***Overwhelming Love***

God Loves Us at Our Worst

**Connecting with God Series - part 15**

**April 25-26**

Ephesians 2:4-7

**Introduction**

* **What’s the first emotion you feel when I talk about God?** – is it fear? Is it joy? Is it love? Is it boredom? What?
* **Overwhelming by Love Coming Soon** - By the time we are done with this message and even more this series, you will be overwhelmed by God’s love.
* **Tim Keller’s Prodigal God book** – it was God who was extravagant and almost wasteful in His love

**Connection Means LAVISH Love**

**Lesson**

* **Where we left off last time**…Reflecting on us being dead in our sins. AND, we learned that God’s wrath was coming for all sin, which as sinners was super scary, but today we get the other half of the story and wow is it great!
* **Prep for Today (Context passage)**
* Ephesians 2:4-7 – *“**But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,* ***5****even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—* ***6****and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,* ***7****so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*
* **But God!** – what a beautiful statement. It changed everything! What we couldn’t do for ourselves, He did for us. The only way we are ever saved is if God reaches down and does it for us. Thank you Lord for saving us.
* **Mercy Me**
* **God’s Mercy and Love for Us**
* **Ephesians 2:4** – *“**But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,…*
* **God rich in mercy** – Mercy means someone deserves a punishment or penalty, but out of kindness they are released from it. In other words you deserve it, but love stops it from happening. (Grace means you just want to give a gift out of love, even though someone doesn’t really deserve it).
* **God’s Referred to with Mercy a lot in the Bible –** God is continually extending mercy to sinners. Think about how real this is. God is perfect. Everything He does is right. He doesn’t have to apologize, He doesn’t have regret, He never makes bad decisions. But He ONLY Works with creatures that do all those things. He is consistently being sinned against. He is consistent disrespected and challenged. He is always classified as the Bad guy when things don’t go people’s way. But He is continually loving and forgiving. His whole relationship with His creation is one of MERCY. It has to be. But what’s so wonderful is that He doesn’t have to He WANTS to. (Exod. 34:6; Ps. 103:8; Jon. 4:2, Mic. 7:18, etc.)
* **Mercy and Grace flow from Healthy Full People –** God wants to extend mercy wherever possible. Why? Because He’s full of joy and full of everything He needs so He doesn’t need anything from us. That allows Him to operate from a complete place to focus on others. Think about why we are so harsh, judgmental, unforgiving and snappish to other people. Why are we like that? Because we are agitated inside. We feel like we don’t have enough so we are stingy with others. WE don’t feel like we’ve been appreciated so we withhold from others. We don’t feel like we are soothed, so we don’t soothe others. But what if we allowed God to heal more of our hurts? What if we allowed Him to cleanse us from the heaviness and the regret and pain? How much more would we extend grace and mercy.
* **God’s great love for us** – Over and over the Bible tells us to reflect on the incredible Lavish love God has for us.
* **Eph 3:17–19** - [Paul prays,] *“…that you, being rooted and grounded in love,* ***18****may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,* ***19****and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,…”*
* **Helpless, Hopeless and Hateful**
* **God Saved us While We were Sinners**
* **Ephesians 2:5a** – *“****…****even when we were dead in our trespasses,…*
* **Loved us when we were still the bad guys** – Here Paul is pointing out the intentional sins that we do, that confirmed His judgment of our sin to be right. We were bad guys, doing selfish things. We were self-obsessed and not interested in God at all. We made the universe circle around us. But even in that state, God’s love was so great that He rescued us anyway.
* **Loved us while we were dead and not reaching out to Him at all** – Again let me highlight that our salvation can’t be earned by us doing anything because we are spiritually dead. God had to rescue us by reaching down and doing everything for us. We weren’t reaching out to Him. The dead can’t respond to stimuli.
* **It’s Alive!**
* **God Raised us to Life Along with Jesus**
* **Ephesians 2:5b** – *“made us alive together with Christ—…”*
* **Made us alive** –
* **How we were made alive** (the by grace you have been saved is going to be repeated in the next portion – so only mention that here).
* **Alive TOGETHER with Christ –** When we fuse together with Christ by asking Him into our hearts, our lives become one. This means that His death is counted to us (dying to sin), and His resurrection is counted to us (becoming spiritually alive). We get what He gets.New Life.
* **Baptism is a word picture of this process** – we are lowered down into the water, like Christ was lowered into the tomb and then we are brought up fresh and clean and washed and purified to a New Life. That’s the point of immersion baptism.
* **By Grace Alone**
* **Saved by God’s grace**
* **Ephesians 2:5c** – *“- by grace you have been saved—…”*
* **What’s Grace? –** Grace is ‘unearned favor.’ It means that God is so loving that out of His goodness, He came up with the idea to bless us with something as a gift.
* **What’s Salvation (saved from what)?** – Rescue. Rescue from what? Remember when I told you last week that God has to remove sin (Justice demands it). I told you that either Jesus takes the sin out of us or we get taken out with the sin. The scary prospect of being taken out, Hell, receiving God’s wrath, was removed once and for all by Jesus Christ dying for our sins. We were SAVED from eternal death. We were saved from spiritual disconnection. We were SAVED from the wrath of God. The sin isn’t a part of us any more.
* **Have Been Saved** – Perfect tense in Greek – ongoing result of a perfected action. Something in the past has made a new reality today! Usually salvation is talked about as an ongoing process, ‘are being saved.’ But this one is focusing on the past fact. It means that Paul is highlighting that Christ’s ability to save us is a lock and can be relied upon as a fact. It’s a conclusion that we are fully saved once for all.
* **We are Alive Forevermore! -** Ro 8:31–39 – *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* ***32****He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?* ***33****Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.* ***34****Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* ***35****Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?...****37****No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.* ***38****For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,* ***39****nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*
* **You Lift Me Up!**
* **Raised and Seated with Christ in Heaven**
* **Ephesians 2:6** – *“…and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,…”*
* **What it means to be raised up** – Resurrected and spiritually ascended to be with Christ – now in dual citizenship. We live here and there.
* **Set Free to Truly Live - Ro 6:3–11** – “*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?* ***4****We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.* ***5****For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.* ***6****We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.* ***7****For one who has died has been set free from sin.* ***8****Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.* ***9****We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.* ***10****For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.* ***11****So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”*
* **What it means to be seated with Christ (in the heavenly places)** – We are **positionally** purified, glorified and secure in heaven. We are safe. We are good. Spiritually.
* **What it means to be raised up and seated in the heavenly places, yet still live down here** (Kingdom now but not yet; heaven on earth) –
* **Php 3:20–21** – *“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,* ***21****who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”*
* **We are positionally there, but actively here**. This means that we have dual citizenship. We can access resources in both locations. Explain.
* **Waiting for the Full Present**
* **Held in Heaven Until Jesus’ Full Kindness is Revealed**
* **Ephesians 2:7** – *“…**so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*
* **What God will reveal in coming ages** – Christ’s rescue of His people and all the great things He’s done and doing for us, stands as a universe wide demonstration of how loving He is. It makes Him look good. Our salvation brings Him glory. It makes the heavenly beings say wow. Every since saved life is a testimony to a good, good God.
* **Immeasurable riches of Grace and the kindness of God** – God is more loving than we can imagine.

**Conclusion**

* **The Beautiful Secure Future of the Believer –** May our hearts, spiritis and souls, those of all of us who call ourselves Christians and follow Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, be soothed today to know that He has done it all for us. He has saved us and is in the process of cleansing us and bringing us to Himself.