & Goliath
- a. “Perhaps the most striking illustration of these principles of holy war is found in the confrontation between – David & Goliath (1 Sam. 17). These two men faced each other in individual combat as representatives of their respective nations—Israel & Philistines.” [Tremper Longman, D. G. Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, p. 38]
- b. In the OT the overarching principle is that Yahweh is present in the battle. Thus warfare is actually a form of worship...No one states the theology of holy war better than young David as he faces the giant Goliath. (1 Sam. 17:45-47).” [Tremper Longman, *Making Sense of the OT*, p. 78]
- c. “Christ’s crucifixion, resurrection & ascension [are the means] by which he defeated Satan & the spiritual powers & principalities. Accordingly, Paul could use military language to describe these great redemptive events. Col. 2:13-15 [says], ‘When you were dead in trespasses...[God] made you alive with him & forgave us all our trespasses. 14 He erased the certificate of debt...& took it away by nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers & authorities and disgraced them publicly; he triumphed over them in him.’ Christ’s death and resurrection could be described as a military victory followed by a parade...” [Tremper Longman, “Holy War & the Universal God,” in David W. Pao (ed.) *After Imperialism*, pp. 107-108]

b. Making us alive with Christ (Eph. 2:5)

- a. When he was made alive, we were too
- b. Having a living relationship with Christ

c. Raising us with Christ (Eph. 2:6)

- a. Presently experiencing spiritual resurrection
- b. Eventually physical resurrection
- “...Paul...highlight[s]...our participation in Jesus’ death & resurrection, i.e., his redemptive work: ‘I’ve been crucified with Christ’ (Gal. 2:20). For Paul, the work of Christ doesn’t establish a union with humanity in general, but rather for a distinct group: ‘Christ loved the church & gave himself up for her’ (Eph. 5:25). Those who place their faith in Christ share in Christ’s resurrection, the ‘first fruits’ of a great end-time resurrection harvest (1 Cor. 15:20). The ‘already’ of believers’ being raised with Christ (Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:12–13; 3:1), & the bodily resurrection yet to come are...two episodes of one & the same event: Christ’s resurrection. [Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “From ‘blessed in Christ’ to ‘being in Christ,’” in ‘In Christ’ in Paul: p.]

d. Seating us with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6)

- a. Sharing in victory over the Satan, the devil, the evil powers, & sin
- b. Eph 1 Christ is exalted far above all powers
- c. Eph 2 The believers by being joined to Christ hold position of superiority over evil powers
- “Believers’ authority over the evil powers is rooted in their identification with the resurrection & exaltation of Christ...In Eph. 1 Paul extols God’s...great power by which he raised & exalted Christ...‘far above’ every rank in the order of powers of darkness (Eph. 1:19-22). In Eph. 2 he applied this...directly to the believer—[God] raised us up with him & seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus’ (Eph. 2:6). The implication for believers...is clear. Just as Christ holds a position of superiority to the [evil] powers, so too do the believers – ...This truth...becomes the doctrinal basis for...spiritual warfare in Eph. 6:10-20.” [Clinton E. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness: Principalities & Powers in Paul’s Letters*, p. 115]

c. Believers' participation with Christ (Eph. 2:5-6)

- a. "But God...5 made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses...He also raised us up with him & seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4-6)
- b. "These verbs ('made alive', 'raised' and 'made to sit') refer to 3 successive historical events in the saving career of Jesus, which are normally called the resurrection, the ascension, & the session... [But here,] Paul is not writing about Christ, but about us. He is affirming not that God quickened, raised, & seated Christ, but that he [enliven]ed, raised & seated us with Christ. Fundamental to NT Christianity is this concept of the union of God's people with Christ." [John Stott, Reading Ephesians with John Stott, p. 50]
- c. In "Eph. 2:5-6...the Apostle is saying we have been made alive, raised up, & seated with Christ & these actions... require that they be performed only once." [Melton B. Winstead, "'Participatory' Language in Eph.," in NT Philology, p. 239]
- d. "The three [Gk. 'co-compounds'—co-enlivened, co-raised, & co-seated] in these two verses [Eph. 2:5-6] express accompaniment, & association, indicating participation with Christ in his being made alive, his ascension, & his being seated in the heavens ...Believers partake of these central Christ-events, so what is true of Christ in his resurrection & ascension is true also of those who believe in him." [Constantine R. Campbell, Paul & Union with Christ, p.]
- e. "The phrase 'seated us with him in the heavens' in Christ Jesus goes beyond other texts that speak of the believers' solidarity with Jesus' dying & rising." [Peter S. Williamson, Ephesians, p. 61]
- f. Here in Eph. 2:6 "it is the Father who acts on the believers in conjunction with his acting on Christ. As he raised Christ, & seated him in the heavens, so he did for the believers. This 'direction' of divine activity counters the more usual mediation of Christ between God & the believers. Here God works on believers & Christ, while Christ's mediation is not the focus." [Constantine R. Campbell, Paul & Union with Christ, p.]
- g. "The belief that a Christian is seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6)...is the distinctive teaching of Evangelical Christianity." [Gerald Bray, "Filioque... in History & Theology," Tyndale Bulletin, V. 34, p. 143]

d. Through faith & baptism (Rom. 6:3-6)

- a. Receiving by faith (Eph. 1:13; 2:8)
Paul makes a "link between Christ enthroned (Eph. 1:20) & his people...graciously enthroned with him (Eph. 2:6)... This means, for those...joined in union with Messiah...[who've] been incorporated into Christ, 'what God did for Christ he did at the same time for believers'." [Matthew Friedman, Union with God in Christ, p. 86]
- b. Forgiven & released from bondage by being joined to Christ
- c. Appropriated by baptism (Rom. 6:3-6)
"Incorporation into Christ's death & resurrection happens not at the believer's [physical] birth (i.e., by virtue of being born human) but baptism (i.e., by virtue of saving faith): 'Don't you know that all of us who've been baptized in Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?' (Rom. 6:3; cf. 6:4-5). To be blessed in Christ in this context is to be incorporated, not into his nature, but into his history, & baptism is the graphic public exhibit of the actualization of such incorporation. Baptism [then,] marks the moment, in our history, when we are incorporated into Jesus' history." [Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "From 'blessed in Christ' to 'being in Christ'," in 'In Christ' in Paul: Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union..." p.]
In baptism we are "publicly confessing our faith in the gospel & dramatizing, through immersion into & emergence out of the water, what has taken place in faith, namely our incorporation into the death & resurrection of Christ...& our transfer from the satanic kingdom of sin & death into Christ's kingdom of righteousness & life." [Seyoon Kim, Justification & God's Kingdom, p. 68]
- d. Receive & be baptized
 - a. Receive by faith – saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8)
 - b. Baptism, the actualization of our incorporation into Jesus. (Rom. 6:3-6)
 - c. Talk to people in your small group or contact church on mycit.info. We can arrange a small baptism, or connect you with some who can do it (if you are far away). If you wish we can live-stream.