

Ephesians 2:4–7 | “Raised Up To New Life”
Preached on April 20, 2025 by Pastor Matt Brown

Good morning, I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 2:4–7 today. *[pause]*

If you haven't been with us the past few weeks, we are in the midst of working through the book of Ephesians, and today we are here in chapter 2, verses 4 through 7. *[pauseeee]*

When I think about Easter, I can't help but think of *new life*. *[pause]*

It's the day that we rejoice in and celebrate the resurrection of Christ, as His physical body came back to life, miraculously and powerfully.

But Easter is also during springtime, which aids in highlighting this emphasis on new life. *[pause]*

As we celebrate the living Christ, we look around and we are starting to see flowers bloom, leaves growing, and wildlife spring back into action. *[pause]*

You probably also see a lot of people wearing brighter colors around you today, which represents light, joy, and hope. *[pauseee]*

Easter is about new life, the raised life of Christ primarily, but also, due to His resurrection, our new life in Him. *[pause]*

It's that new life that we have in Christ because of His resurrection that we will be dwelling upon today. *[pauseeee]*

In the context of Ephesians, Paul has just prayed that the Ephesians would know deeply the immeasurable greatness of God's power toward them. *[pause]*

He has recounted how that power was shown through Christ's resurrection and exaltation, and now he is actually showing us more evidence for the power of God.

And what does he talk about?

None other than the new life that God has powerfully given to us, who were dead in our sins. *[pause]*

Let's READ Ephesians 2:1–7 to get the whole passage on our minds. *[READ]*

Last week, we looked intently on how we were dead in our sins, and what that all looked like and what it meant for us...

We were truly in the worst situation possible—we were dead! *[pauseeee]*

No one likes being in the worst situation. *[pause]*

Being stuck in a room with a song that you hate playing on the radio over and over again would be a pretty bad situation. *[pause]*

Being kidnapped would be horrible.

But really, from a human, physical perspective, what's the worst situation there is? Being dead. *[pauseeee]*

Why do many believe that it's the worst?

Because when you are dead, you have no capability of rescuing yourself and no hope as life is over. *[pause]*

At least in the circumstances stated earlier of being kidnapped or being in that room with the hated song being played, there's some hope and some ability to possibly save yourself. *[pause]*

Maybe you could somehow escape your captors and free yourself.

Yet the truth is this: no one who is dead can save themselves. *[pause]*

No one who has died responds to anything.

And that's exactly what our status was before Christ—spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins. *[pauseee]*

We weren't merely sick or maimed or seriously injured—we were DEAD! *[pause]*

We didn't need resuscitation, we needed a resurrection! *[pauseeee]*

No moral exertion or trying hard enough can make a dead person alive, so this reminds us that to be saved, God had to initiate and do a miracle of giving us life. *[pause]*

We couldn't save ourselves by making ourselves alive—we didn't have the power to do it, for only God can give us true life.

And any man-centered theories of salvation, even any one that has even a *hint* of our effort in gaining salvation, is to be rejected as false. *[pause]*

We were dead, and dead people can't save themselves or do anything! *[pauseeeee]*

But what do verses 4–7 teach us?...

I. God made us alive because of His grace.

Have you ever experienced amazing, good news, and it just lifted up your heart in joy? *[pause]*

I remember the four times in my life when Kate said to me those words, "I'm pregnant."

What joy it brought to my heart! *[pause]*

I remember the moment when Ed and Dave came and told me that this church voted to make me your next pastor, and how my heart just lifted with joy. *[pause]*

Those are precious times that bring great happiness, but what God did blows those things out of the water...

It was more like a person who you thought was dead, and the doctor says, “They’re alive!”
[pause]

But even conquering that situation is what God did in our lives, for even though we were actually spiritually dead in our sins, God made us alive. *[pause]*

What power of God! What a miracle!

Amidst our prior dead state, Paul says, “But God...” *[pause]*

Oh, how I love those words!

In darkness, in hopelessness, in despair, when all seem lost, the words “but God,” ring out with hope! *[pause]*

They are words that shine in the darkness.

