

The Church is Christ's Beloved

Ephesians 2:1-7

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians presents a theological high watermark.
1. One of its great themes is the exalted place of the church in the will of God.
 2. A series of four lessons will challenge us to consider four images of the church provided for us by Paul.
 - a. The Church is Christ's **BODY**
 - b. The Church is Christ's **BELOVED**
 - c. The Church is Christ's **BUILDING**
 - d. The Church is Christ's **BRIDE**
- B. Today we will examine the Biblical truth that the Church is Christ's **BELOVED**.
1. The assumption here is that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit work together in absolute harmony, unity, and intention.
 2. The image of the church as Christ's "Beloved" is a direct extension of Ephesians 1:23, which identifies the church as the body of Christ.
- C. Lesson Text: **Ephesians 2:1-7** - " And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,
- 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,
 - 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.
 - 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
 - 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
 - 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
 - 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."
1. In the these verses, we three personal pronouns (*you, we, and us*) used nine times describing the church and its relationship to the Lord.
 2. In this passage, however, it is in verse 4, which tells us "but God." Everything stops and revolves around that declaration,

“BUT GOD”! "But God" is the difference between what is described in verses 1, 2, & 3 and what is described in verses 5, 6, & 7

3. No circumstance, condition, problem, difficulty, or even impossibility is a matter for this simple yet profound idea, **“BUT GOD”!**
 - a. When **Noah** faced the flood all would have been loss, **“BUT GOD”!**
 - b. When **Abraham** stood in the precipice of losing Isaac, **“BUT GOD”!**
 - c. When **Joseph** could have reaped revenge, **“BUT GOD”!**
 - d. When **Moses** faced the Red Sea in front and Pharaoh's army behind, **“BUT GOD”!**
 - e. When **David** the shepherd boy faced Goliath, **“BUT GOD”!**
 - f. When the world was lost and hell-bound, **“BUT GOD”!**
- D. Now consider four insights that help us understand the truth that the church is Christ's beloved! Paul tells us . . .
 1. Who God is.
 2. What we were.
 3. What God did.
 4. Why God did it.

THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S BELOVED

A. Who God is (v. 4).

1. When Moses fell on his face at the burning bush visitation, God revealed Himself as Yahweh or Jehovah, "I am who I am."
 - a. This might well be translated it . . . **“I will be who I have been.”**
 - b. In other words, God reveals His nature by His activity.
 - c. Paul is saying the same thing. God has expressed His nature.
 1. **“He is rich in mercy!”** Because of God's mercy
 - a. There is hope for the hopeless . . .
 - b. There is cleansing from sin's curse . . .
 - c. There is deliverance from the power of the demonic . . .
 - d. There is an escape from the tentacles of evil! Paul tells us that God is rich and wealthy in mercy!
 2. Not only has God expressed His nature, He has also allowed us to see the essence of His nature **“because of His great love with which He loved us.”**
 - a. Why does God act like He acts? . . . Because of His love!
 - b. Why is God so patient? . . . Because of His love!
 - c. Why is God kind? . . . Because of His love!
 - d. Why is God faithful? . . . Because of His love!
 - e. Why is God so merciful? . . . Because of His love!

Love is the driving and continual attribute of God's nature!

2. Paul tells us that God's love is great and that **God himself loves us!** This love was demonstrated in the Father's willingness to send Christ to the cross and in Christ's willingness to endure the cross!
 1. And when Jesus went to the cross, Scripture tells us "The Father laid on Him the iniquity of us all"!
 2. As Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:21** - "He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Here, Paul tells us who God is. He is the one who is driven by His unconditional, uncompromising, and unwavering love! . . . And we are its object!

B. Paul also tells us what we were (vv. 1–3).

1. This is not a pretty picture. In rapid-fire strokes of a pen, Paul lays out the brutal facts. Here is what he says:
 - a. You were dead in your trespasses and sins (v. 1)
 - b. You formerly walked according to Satan's direction (v. 2),
 - c. You formerly walked in line with Satan's spirit, which even now controls the disobedient (v. 2).
2. Now Paul says all of us, himself included, were locked into this sin cursed trap.
 - a. We formerly lived controlled by the lusts of our flesh (v. 3),
 - b. We formerly indulged the desires of the flesh (v. 3)
 - c. We formerly indulged in the desires of a darkened mind (v. 3).
3. In essence, Paul writes, "we were by nature children of wrath (deserving God's wrath), even as the rest "of lost humanity"! . . . But God! . . . We would have stayed that way, but God acted . . . He demonstrated His rich mercy! Why? . . . Because of His great love for us! . . . In short, we are His beloved! We are the objects of His great love.
4. **That's who we were because that is who God is!**

C. Now Paul tells us what God did (vv. 5, 6).

1. Even when we were dead in our trespasses and sins, He made us alive together with Christ. That is God's intervention!
2. Paul tells us that God made us alive . . . raised us up . . . and seated us with Christ in heavenly places in Christ Jesus .
 - a. Here is the Lord Jesus in Heaven and He says, "I want you to come and live with me in Heaven!"
 - b. What a powerful thought! Listening friends, Paul tells us what God's grace does at its greatest . . . Grace loved us . . . Extended mercy to us . . . Convicted us . . . Drew us to Christ . . . And in its completion brought salvation!
3. Yet, if you are like me, you tend to see yourself in all of your

shortcomings, failures, sins, habits, and mess , , , And you ask yourself the question, *Why would God do all that? . . . Why would God take a sinful people . . . save them . . . clean them up . . . make them brand new . . . and bring them into His family . . . and declare that they are His beloved?*

D. Paul tells us why God did it (v. 7).

1. Paul tells us that God did all of this “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” In short, God says, “I did all this so you will know who I am and what is in My heart.”
2. At the core of the supernatural heart that governs the entire universe is a flawless, unlimited heart of love! And this great God says, “You, church, are My beloved!”

CONCLUSION:

A. Two of the most important words in the whole Bible . . . "BUT GOD."

1. God made the difference in the lives of:
 - a. Noah
 - b. Abraham
 - c. Joseph
 - c. Moses
 - d. David
2. He can be the eternal difference -maker in your life if only you will allow Him to.

B. God's Plan for Man's Salvation