

"But God" = Salvation

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 May 2024

Preacher: Pastor Steve Hersey

[0 : 0 0] when I was mentioning the visitors. Nancy's back there. She decided Florida got to be too hot, and she was coming back to where Maine, where it's nice, so. Nice to have you back, Nancy, for the summer.

So, good. Take your Bibles, go to Ephesians, chapter 2. Ephesians in the New Testament, chapter 2. I mentioned a few weeks ago I was preaching about something, and I mentioned that the words, but God.

I said I'd have to speak on that. I've done it before, and I'd have to speak on that again to remind you of the importance of those two words, but God. In Ephesians, chapter 2, I'm going to read the first seven verses.

I'm going to give you an outline, not the one I'm using for the message, but I'll give you the outline anyway. Verses 1 through 3 talk about our past guilt. Verses 4 through 6 talk about our present grace, and verse 7 talks about our future glory.

So, as we read through this, think of it in those terms. First of all, our past guilt, starting at verse 1 of chapter 2 of Ephesians. Verse 1 through 6. And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in time past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

[1 : 4 1] But now we have present grace. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherein he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, for by grace are ye saved, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

future glory, that in the ages to come, we might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

We have been sinners in the past. We have God's grace on our life now, and we have future in heaven with him, future glory.

You know, there was a man by the name of Harry Ironside, H.A. Ironside. He was the pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago.

He followed Daray Torrey, who followed D.L. Moody. And one day, he was riding a passenger train into the city, back and forth, and as they do there in Chicago, in those elevated trains.

[2 : 5 1] And a gypsy woman came in, and she sat down next to him. And she said, Sir, if you will cross my palm with some silver, I'll tell you your future. Now, she wasn't really good at this, because if she had been, she would have known what was going on.

But he said to her, he said, Well, before you do that, let me tell you what God says about my future. And he opened his Bible, and she's like, Oh, wait, no, no, that's okay.

And he kind of just put his elbow there, so she couldn't get up out of her seat. And he told her about, that he had had enough, because of God saving him.

He had enough, because he knew what his future was going to be, because of God, Jesus Christ dying on the cross. He had enough of everything he needed, because God, his Holy Spirit, filled his life.

And about that time, she bolted out of the seat, and took off running down the train, I picked the wrong man, I picked the wrong man. Yeah, she was supposed to be a fortune teller, to be able to read himself, but she picked the wrong man.

[3 : 59] See, God has taken care of everything we need, concerning our future. Salvation exists, past, present, and future. You know, once we lived under the penalty of sin, but by the power of God, through Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ came, died on the cross, rose again, and through that power, he's able to save us, for all eternity, and he's able to save us, and give us glory, in the times to come.

How does that happen? Well, you notice behind me, I say, but God, equals salvation. We are saved, and saved, is not a Baptist term, saved, is not a term, that we made up, it is a biblical term.

Let's have a word of prayer, and then we'll talk about, this idea of being saved, but God, equals salvation. Heavenly Father, I pray right now, that you would open our hearts, and minds, to hear your word.

Lord, that you would help us, to understand today. Lord, I don't know if everyone, in this room is saved, I don't know, everything about everybody, you do, but I don't.

And so Lord, you've called me, to preach the gospel. You've called me, to preach the word of God. And so Lord, be with me, strengthen me, help me today, as I preach your word. And Lord, I pray that you will help, the people here, to hear with open ears.

[5 : 30] They will examine themselves. Do they know, Jesus Christ, as Savior? Have they been saved, according to the word of God?

Lord, help us this morning, to fall in love with you again, in Jesus name, Amen. Saved, who saved?

Or who saves? God alone. God is the only one, who can save us. I said, saved is not a made up term, not a Baptist term, it's a biblical term.

Verse behind me, Acts 4.12, says, no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be, what's the word? Saved. Saved. Romans 10.13, whosoever should call upon the name of the Lord, shall be, saved.

Saved. How, how, how, is someone saved? By God alone. Have you been saved? Do you know him as your Savior?

[6 : 33] Savior? If I were to ask you, do you know you're saved? And you say, yes. And I say, put that into words. How do you know that you're saved?

You might start talking and say various things, but let me bring it down to one key thing.