They are words that trumpet that grace is on the way.

They are words of power, words of life, and words of mercy. *[pause]*

The title of the story of our lives could be entitled, “But God.”

And our lives should be stamped with it, and our lips proclaim it. *[pauseeee]*

I once was lost...but God. *[pause]*

I once was without hope...but God. *[pause]*

I once was living for myself, following the world, Satan, and my fleshly desires...but God.
[pause]

I once was in the miry bog...but God.¹ *[pause]*

As our text explains, “I once was *dead*...but God.” *[pauseeee]*

God was the initiator, the worker, the actor, not me—for I was the dead one.

I brought my deadness to the table, He brought His power, His grace, and His mercy. *[pauseeee]*

He stepped into my awful state, and turned it around completely—He made me alive! *[pause]*

¹ An allusion to Psalm 40:2.

In verse 5, Paul even reiterates that it was “even when we were dead in our trespasses,” that God made us alive. *[pause]*

Even though we were dead, in rebellion against Him, trying to live life apart from Him...

Even though we were enslaved to the world’s values, Satan, and our fleshly desires, He made us alive. *[pauseeee]*

What else does that do, but highlight even more His grace! *[pause]*

Like light shining into a dark room, His life-giving work amidst our rebellious dead state shines ever more brightly. *[pauseeee]*

We were the helpless and hopeless ones, but even amidst our being dead in our trespasses, He saves those who were enemies of Him. *[pauseeeee]*

We often recoil when we think about showing great love to a fierce enemy, yet God did it on the grandest, biggest scale possible.

For we were enemies of the Holy Creator, and yet that Holy Creator reached down in grace, and said, “Live!” *[pauseeee]*

What a miracle. *[pause]*

But it just goes to show that nothing is too hard for God.² *[pause]*

There was no possible way *for you* to make yourself spiritually alive, but thankfully, it wasn’t on your shoulders to do so in the first place. *[pause]*

You couldn’t muster the strength to make yourself alive.

Your good deeds wouldn’t do the trick.

It had to be a miracle, a work of God, and He has done that miracle in your life, if you have truly trusted in Christ alone to be saved. *[pauseeee]*

Maybe you are one of those people who say that there have been NO miracles in your life, well let me point out that there has been at least 1 miracle in your life: the greatest miracle...

If you have placed your faith in Jesus, then know that God has done a miracle of new life in you. *[pauseeee]*

Before Christ, you were spiritually dead...

Though you walked around, talked, and had *physical* vitality, you were dead spiritually. *[pause]*

² A reference to Jeremiah 32:17.

You had no love for God or awareness of His special presence. *[pause]*

You lived for yourself, and didn't desire to live for Him. *[pause]*

You were indifferent to Him, and didn't see the glory of Christ—but God, He made you alive!
[pause]

Now you love God, you desire to follow Him. *[pause]*

Yes, you fail at times, and struggle against sinful desires, but you *want* to do what's right and pleasing to Him. *[pause]*

You know and feel His presence, you see the glory of Christ, and you are no longer enslaved to the world, the flesh, and the devil. *[pause]*

New life! Eternal life! God-given, grace-gifted life!

It's that grace that Pauls points to continually here. *[pause]*

He says, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.” *[pause]*

Listen up—we have only been made alive because of who God is. *[pause]*

He is “rich in mercy,” that's His character, that's who He is!

He has kindness and compassion for those in need. *[pause]*

We were certainly in need, for we were dead and had sinned against Him.

We were under His wrath, and yet “being rich in mercy,” He saved us. *[pause]*

He is “rich” in mercy, for it doesn't run dry, but overflows for sinners—so His mercy overflowed into action for us. *[pause]*

He saw us in our awful state, and reached down in compassionate forgiveness through Christ.
[pause]

Truly as that song that we sing states, “Our sins they are many, His mercy is more.”³ *[pause]*

But it wasn't *just* mercy that led God to do a miracle of spiritual life-giving in us, but it was also His love. *[pause]*

Verse 4 says that it was “because of the great love with which he loved us.” *[pause]*

This was His reason and motive for acting: His love for us. *[pause]*

³ “His Mercy is More” by Matt Boswell & Matt Papa.

