

SEATED IN CHRIST

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS:

GOD'S GRAND PLAN FOR THE CHURCH

Ben Deaver at Mosaic Church on April 30, 2023

Ephesians 2:1-10

SO WHAT? We were walking in the way of the world.

FEEL WHAT? We are abundantly wealthy in Christ.

NOW WHAT? As God's mosaic, walk in good works.

VISION CASTING

The mission of Mosaic Church is to unite people in the Way of Jesus.

MINGLE QUESTIONS

1. What's an adventurous thing you've done recently?
2. What drink best describes you today?

INTRODUCTION

The Comstock Lode – Henry Comstock's Story

Henry Tompkins Paige Comstock was born in 1820 and owned the richest silver deposit in American history. Henry Comstock was looking for gold, but he didn't find much. His claim did contain some gold, but the miners were unable to get to it because of an abundance of bluish

clay. This blue stuff clogged their equipment as they tried to wash out the fine gold. As it turned out, this clay was silver of exceptional purity.

The ore was so soft it could be removed by shovel. Initially the ore was extracted through surface digging, but these were quickly exhausted, and miners had to tunnel underground to reach ore bodies. Unlike most silver ore deposits, which occur in long thin veins, those of the Comstock Lode occurred in masses often hundreds of feet thick. The excavations were carried out to depths of more than 3,200 feet.

This picture shows the different bonanzas on Comstock's land. A bonanza is a large amount of something that's desirable. The total product of ore extracted and milled in the Comstock District in 20 years was about 7 million tons. That's the weight of 19 Empire State Buildings.

In one year alone the mines produced over \$14,000,000 of gold and \$21,000,000 of silver (about \$361,171,282 and \$541,756,923 today).

Henry Comstock was a wealthy, wealthy man... A true rags to riches story! Just like you and me who are in Christ. We'll revisit Henry's story soon but for now let's open up to Ephesians where we're learning about God's Grand Plan for the Church.

Ephesians 2:1-3, NIV: As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live (once walked) when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

We need to own our piece of the mess. There's probably more there that I don't even realize. I need help. I can't fix everything on my own. I can't make things right on my own. The Good News of the Gospel is good to those who realize who bad things really are.

Tornado fast approaching! If there's a tornado coming your way and you don't know about it and someone comes to take you to shelter you're probably not going to take shelter until you feel the danger that you're in.

Romans 2:14-16, NIV: ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵ They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) ¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Ephesians 2:4-7, NIV: ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive **with Christ** even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up **with Christ** and seated us **with him** in the heavenly realms **in Christ Jesus**, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us **in Christ Jesus**.

Hebrews 1:3, NIV: The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Romans 6:1-2, NIV (NO SLIDE): What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

Romans 6:3-4, NIV: ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

We all share in the Chiefs' Super Bowl victory!

1 Corinthians 15:22, NIV: For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Anger towards Adam?

Do you feel anger towards Adam for the impact of the choice he made on your life? Has anyone done a genogram? A genogram is a diagram outlining the history of the behavior patterns (as of divorce, abortion, or suicide) of a family over several generations. The choices made by those in your family have deeply impacted you. Someone may even come to mind who's choices years ago has wreaked havoc in your life and in your family. But do you feel anger towards them right now? Probably not. We probably feel more anger towards the man who killed Ralph Yarl in Kansas City recently or the man who killed five people because one of them asked him to stop shooting his rifle because the baby was sleeping. We feel anger towards these people who have made choices that impact others recently. But the more time that passes, the less anger we feel although the impact of the choice remains. If you have a problem with someone because your life is hard, it's Adam. He's to blame and you are still responsible for your actions moving forward.

But that's not the only person whose choice has made a huge impact on your life.

Gratitude towards Jesus?

