

Weekly Devotional
April 8, 2020

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:4-5 ESV)

I vividly remember opening the sliding glass door to our backyard. I was in middle school back then, living in the home I grew up in. We had two Chow Chows, an aloof dog breed that looks more like a plush lion or a fuzzy teddy bear than an actual canine. As I stepped outside, I waited for the usual scurry of our two companions rushing to the door at the sound of the door latch unlocking. But this time, only our boy came to greet me at the door. Walking around the corner, I discovered the lifeless body of our girl laying on the ground. She had died over night. It was my first experience in which I was old enough to feel the impact of loss, and old enough to understand the reality of the inescapable nature of death.

As the 12-year-old version of me tearfully questioned, “Why did she have to die?” I realized two things: life is short, and death awaits everyone. Later in life, I came to understand why death has such a universal rule over creation: it came as a consequence to our sin (Romans 6:23). This is why the Apostle Paul describes our state prior to Christ as those who “were dead in our trespasses” (Ephesians 2:5). We had biological life, but spiritually we were dead, with no ability to bring spiritual life to ourselves. And that’s because dead people can’t rescue themselves.

Thankfully, we have an awesome God who can and does rescue spiritually dead people. And the way he has accomplished this rescuing is astonishingly loving! The Father sent the Son to take on human flesh; we know him as Jesus. And Jesus—being wholly innocent—went to the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. In his human nature, he experienced the sting of death for us. But the story didn’t end there. He then defeated death for us as he was raised from the dead, and now his resurrection gives us the total assurance that death no longer rules over those who trust in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:55). Jesus said it this way: “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die” (John 11:25-26).

By God’s grace, through faith in Christ, based on the work of Christ in defeating death for us through his own death and resurrection, God gives us new, everlasting life. He makes us “alive together with Christ” (Ephesians 2:5). So, as Easter approaches us this Sunday, let the good news of Jesus’ resurrection assure you of the defeat of death. And as your heart is reassured by that good news, rejoice! He has defeated separation. He has defeated sin. He has defeated death. And he’s done it all for the praise of his glorious grace (Ephesians 1:6). So be assured. Rejoice. And praise him!

Questions:

- The Bible records a time when Jesus experienced the loss of a dear friend named Lazarus. Even though Jesus was about to raise his friend from the dead, he cried over his friend’s death (John 11:35). Why do you think Jesus cried, even though he knew he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead? What does this teach you about the way God views death?
- Especially as we draw near to Good Friday and Easter Sunday, how does Jesus’ death and resurrection encourage you in your own spiritual walk this week?
- Spend some time rejoicing and praising God over his defeat of death on your behalf. As an additional aid, [here is a link](#) to a Spotify playlist entitled “Hymns of Praise” which you could use to fill your ears and heart with music that reminds you of God’s glorious grace.