Would you be saying, well, I did this, and I did this, and I did this, and I did this? Or would you be saying, God did this, and God did this, and Jesus Christ did this?

See, our salvation does not depend on us. Our salvation depends on what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross. Our salvation depends on what God did for us when he sent Jesus Christ to die for us on the cross.

Salvation is of the Lord. The Bible says that as well. Too many people today, though, are trying to make salvation a thing of, well, I did this, I'm a good person.

[7 : 36] Stan was talking about this a few minutes ago. I'm a good person. Well, that's good. You should be a good person. People appreciate you being a good person, but that does not save you.

Jesus Christ saves. Matter of fact, let me throw another verse in here. It's not on the screen. John 14, 6. I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Those are words that Jesus said. No one can come unto God, but by me. Because he was God. He made the way for us. He says, I'm the way, the truth, and the life.

You have to come through me in order to get to God. You know, so many people try to earn their way to heaven these days.

Well, I'll be a good person, and I'll give to the poor, and I'll do this, and I'll do that, and I'll do this other thing. Trying to work their way to heaven. It doesn't work. Some religions, that's part of what they do.

[8 : 37] Well, you do good works, and you'll get to heaven. No, that's not how it works. I am the way. You know, it's not about us.

It's all about God. And when we read through this chapter, here, chapter 2, he talks about the sin, and the way we lived, and everything, and the kind of life we had. But then in verse 4, he says, but God.

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherein he loved us. He loved us.

He showed mercy to us. But God. Those words are so important. There are so many times you read through the Bible, and you will find the words, but God.

Let me show you a few. Psalm 49, 15. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me.

[9 : 38] We're saying, there is a redeemer. That's who Jesus is. Jesus is our savior. Another word we use is he's our redeemer. He bought us back from the sin that we were in.

He paid the price to get us out of jail. He took care of everything for us. And as I said, only God can do that.

And you know, the people that Jesus came to, the people Jesus was talking to and dealt with the most, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes, and different ones, here's what they said.

They knew the right answer. They just didn't recognize Jesus for who he was. Mark chapter 2, verse 7. Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?

They got that part right. Only God can forgive sins. They just didn't recognize Jesus for who he was. As a matter of fact, they fought against him in what he was trying to do.

[10 : 37] Luke chapter 16, verse 15. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men but God knoweth your hearts for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

He says, you try to justify yourselves. That's what we're talking about. People try to justify themselves. I do a lot of good works. I do a lot of things. He says, our good works are filthy rags.

He says, it's an abomination. He says, but God knows the heart. I can try to do all kinds of good things, but am I doing it for me?

Am I doing it to help get me to heaven? Am I trying to do it? God knows your heart why you're doing it. Am I doing it because I'm hoping to earn my way to heaven or am I doing it because Jesus Christ lives within me and he wants me to help and lead others to him?

Romans chapter 5, verse 8. But God commendeth his love toward us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. God says, Christ went to that cross, gave of himself because we were sinners.

[11 : 55] And he did that 2,000 years ago. You were not a gleam in anybody's eye 2,000 years ago. But God knew that in 2024 we were going to be here.

We're going to be sitting here on May 5, 2024. And he says, God commended his love toward us. And while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Corinthians 3, 6 and 7. I have planted, the polished water, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither is he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.

I'm supposed to take the gospel. As a Christian, I'm supposed to take the gospel and tell people about Jesus Christ and what he has done. But can I tell you, I have saved nobody.

I plant the seed of the word of God. I come along, somebody else has planted the seed, I come along and I water. I give more verses and more. Impetus to what God says in his word.

[13 : 04] But it is God that gets the increase. It's God that giveth the increase. And then this verse here, in Ephesians 2, 4, but God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.

Do you notice it doesn't say, but you. It says, but God. God does the work. God does everything.

And it's been that way since the beginning. Back in the Garden of Eden. You remember, Adam and Eve sinned. They went against God's word.

Did Adam and Eve sin because they ate of the fruit, whatever it was? Not necessarily. They sinned because they went against God's word. And he said, because they sinned, they tried to cover up their sin with fig leaves.

They understood they were naked and then they tried to use fig leaves to cover things up. That's kind of a picture of mankind. We try to cover up sin with our own devices instead of leaving it with Jesus Christ.

