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Ephesians 2:5-6
Living Where You Are

We're going to continue this morning with our study of book of Ephesians. Last week we did our second week on Ephesians chapter 2 verse 4 dealing with the love of God. Today we're going to look at the next two verses that describe the reality of God's love in the Person of Christ.

Ephesians 2:5-6 is really a description of the "great love" that Paul mentions in verse four. In fact, in the margin of my Bible, I have an arrow drawn from the word "love" in verse 4 pointing down towards verses 5 and 6 because one day, as I was reading this chapter, it dawned in me with clarity that what Paul describes in verses 5 and 6 is nothing other than "the great love with which He loved us". It is much more than just an emotion that God has, it is a Son that He has given. And it is in and with this Son that we, though we were dead in trespasses and sin, were made alive together, raised together and seated together. Lets read the verses for today.

Eph 2:5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), **6** and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

What I'd like to do today is first look specifically at a few things in this verse, and then talk a bit about living where we've been placed. It is one thing to have some understanding of these verses. It is another thing to live in, and by, and out from where these verses describe us to be. That is by far the bigger deal.

Somebody at one of the groups this week compared it to being in a jail cell and getting a bigger and bigger window, without ever leaving the cell. That's what learning the Bible is like without the reality of Christ, our life, being revealed by the Spirit. Its like a man who sits in the same jail cell and somehow slowly adds to the size of a window – making it bigger and bigger – so that he can look at more and more of the realm of freedom, and yet never leaves the cell. He learns about freedom, he enjoys gazing towards it from time to time, but remains where he is because that's the place he knows the best. If we're not careful to humble our hearts, knowing the Lord can be like that.

But everything described in the Scripture is not a theological and distant fact to be studied, but truly a reality to be revealed and experienced. And even more than that, it is a reality that overtakes and eclipses the realities that we once knew...causing them to give way to the reality of what is now real in Him. One reality giving way to another. That is spiritual growth.

So when we look at verses, I hope we come to see them always as invitations into a reality that is ours in Christ, and must become ours in experience. What has been given to us in Christ must be possessed by faith and experienced and manifested through the true knowing of Him.

Alright, what is this verse saying. Well, again, this verse is describing the reality of how God has loved us in His Son. What is the reality of that love? He has made us alive together, raised us together and seated us together in the heavens in Him.

Now this is such an unbelievable statement of spiritual reality that it is tempting to take it metaphorically. It is tempting to making it a positional truth or even a figure of speech because we don't understand how it could be literal. We read this and think "I wasn't made alive with Jesus...that was 2000 years ago. And I certainly don't remember ever being raised up and seated in heaven with Him. I'm very much still on planet earth". We bring our imaginary definitions of words like raised, together, and heaven, and we're thinking of a natural event rather than a spiritual reality.

Lets break this verse down for a few minutes. First of all, when it says that you were made alive together, raised together, seated together...each of these phrases are one compound word in Greek. It is the word *sun* – a primary preposition denoting union, combined with the verbs for make alive, raise, and seat. It so it is NOT as though God made Jesus alive, and He also made you alive too. Or God raised Jesus, and while He was at it He decided to raise you too. No. All of these things refer to Jesus Christ, and are yours because of your union with Him. They are yours because you have been baptized into Him, made to drink of His Spirit, you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

In other words, it is Christ's resurrection that you have been made to partake of. That is the love of God. God raised His Son from among the dead, and you, having accepted His death as your death, having been born dead in trespass and sin are now quickened together, or made alive together by partaking in Him who is Life. You are joined to Him who is the Resurrection. You are alive because you now have no life but Christ. Your soul has been circumcised of the Adamic man, the nature of flesh, and has become a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:3). You have become one Spirit with Him. (1 Cor 6:17).

The reason I say this so many ways is because, whether it is stated or not, we in the church still think of ourselves independently of Christ. We think of ourselves as having been given eternal Life as a thing, as a gift, as an ability...but not as a Person. We think that God gave Jesus Life, and because of the cross He gave us some Life too. No. That is not true. Because of the cross, Jesus, who is the Life, is given to you. Jesus, who is Life, now lives in you. That is so different.

It is that fundamental error of comprehension that leaves Christians trying to make their "new life" pleasing to God, rather than seeking that Christ, their Life, be formed in them. And that, being impossible, leads only to condemnation.