I think we all could say, “God is love,”⁴ and it’s true, but do we really and truly grasp how *great* His love is for us? *[pause]*

It’s a love that loves those who were enemies.

It’s a love that loves those who couldn’t do anything in return that would equal what He did for us. *[pause]*

It’s a love that is truly “great,” stretching even the bounds of that word.

It’s this great love of His “with which he loved us.” *[pauseeee]*

I think there are many people in our lives that we meet, who say they are loving. *[pause]*

They may even keep reiterating how loving they are, or at least hint at it, but do they love you with that love that they say that they have? *[pause]*

Do *you* love people with the love that you say that you have? *[pause]*

Well God loves us with His great love...

His love doesn’t sit back and do nothing.

His love doesn’t sit idle, but He actually *loves us*. *[pauseeee]*

You may not feel loved by others, or you may not have anyone show you much love in this life, but if you have been made alive by God, then you have been loved by great love. *[pause]*

God has shown you the most love possible by taking you who were dead and making you alive.

Because He is loving, so you are loved and have been loved. *[pauseeee]*

It’s His great love that sustains us even in the hardest days, and even when we feel no love from anyone else. *[pause]*

It’s only because of God’s character that we have been given new life, and that’s why Paul says that it’s “by grace you have been saved.”

It’s like he can’t help but include that well-known statement. *[pauseeee]*

Now making us alive is an astounding reality—that in itself could be dwelled upon forever, and still we would never reach the bottom of how amazing it is.

But Paul adds some things in verse 6. *[pause]*

He has told us that God “made us alive together with Christ,” and now he adds, “and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places.” *[pauseeee]*

⁴ 1 John 4:8.

To make sense of what Paul says here, you must know the importance of Christ. *[pauseeee]*

There are so many in our day, who try to promote some Christ-less spirituality.

It's this self-made spirituality that makes people feel good about themselves that they are "spiritual," but it is devoid of Christ. *[pauseee]*

Is life to be found outside of Christ? Of course not!

That's why Paul grounds our new life in Christ, for we are made alive *together with Christ*, we are raised *with him*, and seated *with him*. *[pauseee]*

To leave Christ out is to dismantle the whole thing, and you are left with none of it. *[pause]*

To have new life you must be in union with Christ through faith—there's no other way.

No alternate route of spirituality or religion will get you there. *[pauseee]*

When someone places their faith in Christ alone, they are united to Him, and so all of the blessings that He secured flows to them.

But also, due to being united with Him through faith, there is something special going on. *[pause]*

When He died on the cross, it's like our old lives died with Him because we are so united to Him.

And when He rose again, it's like our new lives rose up with Him—so what happened to Him in a way happened to us. *[pause]*

He died for us and in our place, so that our old lives would be put to death, but then He rose up to new life, so that we could have new lives in Him. *[pause]*

It's all because of what *He* did that these things could happen to us, and we simply placed our faith in Him, and so are in union with Him. *[pauseee]*

I know this is somewhat hard to grasp, but it's true, and it's what Paul is referring to here. *[pauseee]*

Think about how Paul just said that we were dead, *but God* made us alive.

Well listen to how Paul talks about Jesus as he preaches in Acts 13...

"...they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. *But God* raised him from the dead."⁵ *[pause]*

⁵ Acts 13:29–30 (italics is mine).

What happened to Christ, happened to us spiritually because of Christ, and will someday happen to us physically as our bodies are raised. *[pauseee]*

As sure as He died and rose, so we were dead spiritually, and we surely rose spiritually!
[pauseee]

It's only because Christ died and rose again to new life that we can have new life in Him and with Him.