[14 : 13] But God came along, shed blood of an innocent animal, clothed them with that skin. the first demonstration of blood being shed, an innocent for the guilty.

And that's what Jesus Christ did for us. The innocent for the guilty. There was no sin in him. Are you trying to cover yourself? You can't do it. My righteousness is as filthy rags, it said.

I thought of it this way this week as I was preparing this. I got friends who work in mechanic work and things. I can picture Dana.

He's out there working in the garage, working on a vehicle and he spills something. Well, he spills something so what does he do? Grabs the nearest rag to wipe it up.

Only problem is the rag he grabs is the one he also changed the oil with and some other things. So, he's trying to clean up. But as he's trying to clean up, what's he doing? Spreading oil and grease around. See, God says, our righteousness has filthy rags.

[15 : 21] We're trying to clean up ourselves and it does not work. Let me ask you this. When it comes to the sin in your life, are you wearing fig leaves? Are you allowing Jesus Christ to cleanse you?

But I'm a good person. No. But God. God takes care of it. It's not baptism. It's not anything else. I like this illustration that somebody mentioned.

When we try to save ourselves, I lived in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, when Hurricane Andrew hit Miami. 30 miles difference. So, I was there for that hurricane.

And somebody illustrated us trying to cover up our sins and take care of our sins. is like putting an electric fan out the window to blow back a hurricane. That's what it's like. It does not work.

It's not going to be able to do it. Or, somebody else put it as, you take Niagara Falls and you're going to dam it up with toothpicks.

[16 : 23] You're going to build a dam out of toothpicks and it's going to hold that water back. It doesn't work. Us trying to forgive ourselves of our sins and cover up our sins just doesn't work. We need God.

That's the longest point. The next ones are shorter. Who saves? God alone. Number two, why does God save us? Love and mercy.

Look at verse four again. But God, who is rich in mercy for his great love wherein he loved us. Love and mercy. It's easy to love someone who's lovable.

Someone who's loving. Oh yeah, it's easy to give. What about those who are not? And yet the Bible said, I already read to you, but God commended his love toward us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

He went for the unlovely and paid the price for them. You know, I may not understand it all, but I am so glad he did it.

[17 : 27] He gave himself for us. You've probably heard this illustration before, but there was a theologian, great theologian, who came to a college and he was speaking as a guest speaker and he had an auditorium, you know, lecture room that was, you know, hold hundreds.

And he's there and he's speaking and his people are able to come in and watch and listen and they're able to ask questions and things. and one young person asked him the question, said, what was the most profound truth that has ever occupied your mind?

And they're thinking they're going to get some great deep doctrine. The man says, well, actually, the greatest thing I ever thought about was something my mother used to sing to me.

Jesus loves me. This I know. For the Bible tells me so. Think about that for a second. Just dwell on that. Jesus loves me.

It's all right there. The fact that he loved us even while we were yet sinners, he loved us. And the fact that the Bible tells us so.

[18 : 39] We can trust this book. No contradictions, no errors. We can trust this book. Why does God save us? Because he loves us.

Why does God love us? I have no idea. When I look at me and I look at people I know, why does God love us?

I have no idea. But he does. And that's the great thing. He does. He also shows us his mercy.

Notice it said there, but God who is rich in mercy. We have his mercy on our lives. Mercy is not receiving the punishment you rightly deserve.

Let me say that again. Mercy is not receiving the punishment we rightly deserve. What do we deserve? Well, if you believe the Bible and you read it, we deserve death and hell.

[19 : 43] We're sinners. We've gone totally contrary to what God has for us. And you know, there are people out there who some will say, well, I'm not that big a sinner.

Have you ever told a lie? one sin. You cannot be allowed into heaven because any sin in heaven would taint it.

Any sin in heaven would not make it heaven anymore. No sin. Well, that leaves me out. Yes, that's why Jesus came. I'll talk some more about that in a minute.

Then there, on the other side, you've got people who say, I've just sinned so much, I've done so much, there's no way God could love me. There's no way God could forgive me. There's just too much. God's mercy is unbelievably deep.

Some folks in England took a poor lady who lived in the slums of London and took her on a vacation to the coast.

[20 : 52] And as they took her on vacation to the coast, they arrived there, they got out of the car, the lady looked out at the ocean and she started to cry. And they're like, it's a beautiful day.