So when Scriptures says "made alive together", don't think of two dead people both getting resurrected. Think of Christ, who is resurrection from death, coming to live in you. It is in that sense that you were made alive together.

It is also in that sense that you were raised together. What does it mean to be raised with Christ. Again, don't picture two people flying together over the rainbow. Don't picture you and Jesus blasting off through the clouds. No. Again, it is Christ Himself raised out from among the dead, and your participation with this through spiritual union. This raising is not just of His body from the tomb. This raising is of Christ out from the entire realm of death, the entire realm of the old creation, the old

man. This is Christ being raised up out from the realm of death and being restored to the full and unhindered fellowship of Life with the Father. This is Christ being restored to the glory that He left, but being restored to that glory bearing in Himself a people that share His life. Again "you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God". Friends, this is the reality of heaven.

When you think of heaven, it really isn't helpful to picture a geographic location where you will find gigantic candy-canes, golden crowns, and feathery clouds. That is not what heaven is. I am by no means saying that heaven isn't a reality. What may not be a reality is our concept of heaven. Heaven has much more to do with a relationship with God in Christ than it does with a physical place. Heaven has to do with being taken with Christ, in Christ, into the Father Himself...and living in fellowship with God eternally. It is a spiritual reality and not a physical place. It is a relatedness with God by participation in His life, and not just a big city with gold streets.

I don't mean to strip from you any happy imaginations prior to them being cast down by the Spirit of Truth...but I'd be lying to you if I encouraged a view of Heaven as a spiritual Disney Land. It is better than that. We do damage to the reality of heaven when we hold onto our dreams in place of He has given us. And, frankly, our carnal concept of heaven doesn't even make sense in light of verses like this.

Here it says that we have been raised up and seated in heaven in Christ. Understanding heaven as a physical locality makes nonsense out of this verse. It makes nonsense out of Ephesians chapter 1 verse 3 where Paul tells us that every spiritual blessing has been given to us in Christ in the heavens. It makes nonsense out of all of the verses that describe us raised up and seated there. And the verses that tell us that our citizenship is in the heavens.

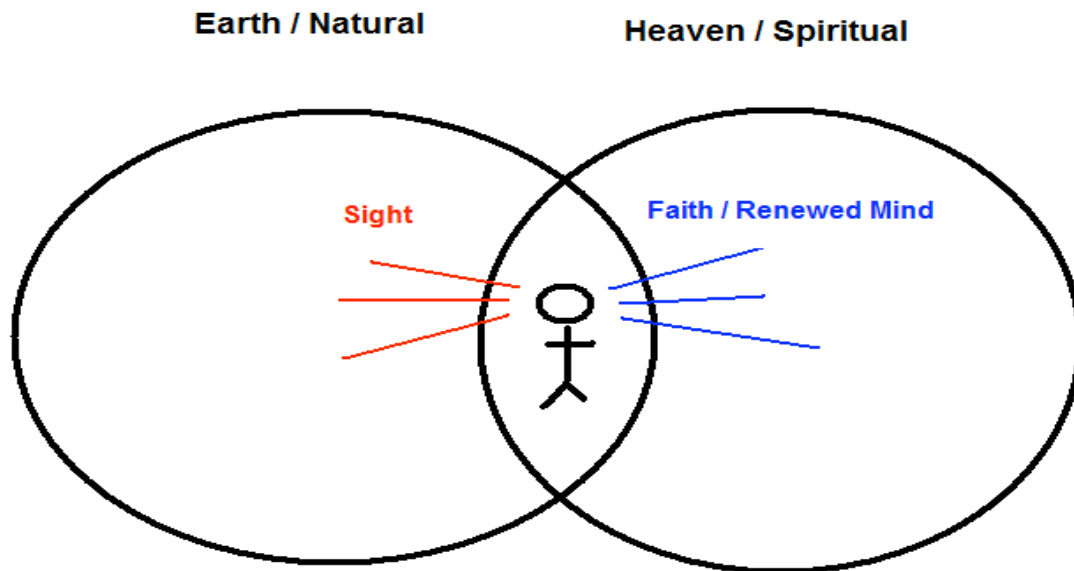
I don't mind if you call heaven a place, as long as you understand that it is a place where you are seated now with Christ, in the Father. You can call it a realm in that it is other than the realm of the earth, the natural realm. You can call it a house, as long as you understand that the word house is used to describe the eternal habitation where God and man have been joined together in Christ. You can call it a kingdom, as long as you understand that that doesn't mean unicorns and princesses, but rather the reign and rule of God in the souls of the redeemed. You can call it a city, as long as you realize that the word city denotes a new creation of God, built on His foundation, filled with His light, and in which you have become a living stone.

