

## But God . . .

Ephesians 2:4-7 Sunday AM, June 11, 2023

**Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-7** (NASB95) And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Overwhelmed with God’s gracious goodness, Paul offers a prayer of thanksgiving to God for these saints at Ephesus. I praise and thank-you God for your great and gracious mercies toward these believers. Help them see more of these blessings so they will be faithful to Your purpose for calling them. Help them not only see this purpose clearly, but upon seeing the human impossibility of faithfulness to that plan, help them see “the surpassing greatness of [Your] power toward us who believe.” What kind of power? The kind that is 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 in the heavenly places.” And this is the last we hear about us individually in this prayer. The rest of the prayer shows the praiseworthy power and extent of Christ’s reign. Our only mention comes if we are found to be under that great and final authority as Christ is proclaimed Head of His body, the church. The focus is on Christ. This is so important, because last week—we looked at life out from under that authority. It was lived according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is not working in the sons of disobedience. These chains kept us busy—living in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind—leaving our world centered on us, shrunk to the size of our desires and personal happiness. And how is this life with its goals and values described? We were by nature, children of wrath—objects of the wrath of God. Why? Because according to the only reality that matters, it is DEAD living—there is separation between us and God and all that results is full of stench and decay. Do you feel the weight of this condition, of life determined based on your life with God shown by your life’s focus and desires? John Newton did, and you can hear it in this hymn, first appearing in 1779 in the Olney Hymns, right in the middle of other hymns based on the book of Isaiah—this one perhaps based on Isaiah 53:4-5. The only hope lay in our two powerful words today—But God.

### \*Hymn (Powerpoint): How Lost Was My Condition

But God did what? Don’t rush it this morning, because before we get to what happens to dead objects of wrath, we are called to look away from us. Look at God—look at who He is, look at His disposition toward objects of wrath. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions. Think on holy mercy.

### \*Hymn (Powerpoint): His Mercy is More \*Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: Consider the Stars Scripture: Isaiah 45:1–23

(NASB95) Thus says the LORD to Cyrus His anointed, Whom I have taken by the right hand, To subdue nations before him And to loose the loins of kings: To open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: <sup>2</sup> “I will go before you and make the rough places smooth; I will shatter the doors of bronze and cut through their iron bars. <sup>3</sup> “I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden wealth of secret places, So that you may know that it is I, The LORD, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name. <sup>4</sup> “For the sake of Jacob My servant, And Israel My chosen one, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor Though you have not known Me. <sup>5</sup> “I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; <sup>6</sup> That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. <sup>7</sup> The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these. <sup>8</sup> “Drip down, O heavens, from above, And let the clouds pour down righteousness; Let the earth open up and salvation bear fruit, And righteousness spring up with it. I, the LORD, have created it. <sup>9</sup> “Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker—An earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you doing?’ Or the thing you are making say, ‘He has no hands.’ <sup>10</sup> “Woe to him who says to a father, ‘What are you begetting?’ Or to a woman, ‘To what are you giving birth?’” <sup>11</sup> Thus says the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: “Ask Me about the things to come concerning My sons, And you shall commit to Me the work of My hands. <sup>12</sup> “It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hands And I ordained all their host. <sup>13</sup> “I have aroused him in righteousness And I will make all his ways smooth; He will build My city and will let My exiles go free, Without any payment or reward,” says the LORD of hosts. <sup>14</sup> Thus says the LORD, “The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush And the Sabeans, men of stature, Will come over to you and will be yours; They will walk behind you, they will come over in chains And will bow down to you: They will make supplication to you: ‘Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, No other God.’” <sup>15</sup> Truly, You are a God who hides Himself, O God of Israel, Savior! <sup>16</sup> They will be put to shame and even humiliated, all of them; The manufacturers of idols will go away together in humiliation. <sup>17</sup> Israel has been saved by the LORD With an everlasting salvation; You will not be put to shame or humiliated To all eternity. <sup>18</sup> For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), “I am the LORD, and there is none else. <sup>19</sup> “I have not spoken in secret, In some dark land; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, ‘Seek Me in a waste place’; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, Declaring things that are upright. <sup>20</sup> “Gather yourselves and come; Draw near together, you fugitives of the nations; They have no knowledge, Who carry about their wooden idol And pray to a god who cannot save. <sup>21</sup> “Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me. <sup>22</sup> “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other. <sup>23</sup> “I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.

**Offering: \*Doxology:** What did God do? He took dead people, objects of His wrath and made them alive! How did He do that?

Does it have to be fully understood before you acknowledge this is the kind of thing that God does? He takes Cyrus, a powerful, ungodly king, and gives Him “a title of honor though you have not known Me.” He acts “that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity.” Who can match His power or question His authority. “Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker—an earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you doing?’” This power exposes idols as foolish emptiness, <sup>16</sup> They will be put to shame and even humiliated, all of them; The manufacturers of idols will go away together in humiliation. And what is the reason for this show of power? To show His powerful ability to care for His children whether through discipline or deliverance. <sup>17</sup> Israel has been saved by the LORD With an everlasting salvation; You will not be put to shame or humiliated To all eternity. How should we respond to this great One who saves? Listen to Him, and be reconciled to live under His gracious rule. “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.

### \*Hymn #117: We Come, O Christ to You

**You may be seated.** Pastor preaches this familiar passage, how should you respond? Worship, gratitude, and obedience—your life lived through Him and for Him, all intentionally seeking to call others to Christ. You just sang it! So fill our hearts, that all may view Your life in us, and turn to You. **Why would others desire this?** Because of the freedom of yielding to One so great who cares for all the stars the choir sang about and everything else. But there is more—Christ is to us Savior and Friend—we can be personal recipients of God’s love and mercy, and He wants to show you more of the riches of His grace throughout eternity. Would that be okay with you? To those whose eyes God has opened, there is a definite YES PLEASE!

### \*Hymn (Powerpoint): Savior and Friend

**Message: “But God . . .” Ephesians 2:4-7 \*Hymn #203: And Can It Be \*Prayer**