It's warm. We're at the ocean. You're away from the things that you have back home. Why are you crying? And she pointed at the ocean and said, it's the first thing I've ever seen that there's enough of.

because she lived in the slums. She was used to not having. God has enough mercy in his little finger to take care of anything you have ever done.

God will forgive you of anything. His mercy is so great. Who saves us? God alone. Why? Love and mercy.

How does God save? Grace. Grace. Look at verse 5. He says, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace are ye saved.

[22 : 06] By grace. That's the opposite of mercy. Grace is receiving something good that you don't deserve. You get to receive something you don't deserve.

God, by his grace, has offered you salvation. Something you don't deserve because of what you've done on your own, he's offering it to you anyway. You often see the acrostic, grace, God's riches, or God's redemption, at Christ's expense.

Jesus came to redeem us, to buy us back, to give us the riches. When we become a Christian, we accept Jesus Christ from us, it says you become a joint heir with Jesus Christ.

What does God give us that we don't deserve? First thing that comes to most people mind, heaven. I get to go to heaven. That's true. You get to go to heaven because God has saved you and you get to go to heaven and live with him.

But, what about now? What do you have right now? We can wait to go to heaven, but what do we have right now?

[23 : 22] We have the righteousness of Christ on our lives. How do we know we're saved? Because Jesus Christ came to live within us. Jesus Christ's righteousness has covered our sin, taken care of our sin.

See, not only are we saved from something, but we're saved to something. We're saved from death and hell, but we're saved to the righteousness of Christ and the heaven that awaits us.

We're clothed in his righteousness. See, God looks out and he says, he sees a born-again Christian and he not only sees someone who has been forgiven, but because of the righteousness of Christ, he sees someone who has been justified, just as if I never sinned.

See, Christ never sinned. Christ never committed a sin in his life. And his salvation coming to us, filling us with himself, God looks down and he sees Jesus.

He sees it just as if I had never sinned. Hard to believe, isn't it, that God has done that for us. Who saves? God alone. Why?

[24 : 38] Grace and mercy. How? By grace. When does God save? When true biblical faith occurs. When true biblical faith.

Notice again, he says in verse 8, for by grace are ye saved through faith.

By grace through faith. It doesn't say by faith. faith. We say that a lot. You're saved by faith.

No, we're saved through faith. By God's grace, through faith in what God has done for us. It's not by the faith, it's through the faith that we have.

What is faith? Again, another acrostic. Forsaking all. I trust him. I forsake my good works. I forsake baptism. I forsake church attendance.

[25 : 35] I forsake, now I don't mean forsake those and not doing them, but I'm not trusting in those for my salvation. I trust him. I trust Jesus Christ for the salvation that I have.

Too many people are missing salvation because they're trusting in other things than Jesus. They say, oh no, I trust in Jesus plus baptism.

I trust in Jesus plus church attendance. I trust in Jesus plus you name it. We try to add things to what Jesus has already done for us.

Jesus already took care of it. All I have to do is trust him. I just have to put my faith and trust there. Trusting Jesus Christ plus nothing else.

Trusting Jesus Christ minus nothing else. Forsaking all, I trust him and him alone.

[26 : 45] Think about the hymns that we sing. We don't sing how great I am. We sing how great thou art. God did it all.

for us. When you trust Christ alone and his death, his blood takes care of everything that we need.

You can't make it to heaven with anything other than Jesus Christ. Number five. Number five, where does that leave us?

God who can save us? God alone. Why? Because of his love and mercy. How does God save?

By grace. When does he save? When biblical faith occurs. So where does that leave us? If we have done those things, if we have trusted Christ as our savior, we have allowed him to come in and cleanse us, to cover us, and to take away our sin, and we're trusting in him to take us to heaven, we're trusting in him to take care of us right now, where does that leave us?

[28 : 00] Look back at verse six. What does it say? And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

I'm not the smartest person in the world, but I have been to school. I have taken some English classes, so let me ask you, look at that verse. It says, hath raised and made.

Are those things in the future, or have they already happened? They've already happened. He says, he hath raised you and made you, past tense.

He has done these things for you already. If I am saved, then in the mind of God, I'm as sure as heaven is if I'd already been there a million years.