All of these words and more are used to describe heaven. What the natural mind does with these word pictures is amazing. We don't see them as realities that we have come to in Christ. We see them as natural things that we will share with Christ. Christ will be in that city, and so will I. Christ will have a huge house in that kingdom, and I'll have a pretty big one too. See, that's what we do.

Again, I'm not saying that heaven isn't real. I'm saying its MORE real than our imaginations. I'm actually saying that our carnal ideas can rob us of the reality of heaven. Because this verse right here tells us plainly that we have been made alive, raised and seated in heaven right now. How can we look to God to reveal to us the reality of where we now are, if we are quite convinced that heaven is just a place that we cannot go until our body dies.

Can I ask you a question? Can you tell me one verse where the Bible talks about dying and then going to heaven?

Heaven becomes a never-ending reality and relationship the moment you and I are born again. It is a never-ending living reality and relationship with the Father in the Son, revealed by the Spirit. I'm going to use this diagram to demonstrate this.



Once a person is born from above, though his body or vessel remains of the earth, his soul has come to eternal reality and relationship of heaven. As Paul says "I have been crucified to the world, and the world has been crucified to me". Or "You have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God". Or our verse today "you have been made alive together, raised together, and seated together with Christ in the heavens".

And as I've demonstrated before, the death of the body is only the removal of the line to the right of this little guy in the diagram. The death of the body doesn't bring you anywhere you were not. It only takes away a realm and reality that was not eternal.

What I want to do for the rest of the time together this morning, is just talk a little bit about what it means to live in the heavens. Or you could say, what it means to live where we truly are. Where we have been placed.

It is one thing to be in Christ in the heavens, it is another thing entirely to be found there, abiding there, seeing things above, minding things above, living in and out from the reality of being dead to the world, and alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What does it mean to live where we are? Well, in a word it means allowing Him to show you His view of where you are and what is real there. It means allowing God to bring us to His view. The right circle here that we have labeled "heaven" could also be labeled - God's view of all things. In order for us to experience the reality of

our citizenship, we must come to God's view, God's perspective, God's understanding of this circle on the right.

I'd like to suggest to you that, despite what we say, most of us really don't want to know as we are known, see as we are seen. I'd like to suggest to you that God, if you can talk like this about God, has a very hard time trying to convince the body of Christ that it is safe and good to release our thoughts regarding salvation and let Him show us His.

I know what we say. I know we say to God, or to Christians, that all we want is to know the truth. But that's not really real. What we really mean by that, underneath the layers of our deception, is that we want to hold on to our greatest imagination of truth and have God add to it. We want it to be what we think, what we know, what we like...but even better. We say "God show me the truth" and we think that that will entail an enlargement of our concept, when it is really the replacement of our concept with His. And that we resist. And we resist it because of the overwhelming power of self-preservation.

We tell God that we want to see what He sees. We ask Him to reveal His Son in us. And as a general concept, I think we mean it. But as a day to day experience, as it effects actual living, we resist it. We resist it because the reality of what He always shows us is according to what He has done in the cross. In other words, the reality of His view of things always involves a seeing that we are dead and He is our life. It involves losing self and being found in Him.

I have a hard time communicating this, but can you see that God is not trying to **do something** to you by His cross, He's trying to show you what He's **already done**. We don't really refuse what He's doing. We refuse what He's done. We're not refusing what He's offering us. We're refusing to walk in what He HAS given. Do you see? It is His view of reality that we are refusing. Not what He's trying to get you to become, but a view to what you already are.

Words are so tricky. They can be such poor carriers of reality. I'm trying to say that we can't really live where we've been placed if we're not willing to let Him show us what He has done. But I'm also saying that we resist this at every turn because a true view of what He has done will show us to be crucified, dead, and buried every time. It will show us ourselves in His view, His mirror, the mirror that shows us the true reflection of what we now are. The mirror that Paul talks about in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, and James talks about in James 1. It is the mirror that shows us the true image of what God has done in Christ.