Do you feel gratitude towards Jesus for the impact of the choice he made on your life? His choice 2000 years ago changed everything about your life. Do you feel that? Are you connected to that reality? So much of walking in the way of Jesus is apprehending the reality of your life considering Jesus' choice to take up his cross and die for you. Jesus made a choice that impacts you greatly, whether you feel it right now or not. We meditate, we sing, we reflect, we remember to try to embrace the reality of who we are in Christ and what we have in Christ.

We are Seated In Christ

Close your eyes and count how many times *in, through, or under Christ* occurs.

Ephesians 1:3-13, NIV: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing ***in Christ***. For he chose us ***in Christ*** before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship ***through Christ***, in accordance with his pleasure and will... ..which he has freely given us ***in Christ. In Christ*** we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. ...he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed ***in Christ***, ...to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth ***under Christ. In Christ*** we were also chosen... ..in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included ***in Christ*** when you

heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked **in him** with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit...

Like Henry Comstock and his land, you've got to do some digging to mine the wealth that is yours in Christ.

Ephesians 2:4-7, NIV: ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive **with Christ** even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up **with Christ** and **seated us with him** in the heavenly realms **in Christ Jesus**, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us **in Christ Jesus**.

SOLUTION

The mission of Mosaic is to unite people in the Way of Jesus.

The Way of Jesus can be summarized in these three words which form the structure to Ephesians; Sit, Walk, Stand.

Watchman Nee was a Chinese church leader and teacher who worked in China in the 20th century. He walked in the good works prepared for him. He spent his last 20 years in prison. We need that background on him to hear him reflect on resting. In 1957 he wrote a little book that frames up Ephesians called *Sit, Walk, Stand*.

Ephesians Structure

- A. Doctrinal (Chapters 1 to 3)
 - a. Our Position in Christ (1:1-3:21)—SIT
- B. Practical (Chapters 4 to 6)
 - a. Our Life in the World (4:1-6:9)—WALK
 - b. Our Attitude to the Enemy (6:10-24)—STAND

Sit

Life with Jesus does not begin with walking. It begins with sitting. Sitting at the feet of Jesus. Sitting in the truths of who we are in Jesus. Sitting in the truths of what we have in Jesus. In Luke 10, Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet and to sit in what he had to say about her while Martha chose to frantically run around the house trying to get stuff done to be a good host. Jesus said to Martha, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Watchman Nee, *Sit, Walk, Stand*: "If at the outset we try to do anything, we get nothing; if we seek to attain something, we miss everything. For Christianity begins not with a big DO, but with a big DONE."

Watchman Nee, *Sit, Walk, Stand*: "'Sitting' is an attitude of rest. Something has been finished, work stops, and we sit. It is paradoxical, but true, that we only advance in the Christian life as we learn first of all to sit down."

Sitting = Resting: Sitting has to do with resting. The chair is holding up all of your weight. Resting and abiding in Jesus.

Adam and Eve were created on day six and then invited to first join God on the Sabbath, day seven, before Adam and Eve got to work. Adam and Eve rested with God FIRST, and then they got to work. God did the work FIRST, and then rested.

Creation, Rest, Tragedy, Recreation, Rest

Creation: God saw that it was good. Recreation: "It is finished!"

Matthew 11:28-30, The Message: "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

I need to hear Jesus and respond more now than ever!

Watchman Nee, Sit, Walk, Stand: "And the first lesson we must learn is this, that the work is not initially ours at all, but his. It is not that we work for God, but that he works for us. God gives us our position of rest. He brings his Son's finished work and presents it to us, and then he says to us, 'Please sit'. His offer to us cannot, I think, be better expressed than in the words of the invitation to the great banquet: 'Come; for all things are now ready' (Luke 14:17). Our Christian life begins with the discovery of what God has provided."

Back to Henry Comstock

He was a wealthy, wealthy man but guess what. There's one small problem. He never knew that he was sitting on a pile of silver and gold. Henry Comstock was unfathomably wealthy and didn't even know it. He had no clue of his objective wealth.