Think about that. Stop there for a second. If I am saved, God already pictures me in heaven, in heavenly places.

[29 : 12] Look back at chapter one, verse three. It says, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ.

He says, he has trusted us and blessed us and given us things in heavenly places. Think about it.

In God's mind, you're already there. In God's mind, you've already made it there. God's love. Let me ask you a question. Somebody asks you, are you on your way to heaven?

I hope so. No. I don't hope so. He says, he already sees me there.

If I've truly trusted Christ, asked him to come into my life to save me, he says, God already sees you there. I don't hope so. I know so. I know that's where I'm going.

[30 : 16] People come along and they say, how are you doing? Well, good, under the circumstances. No, no, no, no, no.

Circumstances don't matter. He already sees me there. He said there in verse 3 there of chapter 1, he said, he's blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ.

He said, you're already there. Why are you living the way you're living? Why are you living under the circumstances? Why are you living under all these different hardships and things that have taken place in your life?

Why are you letting them get you down? He said, it doesn't matter what the circumstances are, but God. Why are you down in the dumps? You live in the heavenlies.

Why are you letting Satan attack you and have all this control in your life? But God, has you seated in the heavenlies? How does it affect our life here now?

[31 : 21] If I'm seated in the heavenlies, if I'm saved and I'm under God's control, how does that affect my life now? let me show you some more things the way I started in the Bible.

In Genesis chapter 31 verse 7, Jacob says, your father hath deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God suffered him not to hurt me.

Remember all the things he had to go through to get his wife? Jesus, but God. Genesis 48 verse 21, Israel is Jacob, and Israel said unto Joseph, behold I die, but God shall be with you and bring you again in the land of your fathers.

See, when things happen in our life and things are going on in our life and we don't understand and we don't want, he says, but God has an answer. Genesis 50, this was Joseph.

Remember Joseph by his brothers was taken and sold into slavery and wound up in Egypt and going through all of it? Genesis chapter 50 verse 20, but as for you, he thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good to bring to pass as it is this day to save much people alive.

[32 : 42] Joseph, by going through all the different things he did, all the things that seemed bad, he says, look, God did it so that I could be here to save your lives.

1 Samuel 23, verse 14, David's hiding from Saul, since David abode in the wilderness in strongholds and remained in the mountain of the wilderness as if, and Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.

David was protected by God every step of every day. 2 Chronicles 20, 15, Jehoshaphat, surrounded by the Assyrians, and he said, hearken ye, all Judah and all ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou, King Jehoshaphat, thus saith the Lord unto you, be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.

God is going to take care of you. Do you ever have times when you just think, I just don't have the strength to keep going? I just don't know what I'm going to do. I just don't. Psalm 73, 26, my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

What about if you come to the New Testament? Does God still work in the same way? Are you faced with temptations every day? There are things that come along and just, how am I going to handle this? What am I going to do with this? 1 Corinthians 10, verse 13, there hath no temptation to you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it.

[34 : 30] He says, you're going to face temptation, you're going to face all kinds of things, but God is going to be right there with you and he's going to give you the way around it and the way out of it. Epaphras was going through some different things.

In Philippians chapter 2, verse 27, he says, for indeed he was sick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him, not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

Think about it. How important are those two words? But God. Who saves? God alone. Why? Because of his mercy and grace.

How does he save? By grace. When does God save? When true biblical faith occurs. Where does that leave us? In heavenly places.

Do you thank God for the simplicity of salvation? The simplicity of it. He said, you can have all of this. He said, I give it to you as a gift. Here's the gift.

[35 : 35] Reach out and take it. See, we can't face God's God someday in anything we've done. We can't face him with anything less than Jesus Christ.

I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. You cannot save yourself, but God can. Do you trust in God?

Do you have faith in God? Forsaking all, I trust him. When I look at my life and I look at the salvation I have and I look at what's in the future, all I can say is, I trust him.

Those of you who come here regularly, how many times have you heard me in the last few months? Talk about that. Do we trust him with everything in our lives?

But God. if I truly trust him in the way I should, then I'm going to let him have his way in my life.

[36 : 42] I'm going to do what he says. I'm going to go where he leads. I'm going to be under his command and control. I'm going to let him have his way. Take your hymn books and go with me to 366.

366. Have thine own way, Lord. Have thine own way. You You You You