And that view is not safe for the adamic man. It is not safe for the flesh. In the words of C.S. Lewis, it is not safe, but it is good. It is so good. But we resist it because it comes right up against the most powerful natural desire there is – the desire for self-preservation. That mirror speaks as Jesus spoke "you must lose your life to find it". "You must hate your life to gain it".

And that, of course, isn't something that you do out of your radical devotion, but something that you allow Him to show you, that was the result of Christ's radical devotion. Losing your life isn't something that you learn how to do, but something that works in you through letting Him show you what He's done.

Listen, I hear myself say these words and I realize that it is impossible for the natural mind to understand. But just try to turn your heart to hear this. God isn't trying to get you to do anything. God isn't trying to make you into something. God isn't trying get you from point A to point B. God is trying to get you to live in and walk in and know the reality of where you already are.

There is absolutely no way you can fail Him in what you do or don't do. You already failed Him in that way. That is what the cross was for. Why would God continue to be disappointed with you for what He has already put away in the cross of His Son. Why would God condemn you again for something He has already crucified and buried. Do you think he's going to dig up your failures out of the grave and hold them against you. Do you think He continues to point out the fruit of the Adamic man that still works in you because of an unrenewed mind and denounces it? Friends, He buried that fruit together with the old man and left them in the grave. He now only seeks that you would come to His view of what is NOW in Christ. To His view of Him in whom you have been made alive, raised, and seated in the heavens.

Do you really think that God would put expectations on YOU to accomplish His will. Have you not read the Old Testament? Have you not seen that no man could ever walk in His way? Have you not read that the Law only aroused our sinful passions and increased the offense against God. It became, as Paul says, a ministry of condemnation and death.

We do. We think that God's expectations are on us to accomplish His will. We actually think that, though His very Son lives in our soul, God wants us to attempt to act like Him. Why would we try to act like Him if He, Himself, could actually live in and through us? Why would we think that God's expectation for our life could possibly be anything other than walking in and experiencing the fullness of Christ who is NOW our life? Only because we haven't come to God's view of His finished work.

In the words of T. Austin-Sparks, why are you still hunting around for something, somewhere, some rag of goodness in yourself that you can present to God that will please Him, satisfy Him, and answer to His requirements? You will never find it. Settle it today.

A clear view in the mirror of God will show you that God's expectations are fulfilled in the Person of Christ who is your life, and manifested by you (not FROM you) when Christ your life is revealed. In other words, if you will let Him show you what He has done, you will see that the only thing that God desires of you is that you walk in the Light, walk in the Truth, know as you are known...because it is then that you cease trying to be what you cannot be, and start experiencing and expressing what you are.

Yes, it costs the loss of your favorite lies, but coming to share God's view of reality is the end of your feelings of failure. It is the end of your hunting around for something in yourself that is pleasing to Him. It is the end of trying to figure out God's will for your life. It is the end of everything like that because all of that has already come to an end at the cross – whether we've faced it or not. You can throw all of that away, because God through it away when He put away the old man. God's view will show you what He has already done. It will show you what already is. And it will work an end in your heart to everything that stands in contradiction to His

finished work. And brothers and sisters, right there is our only problem. There is, in our hearts, SO MUCH, that stands in contradiction to His finished work. Strongholds, Paul calls things, thoughts that have risen in contradiction to the truth as it is in Christ.

Jason, make this practical. I don't think there is anything more practical than Truth working in the soul of man. I don't think there is anything more helpful than coming to God's view of what He has done through the cross. We only want something practical to do because we HAVEN'T seen what God has done. The very desire or demand for practicality is a desire that comes out of blindness. It's demanding God show us something that doesn't exist.

How sad when Christians, in the name of practicality, demand that preachers give them something to work on for God. What a contradiction of the cross. The cross doesn't give you something to work on. It gives you something to know by faith. It shows you and I to be the adamic failure that we are, and grants us Life of the perfect one. The only thing to work on is the turning of the heart to a child-like posture where it will allow God to show us His view of all things.

Ephesians chapter 2 verse 5 and 6 tells us where we are. But I can promise you that you will not live according to that reality, you will not experience that reality, until you are willing to let God displace your view of spiritual reality by letting you share in His. You cannot live where you have been placed unless (right side of diagram) where you have been placed, and all that is real in that Life, becomes far more real to your soul than the death out from which you have come.