



THE WORLD GOD IS MAKING | WHAT CAN GOD DO WITH THE DEAD? (5)

October 11, 2026

Ephesians 2:1-7

PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships
To participate in God's mission to the world

WORSHIP

PLEASE OPEN IN PRAYER

RESPONSIVE PRAYER — Ezekiel 37

The hand of the LORD was upon me,

And he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD.

And set me down in the middle of the valley;

It was full of bones. And behold, they were very dry.

And he said to me: "Son of man, can these bones live?"

And I answered, "O LORD God, you know."

"O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD."

"Thus says the LORD God to these bones:"

"Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live."

"And you shall know that I am the LORD."

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:1-7

READING

¹And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

BIBLE STUDY

Commentary

We are continuing our sermon series through Ephesians called *The World God Is Making*, and this week we will proceed into chapter 2. Up to this point, we have looked at God's plan for the church, the spiritual blessings we have in Christ, and Paul's prayer for the believers in Ephesus. As we turn our attention to the second chapter of this letter, we will focus on the one miracle all believers have in common: the miracle of the gospel.

This chapter starts with the word "and," which connects it inseparably from the previous chapter, during which Paul was praying for the believers' knowledge of God to increase.

Here, he changes the subject to what they need to know — primarily that they were once dead in their transgressions and sins. This somewhat jarring transition is necessary to convey the hopeless position of those who are not in Christ, which is expounded upon in these first three verses. In order to encourage the Ephesians about the work God has done in their lives, he must remind them of the desperate state they occupied before God began his work.

John Stott offered a helpful threefold characterization of this state. First, those who are in their sin are dead and therefore as unresponsive to God as a corpse is to human contact. In the same way that the living in this world have no contact with the dead, those who are in their sin have no contact with God. Second, those who are in their sin are enslaved to the world and its ruler — the prince of the power of the air, the devil. It is he who is at work in the disobedient so that they carry out the desires of their flesh. Finally, those who are in their sin are condemned; Paul calls them “by nature children of wrath.” To be dead in sin is to warrant God’s judgment and wrath, and that is the natural state of all fallen humans.

Verse 4 introduces a phrase that lies at the heart of all of Scripture: “But God!” By exploring the depths the Ephesians occupied when they were dead in their sin, Paul can now show the gospel for what it truly is: a miracle. Filled with love and rich with mercy, God decided to act on our behalf by initiating three actions found in this passage. First, he made us alive together with Christ, which leads to the phrase we’ll return to next week, “by grace you have been saved.” Second, he raised us up with Christ. Thirdly, he has seated us with Christ in the heavenly places. Our passage for this week closes with the reason for all of this: This kindness to us is meant to display just how rich God is in grace for the ages to come.

What is the significance of these three actions that God took? They mirror the events of Christ’s life that we confess every time we say the Apostle’s Creed. “The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.” Only here Paul is saying that we too share in these events as part of our union with Christ. This is the blessing of the gospel: Though we were dead, we have been made alive; though we were enslaved by this world, we have been raised beyond it to long for the new one; and finally, though we were condemned, we are now enthroned.

1. Looking at the Bible

- Look at verses 1-3. What strikes you about Paul’s description of those who are “dead in sin?”
- Look at verses 4-7. Which one of the three actions God has taken here stands out to you the most and why? Are any of these new to you?

2. Looking at Jesus

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Not only does every passage point to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- Before Jesus saved you, did you see yourself as being at enmity with God? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to be “made alive with Christ”?

3. Looking at our Hearts

- How does the transition from death to life described in verses 1-3 relate to your personal faith journey?
- Why is it important for Christians to remember how dire our situation was before Christ? How does this help us appreciate grace more fully?

4. Looking at our World

- Verse 7 says God saved us “so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace.” How should the outward purpose of our salvation impact the way we interact with those around us?

- PRAYER**
- Spend a few moments reflecting and sharing about your spiritual condition before you met Christ. Take a few moments to thank God, not just for what he’s done in your life but also for what he’s done in the lives of your fellow group members.