And our new life is an example of God's resurrecting power! *[pause]*

Listen to Colossians 2:12, "you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead." *[pause]*

We were made alive together with Him, as He rose from the grave. *[pauseeeee]*

We used to be dead in our sins, but now we are alive with Christ. *[pause]*

We have a new identity, as we are now in a new realm! *[pause]*

We were once under the dominion of sin and in the realm of sin and death, living for ourselves and under the wrath of God.

But now through faith, we are in Christ, so that we are in the realm of life and victory.
[pauseeeee]

I was once enslaved to the world, the flesh, and the devil, and under condemnation, but now being united to Christ, I receive the life and blessings that He has.

And that's why Paul talks this way. *[pause]*

No wonder he says that He "raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." *[pause]*

Our true lives and identity are actually in and with Christ, where He is.

So this world is not our home, but our citizenship is in Heaven.⁶ *[pause]*

We are, in a way, already seated with Him in the heavenly places.

So all of the privileges, blessings, authority, and victory that He has secured are ours in Him.
[pause]

It's like we are already seated with Him in triumph, so we don't have to fear sin, death, or the spiritual powers. *[pauseeeee]*

⁶ Philippians 3:20.

I am not of this world anymore, but I have been raised up!

I have a new standard, a new way of life, new values, and a new way of thinking, according to the Kingdom of God. *[pauseeee]*

Sometimes people see Christianity as simply making your life a little better. *[pause]*

Some think that it's a nice, little add-on to their already good life. *[pause]*

Others think that it's all just religious, formal rites, and that's all.

But being a Christian is most certainly not those things! *[pause]*

It's going from enslavement to freedom, it's going from defeat to victory, it's going from death to life. *[pauseeeee]*

Our awful state was completely reversed when we were united to the resurrected, ascended, exalted, reigning Lord of all! *[pause]*

We are made alive with Him, raised up with Him, and seated with Him in a special way even now! *[pause]*

We belong to Him, connected and united with a tie that can never be severed, so that because He lives, we live.

Cultural, shallow Christianity knows nothing of such things. *[pauseeeee]*

God made us alive because of His grace. *[pause]*

The only reason that we have been made alive is because God is gracious, do you realize that? *[pause]*

So many times we try to take even a little credit for our salvation, but it's *all of grace*. *[pause]*

It's because of His rich mercy and great love, not our might or greatness. *[pause]*

It's simply "by grace through faith" in Jesus Christ, who did the work for us...

He died and rose again, so that we who were dead could be raised to new spiritual life. *[pauseeee]*

We learned that God made us alive because of His grace, but we find out more in verse 7...

II. God made us alive to showcase His grace.

In most schools that you walk into, there is something that you will probably see in the main hallway. *[pause]*

What will you see? A trophy case. *[pause]*

A trophy case holds all of the trophies that the school has won over the years in competitions, and they have that trophy case there for a reason...

The school wants to showcase their accomplishments for people to see. *[pause]*

So also, in a way, God wants to showcase something—He wants to showcase His grace for all to see. *[pauseeee]*

Verse 7 says that God made us alive, “so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” *[pauseeee]*

God has a great, grand, glorious purpose in saving us and making us new: to showcase His grace!

We are a part of God’s grand plan to showcase His grace, and what a privilege and honor! *[pause]*

God didn’t save us on a whim, nor did He save us resentfully—He saved us so that His grace would shine forth for what it is. *[pauseeee]*

When a school showcases their trophies, they aren’t showcasing lies, but showcasing what’s real and true—they won those awards.

So also, when God showcases His grace, He isn’t showcasing anything misleading or false, but He’s displaying His grace for what it is. *[pause]*

He wants to demonstrate, point out, display, and make visible how great His grace truly is.

And guess what that means? We are His trophies of grace! *[pause]*

That He would take a person in rebellion against Him, who was dead in their sins, and graciously make them alive in Christ, is none other than *grace*.

But how will this reveal His grace?

Because everyone will look at us and see someone who was dead, but now is alive.

And He did it amidst the fact that we were disobedient, rebellious, sin-controlled, and sin-permeated objects of wrath. *[pause]*

That He would shower such love upon such people as us will be a continual testament of who He is.

Our lives will display that only God can do that will a life, and across our lives will be written in big letters, G.R.A.C.E. *[pauseeee]*

We are walking miracles of grace, walking evidences of God’s power, and walking testimonies of something that only God can do. *[pauseeee]*

Now when will this happen? In the coming ages. *[pause]*

Sometimes we think that God's grace was shown only at the moment of salvation and that's it, but His grace will be on display into eternity!

From now on and forever we will be monuments of His immeasurable grace. *[pause]*

Throughout eternity, what God did in and for us will exhibit His grace and kindness.

All will marvel at and rejoice in what God did for us, and how marvelous His grace is. *[pauseeee]*

You think that we will really stop singing things like "Amazing Grace" once we reach Heaven?

Think again! For eternity, we will glory in His grace! *[pause]*

Every moment forever will be a showcasing of God's grace in our lives. *[pauseeeee]*

Do you live *now* like you are what you are only because of His grace? *[pause]*

Do you talk to others *now* about His grace? *[pauseeeee]*

Now this display of His grace is not a small thing. *[pause]*

What He did in our lives isn't going to only give a flicker of His grace.

It won't be like a small candlelight, but like the blazing sun on a cloudless day. *[pause]*

Why do I say that?

Because it says that what He did toward us in Christ will show "the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness." *[pause]*

God does not simply have grace, but He has "riches of grace". *[pause]*

He is wealthy when it comes to grace, it never runs out.

In fact, He has *immeasurable* riches of grace. *[pause]*

They are so abundant, overflowing, and incalculable that you could never reach the bottom of His grace, or get close. *[pause]*

Our grace often has a limit, but God's grace is boundless, endless, fathomless.

His sea of grace has no boundaries or bottom. *[pauseeeee]*

Sometimes people can be fake with their grace, and only show some grace to someone else with some ulterior motive, but that's not God...

God showed us "grace in kindness." *[pause]*

It was genuine and it came from the kindness of God.

What He did for us was the ultimate act of kindness, and it was done “toward us in Christ Jesus.”
[pause]

The way that He showed us grace was through Christ’s work of redemption. [pause]

In the person and work of Jesus, we have experienced the kind grace of God, and that means that you can only experience the grace of God through Jesus.

If you have never trusted in Jesus Christ, then you have not experienced this grace of God, but it is available for you in Jesus now. [pause]

Know that Jesus Christ died for your sins, was buried, and rose again.

And if you repent of your sins and trust in Christ alone, you will be saved!

You will get to experience “the immeasurable riches of [God’s] grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus,” and showcase it for all eternity. [pauseeee]

You see, this passage shows us that...

In grace, God took us from the worst situation to the best.

We all love stories about those people who go from rags to riches...

You know those stories where a person is homeless and has no education, and then goes through a series of events and becomes super rich and successful. [pause]

There’s just something about the transformation of their state of rags into riches that gets our attention. [pause]

Well did you know that if you are a Christian here today, you have the ultimate rags to riches story?

In fact, it’s even more radical than rags-to-riches, for it’s a death-to-life story. [pause]

We were spiritually dead in our sins, but God made us alive together with Christ. [pause]

What was the absolute worst situation was reversed into the best situation by the grace of God, and how did He provide this new life? Through Christ. [pause]

Jesus Christ died, in what looked like the worst situation, but He then rose again, conquering the grave, showing the full picture...

It was the most wonderful, gracious, loving act of all time—for He died for our sins and in our place, and then rose to new life. [pause]

He did this all so that those who simply trust in Him can go from death-to-life. *[pauseeee]*

As we celebrate this Easter, we see the new life of flowers blooming, grass growing, and wildlife swirling around us.

But that's not all we see, and it's certainly not the most important thing we see. *[pause]*

With eyes of faith, we see the grace of God on display in the new lives that we have only because of Him.

And behind those new lives, we see the resurrected, living Christ, whose nail-pierced hands and spear-pierced side declare that the work is done...

He has risen, He reigns, and in and through Him is life forevermore.