Unfortunately for Henry Comstock, he sold all his claims for under \$17,000 before excavation of his wealth began. They still named it after him though. That's nice of them. He never knew of his wealth and certainly didn't live out of it. He ended up opening trade good stores and eventually went broke. After losing nearly all his property and possessions in Nevada, Comstock prospected for some years in Idaho and Montana without success. Henry Comstock lived a miserable life and eventually died a terrible death without ever realizing that he had once been extremely wealthy.

Nothing is going to touch the wealth that you have in Christ. It's yours, whether you realize it or not. Whether you feel wealthy or not. But we must know that we are indeed wealthier than we can imagine. We are wealthier than we can wrap our minds around in one sitting.

APPLICATION

Ephesians 2:8-10, NIV: ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork (mosaic), created ***in Christ Jesus*** to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (that we should walk in them).

Masterpiece – New Living Translation

The word in the original language, Greek, is poiéma. We are God's poem. We, the church, are God's beautiful poem that will brag on God's mercy for eternity. We are trophies of grace, God's masterpiece. You might think of this as a mosaic, where all the broken pieces have been polished up and put together to make something beautiful.

For we are God's MOSAIC, created in Christ Jesus to walk in good works.

The walking in good works will happen but only after we sit in our abundant wealth in Christ.

INSPIRATION

Invite the Worship Team up

I want to give us a moment to sit in front of a work of art to help us dig into the wealth that is ours in Christ.

Rembrandt, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*: This painting is by Rembrandt sometime between 1661-1669 and features the ending of what's commonly known as the Parable of the Prodigal Son found in Luke 15, which happens to be my favorite of Jesus' teachings. There are two sons, and the youngest son takes his share of the inheritance early and squanders it on prodigal or reckless living while the older son is working as hard as he can on what's left of the family farm. The younger son eventually is completely destitute and broken and plans to return and work his way not back into the family but at least into a job so he won't starve to death. As he approaches the town where his father lives, the father sees him off in the distance and runs to meet him and throws a huge and very expensive party to celebrate the return of his son.

The father's extravagance is seen as prodigal or reckless but to the father it's the only appropriate response when his son returns.

Watchman Nee, Sit, Walk, Stand: "Of all the parables in the Gospels, that of the prodigal son affords, I think, the supreme illustration of the way to please God. The father says, "It was right to make merry and be glad" (Luke 15:32), and in these words Jesus reveals what it is that, in the sphere of redemption, supremely rejoices his Father's heart. It is not an elder brother who toils incessantly for the father, but a younger brother who lets the father do everything for him. It is not an elder brother who always wants to be the giver, but a younger brother who is always willing to be the receiver. When the prodigal returned home, having wasted his substance in riotous living, the father had not a word of rebuke for the waste nor a word of inquiry regarding the substance. He did not sorrow over all that was spent; he only rejoiced over the opportunity the son's return afforded him for spending more."

Watchman Nee, Sit, Walk, Stand: "God is so wealthy that his chief delight is to give. His treasure-stores are so full that it is pain to him when we refuse him an opportunity of lavishing those treasures upon us. It was the father's joy that he could find in the prodigal an applicant for the robe, the ring, the shoes, and the feast; it was his sorrow that in the elder son he found no such applicant. It is a grief to the heart of God when we try to provide things for him. He is so very, very rich. It gives him true joy when we just let him give and give and give again to us. It is a grief to him, too, when we try to do things for him, for he is so very, very able. He longs that we will just let him do and do and do. He wants to be the Giver eternally, and he wants to be the Doer eternally."

If only we saw how rich and how great he is, we would leave all the giving and all the doing to him.”

CONCLUSION

Put This Into Practice:

- How will you sit in the reality of who you are and what you have in Christ?

Next Week: Ephesians 2:11, NIV: Therefore, remember...

I invite you to stand.

Lord's Supper

The Lord's Prayer – Matthew 6:9b-13

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”