

**Living God's Plan
Experiencing God's Power
God's Power at Work in Sinners**

Intro: Several years ago several of us were in a restaurant after services when I received a disturbing phone call. Tom Hatch was on the line and reported that our girls had been involved in a serious automobile accident. As many of you remember Laura was seriously injured, having six broken bones; but made a great recovery.

I never told you this; but a few days after the accident I receive another interesting phone call. It was from a man who attended a church not far from the scene of the accident. He reported that he and those with him were leaving church and that they came upon the accident. He reported that he and his companions saw Laura through the window of the car and that she was not breathing. He and all those with him began to pray for her. I'll never forget the final words of his testimony, "I believe that God raised your daughter from the dead."

As you can imagine, it was awkward to know how to respond to such a claim; and I wasn't sure whether the man was hoping I would compensate him some way for the prayers. But I kindly thanked him for his interest and for his prayers and affirmed my faith in God's power to do whatever He chooses; and that I was very grateful to Him for saving Laura's life.

As to whether God raised Laura from the dead I have my doubts, but of this I am very sure: I think I could say without contradiction that several of us in this room have been previously raised from the dead. Let me show you how.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course 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. 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. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:1-7)

In our last two lessons we've seen that Paul wanted the Ephesians to know "the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." In order to impress that truth upon them, He spoke to them about how that power worked in Jesus, the Savior. By God's power Jesus was:

Raised from the dead

Seated at the Father's right hand in the heavenly places

*Made ruler over everything
Made head of the church*

But Paul shows us God's power not only at work in the Savior, but God's power at work in sinners.

Before being saved, all sinners are in a state of spiritual death.

You Gentiles were dead

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course 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. (Eph. 2:1-2)

We Jews were dead

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. (Eph. 2:3-4)

Note carefully the things Paul says about people who live in sin.

As sinners, they follow the path of this world which is under the rule of Satan. It is an attitude of disobedience to God.

As sinners, they are following their own desires instead of the will of God.

As sinners, they are spiritually dead, separated or cut off from God and the blessings of a life with Him.

As sinners, they are destined for God's wrath.

We need to apply this personally!

Do we think that because we are no worse than other people that we are o.k. with God?

Do we see ourselves as God sees us?

If we did, we would carry a heavy burden of guilt in our heart that would not go away until we found life again.

The power that worked in the Savior is available to work in the sinner.

By God's power, sinners can be made alive.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), (Eph. 2:4-5)

Just as God's power worked in Jesus to give life to His body again, so His power works in sinners to restore their spiritual life. By God's power His word awakens in them a response to the voice of God.

By God's power, sinners can be raised from spiritual death.

and raised us up with Him, (Eph. 2:6a)

Just as God's power worked in Jesus to raise him from the dead, so God's power works in us to raise us to a new life. When the gospel penetrates our hearts and it is received in faith, we also experience a spiritual resurrection from the dead. This resurrection is more than merely being responsive to God, but walking in the newness of life that God calls upon us to live.

By God's power, sinners can be seated us with Christ in the heavenly places.
and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, (Eph. 2:6b)

Just as God's power worked in Jesus seat him at His right hand, so God's power works in us to "seat us with Him in the heavenly places." What a remarkable statement this is, that lifeless sinners can now share the rule of Christ's kingdom.

For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:17)

By God's power, sinners can be saved through faith in Jesus.

Paul urged the Romans to see that faith in Jesus by the power of God accomplishes great things for us. It joins us in faith with Him so that we die with Him, are buried with Him, and are raised with Him.

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:3-5)

and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; 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. And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Col. 2:11-14)

Here's what I want you to see:

That every law of God that you have ever disobeyed will confront you at the judgment. The word of God which was intended to keep you right will then serve as a call for your eternal punishment. And there is no escape from this punishment for the children of wrath, but the forgiveness of God's grace.

Without Jesus, we are also without any power to remove a single sin. We live under an eternal death sentence until we come to God in faith and receive forgiveness of our sins and transgressions.

That's why Jesus came to this earth—to provide a way of escape through His death upon the cross. God's power is available to you to make you alive, to raise you from the dead, to seat you at the right hand of God.

Conclusion: If this were judgment day, where would you stand before God? Dead or alive? Raised from spiritual death or still living in the cemetery of your own making? Seating with Christ in heavenly place or serving the prince of this

world?