

Message: The Surpassing Greatness of God's Power Toward Us Who Believe

TEXT: Ephesians 1:18 - 2:7

Introduction

- A. Every Sunday gathering of the church is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead on the first day of the week, and while around the Lord's Table, we celebrate God's kindness to us in Christ
- B. What will enable us to sincerely bless God for His spiritual blessings to us in Christ, will be for us to know and continue to believe what Paul prayed for us to know in 1:18-23. - in particular, for us to know experientially the surpassing greatness of God's power to those of us who believe/have faith in Christ, a power to be experienced (1:19-20) "in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand ..."

Ephesians 1:18-20 *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*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**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*,

C. Overview

The Greatness of God's Power to Believers

(2:4 but loved by God)

2:1 dead in sin

2:5 made alive with Christ unto faith

2:2 dominated by Satan

2:6 liberated with Christ

2:3 doomed to wrath

2:7 destined for kindness in glory with Christ

I. 2:1 dead in trespasses and sin

- A. We were very much alive to sin - we "walked," "lived" in the lustful desires of sinful flesh in accordance with how the world under the domination of the devil lives. We were not dead "to sin," but "in sin."

Ephesians 2:1 And **you were dead** in your trespasses and sins,² in which **you formerly walked** according to the course of this world, ...³ Among them **we too all formerly lived** in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind

- B. Therefore, we were dead to God.

1. dead = having no ability know God, no ability to believe the gospel of Christ, no desire to entrust our lives to Christ and be saved from the doom of eternal hell.

1 Corinthians 2:14 But **a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God**, for **they are foolishness to him**; and **he cannot understand them**, because they are spiritually appraised.

2. dead = no ability to stop sinning, to desire to live by faith in Christ as Savior and Lord, no ability or desire to live righteously and be conformed to His image, no ability to in any way to be pleasing to God.

James 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* life, and is set on fire by hell. ...⁸ **But no one can tame the tongue**; *it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.*

1 Corinthians 12:3 ... **no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.**

John 6:44 **"No one can come to Me** unless the Father who sent Me draws him

Romans 8:6 For **the mind set on the flesh is death**, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because **the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so**, 8 and **those who are in the flesh cannot please God**.

Hebrews 11:6 And **without faith it is impossible to please Him**

- C. Illustration: Lazarus, dead in a rolling stone tomb (show tomb slide). Opening a way of escape from the tomb would do Lazarus no good while he remained dead. Christ's death will do us no good while we remain dead to God.

II. 2:2 dominated by Satan

Ephesians 2:2 **in which you formerly walked according to the course/age 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.**

- A. Sin renders our souls dead to God, Satan's agenda is to keep us dead to God.

1. 1 John 5:19 says that "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."

1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and that **the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.**

2. 2 Corinthians 4:3 says Satan blinds us to the glory of Christ

2 Corinthians 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case **the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ**, who is the image of God.

3. Hebrews 2:14 says that the devil "had the power of death"

Hebrews 2:14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless **him who had the power of death, that is, the devil**,

III. 2:3 doomed to wrath

Ephesians 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.

- A. The wrath spoken of here is not the devil's wrath, but God's wrath, Christ's wrath.

Ephesians 5:5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things **the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**

- B. The reason being dead in sin and dominated by Satan is so problematic is that there is a universal principle created by God and rooted in His righteous character.

Ezekiel 18:4 The soul who sins will die. Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death,

- C. So being dead and dominated by the power of sin and Satan inevitably leads to doom - having our souls destroyed by the wrath of God.

- D. Transition: And this would still be your destiny and my destiny today Christian, if God had not loved us.

IV. 2:4 but loved by God

Ephesians 2:4 But God, being **rich in mercy**, because of **His great love** with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions,

Romans 5:8 But **God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that **while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us**.

- A. Yes, God loved the world in giving His only Son, “that whoever believes/has faith in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16
- B. But he could have saved the world of humanity without saving any particular individual. He preserved the human race by merely saving the 8 members of Noah’s family. So why save you and me, Christian?
- C. It was not because we loved Him first. It was not for any goodness within us, for we were dead toward Him when he exercised the power His saving grace toward us. It was because of His mercy and love that He delivered us by His power from being dead, dominated, and doomed.

Titus 3:5 **He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,
- D. Transition: What is this power believers experience, and what is so great about His power toward us, which He brought about in Christ when he raised Him from the dead and seated Him as God’s right hand above all authority and power?

V. 2:5 made alive with Christ unto faith

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

- A. God broke the power of our sinful nature, gave us a new heart by His indwelling Spirit to desire Christ, to live by faith in Christ, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.” (Eph. 3:17)

Ezekiel 36:26 "Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you**; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.²⁷ **"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes**, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

2 Corinthians 4:6 **For God**, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," **is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ**.

Ephesians 2:8 **For by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

Ephesians 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be **strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**;

- B. With the power of sin broken by His Spirit’s power to create and sustain faith in God’s chosen ones, we are no longer dead in our sins. We are no longer unresponsive to God, dead to God, but are alive to God.

Romans 6:11 Even so consider yourselves to be **dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus**.

VI. 2:6 liberated with Christ

Ephesians 2:6 **and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus**,

- A. We are not of course yet physically raised up with Christ, yet we are united by faith to the resurrected Christ who is seated above all authority in the heavenly places.

Colossians 2:12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which **you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God**, who raised Him from the dead.

B. Why is it significant that we experience union with the One God raised above all authority?
Liberation from Satan's domination!

1. Example: KP in boot camp. When corporal asked me to go to the PX to buy cigarettes, I told him I had a direct order from my captain and drill sergeants not to leave the company compound. He ranted and raved, cursed me, mocked me, threatened me, but in the end, he could do nothing to me - he could not make me disobey.
2. So also it is now between the devil and the believer. He can rant, rave, assail, mock, persecute, but cannot overpower us to disobey God or inflict any lasting punishment for our obedience to Christ - for our higher authority is Christ!

Ephesians 1:19 and what is **the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe**, in accordance with the working of the strength of His might²⁰ **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

Romans 8:34 **who is the one who condemns?** Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

VII. 2:7 destined for kindness in glory with Christ

Ephesians 2:7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

A. Satan used to hold the power of death over us who were predestined in love to be God's children (1:5), but no longer!

Hebrews 2:14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, **He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.**

Revelation 1:17 ... **"Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.**

1 Thessalonians 1:9 ... **you turned to God** from idols **to serve a living and true God,**¹⁰ **and to wait for His Son** from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, **that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.**

B. We are destined for kindness - Christ's power toward us will ensure this.

Conclusion (return to first full slide)

- A. Today we remember and celebrate all the spiritual blessings that God graciously grants us in union with His divine Son, the crucified, risen, reigning, returning Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. Are you experiencing repentance and faith in Christ, and the hope and joy of salvation?
- C. Then let heart filled love and worship also be your experience. Bless God who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ!