

## *“The Family of God” continues*

### **Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians**

Ephesians 2:1-10

Dr. Jeff Stivason

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**Jeff:** Our gracious heavenly Father, we thank You. We praise You. And we bow before You this morning, remembering that You are God, that You are King, that Your majesty extends over the heavens. You are the Creator of all things, even us. And Father, we’re thankful that not only are You the Creator, but because of the Fall we’re thankful that You are Redeemer and certainly Friend.

We ask, Lord, that You’ll bless us this morning as we spend time in Your word. I certainly pray that You will quench our thirsty souls. We realize that we live in a dry and thirsty land of words, a land wherein people speak and there often is no substance, and they’re often twisting their words and putting a spin on them. And yet Your word is true and it’s straight. It’s propositional truth; we’re thankful for that. It does not err and we’re thankful that it is from You and so true. And Father, we come opening Your word, seeking to be taught, and more than that seeking to be shaped by Your word. Lord. We want our thinking to be conformed not only to Your Son’s image, but we want our lives to be conformed to His image as well.

Father, we ask that You will bless those who are with us today and those who couldn’t be with us. We certainly pray for Don as he plays for this funeral of this 91-year-old. We ask, Lord, that You will comfort the family. Lord, we pray that You’ll comfort Don after he has known her all these years. And we pray that it would be honoring to her and glorifying to Christ.

Father, we pray not only for Vivian this morning, but we also pray for Kevin’s other granddaughter Molly. We ask that You’ll bless her. And Father, we pray that You’ll bring healing to this family and comfort to them as well.

Father, we’re thankful for Dick’s presence today. We ask that Your hand would be upon Him for good. We pray, Father, for all of our needs. And we submit them to You, knowing with confidence that You’ll care for them. We ask it in the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Okay. So why don’t we turn our attention to Ephesians today? And I will start reading in chapter 2 verse 1, although we’ll pick up a little later than verse 1. But just to give us the context, we average about three verses at a crack. (*Laughter*) So we’ll see what we can do, right? So I’ll read the first ten verses here and we’ll see where we are after that.

**Sig Tragard:** And what version are you reading from, Jeff?

**Jeff:** The ESV. Listen to the word of God.

*“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in 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, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our*

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*flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

*“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), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus., so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”* This is the word of the Lord.

**Brave Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Jeff:** Okay. Well let’s talk for a little bit about where we were the last time. And I think we left off with verse 4. We finished up thinking about our condition prior to being in Christ. And now we’re going to come to that verse. This is a great verse—verse 4—that talks about our inclusion into Christ. And the way in which it starts is with the mercy of God and His love for us. And I mentioned this the last time we were together and I want to simply mention it again because I can’t remember what I said. *(Laughter)* So it will all be new and fresh for all of us then.

So when you think about the love of God and the mercy of God, one of the things that you think about is that I don’t know about you, but when I think about the love of God I think about *agape*. And when you think about *agape* you don’t have a tendency to think about that word in exclusion to other Greek words. I mean, by now we all know that there are basically three Greek words for love. One is *eros*, which is sort of the marital kind of love. It’s the intimate sort of love. The other is *fileo*. And that of course is the city of brotherly love; it’s the brotherly sort of love of which Philadelphia, even this very evening, typifies. *(Laughter)* And so there is the brotherly love of *fileo*. And then there is the *agape* love.

And *agape* love is a word that’s interesting. I don’t have a microphone so I can wander a little bit. *agape* is a word that is one of those words that if you look in the lexicons you’ll notice that oftentimes we’re told that word is not a word that has been used very often until the time of Jesus and Paul. They are the ones who actually pick it up and begin to use it. Before that it is a word; it’s not a word they made up. But it’s a word that was in disuse. It’s a word that one lexicon describes as “*abstract and indefinite in meaning.*”

And so here we find that Jesus picks up this word. Paul carries it forward. And the idea of *agape* is the kind of love that doesn’t originate in another.

For instance, let’s say Sig. *(Laughter)*

**Sig:** How about David?

**Jeff:** Let’s say Sig.

**Brave Men:** Sig.

**Jeff:** Let’s just say Sig.

**Brave Men:** Sig.

**Jeff:** Yeah. Let’s say it one more time.

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**Brave Men:** Sig. (*Laughter*)

**Jeff:** So Sig sees Nancy across the crowded room.

**Don Maurer (singing):** “Some enchanted evening.” (*Laughter*)

**Ted Wood:** (*singing*): “You may see a stranger.” (*Laughter*)

**Jeff:** That is wonderful! (*Laughter*) Now he sees Nancy across the crowded room. She is obviously out of his league. (*Laughter*) Okay? I mean definitely. And he overhears a conversation that she’s having. And she’s obviously more intelligent. (*Laughter*) Sig’s just looking at me. (*Laughter*)

**Sig:** One time she was out of my league. (*Laughter*)

**Jeff:** So Sig sees her and he overhears this conversation. And he says to himself, “I gotta have this woman. This woman is everything; I’ve got to have her.”

Now you see, that’s the difference between *agape* love and the sort of *eros/fileo* love that Sig is exemplifying. How so? Because *agape* love is more like this. God looks across the crowded room and sees us fallen in Adam, and we’re disgusting. And we open our mouth and He says, “That’s disgusting too.” (*Laughter*) “But I’m going to love them.” And He sends forth His love through His Son being sent into the world, in order to redeem that which is unlovable.

So really *agape*, instead of being person-centered,--I love because of something I see in that person and have to have in that person,--it originates within the heart of God and moves forward. So for instance, when we talk about Christian love and we talk about loving our enemies, that’s the idea, right? We love our enemies not because there is anything good in them, not because we want to be friends with them because they’re so smart or so attractive. No, we love them even when they are our enemies because we’re practicing *agape* love. That’s the kind of love that we have to get straight.

When we think about verse 4, the God who is rich in mercy loved us with a great love when we were unlovable. Now He did several things for us in loving us. He did these three things. He “*made us alive*,” He “*raised us up*,” and “*He seated us*.”

Now the thing that you have to catch is this. All three of those are in the past tense. He did these things. Again, what did He do? He made us alive, He raised us up, and He seated us.

Now again those are in the past tense. Now I want you to think about this for just a minute. Let’s just visit each one of these for just a minute.

*He made us alive.* Now where does that come from? I want you to think about that for a minute. When you think about “*made us alive*,” you think about what he said, that we were dead in our sins and transgressions. Being dead in our sins and transgressions means that we were separated from Him.

Now you can say this in all sorts of ways, and the Bible does. Remember, I said to you the last time that being dead is a metaphor. It’s a metaphor in this case for being separated from God. I talked to you the last time about Ephesians, and about how this may be exemplified at best in a bad divorce where we hate Him. We have no place in His life. And He has separated us from Him. There’s a separation and we need to be reconciled to Him.

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Now the Bible talks about deadness in other ways of course. But I think this is one of those ways where it talks about deadness as separation. I mean, I want you to catch the depth of the separation. And you can catch it when you do think about death. I mean, if we asked one of you guys to come up here and lay down on the table, and we said, you know, that we want you to pretend that you’re dead for a minute, and if we pinched you and if we said, “You can’t move,” we ask for him to come up here and we pinch him and he jumps, and we say, “You can’t do that, because then you’re not pretending to be dead.” We pinch him and he lays perfectly still. We get up into his ear and we scream at him, and he doesn’t flinch. And we put the worst smelling salts that we can under his nose and he doesn’t move. He’s dead; he’s absolutely dead to the world.

I want you to think about it like this. I had a friend of mine who used to deliver flowers to a funeral home. And he brought these flowers into the home one day. And he said that he put them down in the back room. And he said that he turned around and there was a dead body on the table ready for preparation. And it startled him and he said, “I’m scared to death; I jumped.”

But do you know what? That dead body didn’t move. He did not startle that dead body because that dead body is in another sphere; it’s in another realm. It was in that sense separated from him.

So there’s a separation that happens between us and God. And this text says that God “*made us alive in Christ Jesus.*” He brought us near to Himself. He resurrected us, and so brought us back into a relationship with Himself.

Now when we talk about this resurrection, we use the term to talk about it. And it’s an important term. And we talk about it in terms of *monergism*. We talk about monergism. And that is made up of two words, meaning “one work.” God does the one work in our lives. In fact He is the single worker in our lives to bring about this resurrection from the dead.

*Synergism* is when you talk about working together. We do not work together to bring about this life.

You’ve probably heard this before. But the difference between the Arminian and the Calvinist is just at this point. Let me start with the Arminian. The Arminian talks about how someone is sick and how someone is on death’s door. And they’re in bed and you take the antidote to them and you set it on the table beside them and say, “All you have to do is reach out your hand and put this to your lips, and you’ll be saved.”

Or they talk about the person who is drowning. You know, they’re thrashing about in the water. And somebody casts them a life preserver. And all they have to do is reach out their hands and so be saved.

Well, the Calvinist says that the Bible is more like this. You take the medicine in and you set it beside the corpse. And they’re corpses. They cannot reach. Or think of the swimmer illustration. And the swimmer is not thrashing about but on the bottom of the lake, because he’s dead. He has already taken water into his lungs and he’s dead. And so God has to resurrect.

The Calvinist says that our spiritual life at this point is more like Lazarus. We are in the spiritual grave. And God stands outside of our spiritual graves and He says, “*Lazarus,*

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*come forth!*”, or “Sig. come forth!”, or “Corky, come forth!”, right?—those kinds of pronouncements—“come forth!” That’s the idea of being made alive.

But there is the idea of *being raised up* as well. But before we go to that, let me just ask if there are any questions. What I just went over is probably very familiar to you. Yeah?

**Don Bishop:** You try to explain this to Arminians and they say, “Where is free will in this?”

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Don:** And Lazarus shows that they can’t move until Christ calls them forward.

**Jeff:** Exactly.

**Don:** And the free will is, is he going to remain in the grave? No, he wants life; he comes forward. And he acts on what Christ has already done for him.

**Jeff:** Yeah. It’s also like the man with the withered hand, right? He can’t unfurl his hand. But when Christ says, “*Stretch forth your hand,*” he’s able to stretch forth his hand, right? But he’s unable to do that until Christ commands him, because along with his command comes the ability of the man to stretch forth his hand.

**Bishop Rodgers:** This is the same as regeneration, right?

**Jeff:** Yes, regeneration.

**Sig:** Hold on, Don; there’s one before you.

**Don Maurer:** Okay.

**Matt Reichart:** So you know, you try to make these separations and distinctions. And these descriptions are absolutely true. But from a human point of view we’re still alive, even though we are spiritually dead.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Matt:** So we have to say this because the unredeemed don’t understand that. They have to make a choice before they die and leave this earth. So we cannot be above man, although seriously, spiritually we are dead. Let’s agree on that.

**Jeff:** Yes. Let me say this. Before we get to Don let me say this. So *calling* is in 1 Corinthians 1:9.

**Transcriber’s Note:** 1 Corinthians 1:9, NKJV. “*God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

**Jeff:** God the Father calls us and the Spirit regenerates us. And the calling carries with it the ability to respond. Now out of regeneration we find two things coming forth. A better way to say it is that regeneration is productive of faith and repentance.

Now let me just say at this point that this leads us into what you were talking about. And this is really a question of what kind of free will we have. Do we have what’s called a libertarian-style free will? Or do we have what philosophers call *compatibilism*? (I think that’s still spelled wrong.) Libertarianism and compatibilism.

Libertarian-style free will says this. It says that nothing can impinge upon my decision or I am not at liberty. So for instance, a guy who is a libertarian in his view of free will will actually talk about original sin as if original sin has to be nullified as to its effects before he can make a free will decision. In other words, my freedom of the will can’t be influenced or impinged upon by anything, or I’m not free, right? So they have a really

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difficult time talking about original sin and me being responsible for that in any influential way.

The other day I was again reading *Determined to Be Free*, I think it’s called, by John Lennox. And he talks about the freedom of the will in relation to Adam’s sin. And what he does is that he tries to minimize Adam’s sin, because what he’s trying to do is that he’s trying to maintain libertarian-style free will. I’m genuinely free. If that really influenced me I couldn’t be free.

So the compatibilist says no. There is a compatibility between God’s sovereignty between God’s sovereignty and my choices. In other words I will choose the very thing that God has chosen for me to choose. But I’ll do it freely. And this really comes down to the question. Did I choose what I desired most at the time I did it? And I think that this is the Biblical approach to the freedom of the will.

For instance, if you were to ask Joseph’s brothers, “Did you do exactly what you wanted to do at the time you did it, when you sold Joseph into slavery?” And they would have said, “Oh yes, of course we did.”

And yet we know from Genesis 50 that this is exactly what God had ordained for them to do. And yet they would have said, “I freely did it. That’s what I wanted to do most at the time I did it,” right? And so that’s the difference between the two.

And so I would say that when I talk to people about freedom—and I think this is what the Westminster Confession does in chapter 9 when it talks about freedom of the will in that whole chapter—this is their view of freedom. We do what we want to do most at the time.

So when I choose Christ, when Christ says, “Unfurl your hand,” and the man unfurls his hand, we know exactly what that man wanted to do most at the time he wanted to unfurl his hand. He wanted to do what God had given him the ability to do.

It’s the same with Lazarus. When Lazarus comes forth from the grave we know what Lazarus wanted to do most at that time, and that is to come forth from the grave. So I think we’re saying the same thing. There is a human choice. And I’m just saying that the human choice at root is what I want to do. But it’s what God appointed me to do. Anyway, Don’s next.

**Don Maurer:** I’ve resisted this but I’m going to say it. I’ve heard a couple of Arminians say this. When Jesus was chiding the Pharisees when He was eating and drinking with sinners said, “*It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*” He said they were sick, not dead. I know how I would respond, but what would you say in response to that?

**Jeff:** Well, I would just say that there are all sorts of metaphors used for our condition. So for instance, sickness is not a problem of sickness as used in Jeremiah chapter 6 to describe the sinful condition. It’s actually described in Isaiah chapter 53, verses 3 and 4. Jesus was “*a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*” That word *griefs* is sicknesses. And He bore our sorrows and sicknesses on the cross. So it’s just another way of expressing our condition. And I would simply say that when you have these metaphors like this one—“*And He made us alive*”—I would simply say that it’s sort of like Matt

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said. We’re not really dead. You know, even if we go out today and we walk around with a bunch of unregenerate people, they are still alive.

So what is the metaphor indicative of? It’s indicative of separation from God. It’s just like I think Ephesians says—outside of the commonwealth of Christ, separated from Him—that sort of thing. And yet that’s indicative of being dead, separated from Him. And I can’t come into the commonwealth unless He brings me into it and makes me alive.

**Bishop:** He also uses terms like *resurrected*. Also “*can the leopard change its spots?*”

**Jeff:** Yes, right.

**Bishop:** The impossibility of it all. But I wanted to ask about compatibilism.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Bishop:** Does not God first move us to desire what He desires?

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Bishop:** Otherwise, we’re back into libertarianism.

**Jeff:** Yeah. I think this is basically what happens. I mean,. How do you really describe this, right? But certainly it’s this idea that what happens is that the Spirit works in the subconscious. And then what He does in my subconscious comes to expression in a conscious thought.

**Bishop:** Yes.

**Jeff:** So it’s a really funny thing, right? If you’ve ever watched this, who can actually pinpoint the time? Because when it actually comes to conscious expression, you don’t know how long it’s been in the subconscious.

I’ll never forget watching somebody. I knew his positions on things. And all of a sudden he said to me, “You know, I came out of church the other day.” He would attend church with his spouse. And this is what he said. “I came out of church and I started thinking to myself, you know, that preacher is right about this.”

And I thought to myself, what in the world is happening here? (*Laughter*) But you know, I think there was a conscious expression. And he was converted, and his whole life gave expression to that. It was great! It was just really neat to see the flower poke up from the soil for the first time. You want to say, “I know just what happened to you!”, even though you know that you don’t. It’s like, huh? Yes? I think you’re next.

**Tom Hansz:** You mentioned that Lazarus came out because he wanted to come out.

**Jeff:** Mm-hmm.

**Tom:** But he couldn’t want to come out until he was alive.

**Jeff:** Yeah; true.

**Tom:** And yet he was dead.

**Jeff:** Yeah; that’s right.

**Tom:** And going back to that word,--

**Jeff:** Monergism?

**Tom:** Monergism. It says that we have our salvation as individuals without cooperation from the individual. We’re out of it.

**Jeff:** Yes. But the cooperation begins as soon as regeneration happens. I mean, B. B. Warfield says that there is a sense in which it is hard to separate where monergism ends

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and synergism begins, because as soon as I’m alive this is the blood that flows through the spiritual veins, right?

**Tom:** Yes. I like that word *regeneration* which means “to regenerate again.”

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Tom:** We were generated in the womb or before the womb when we came to life. Now being here we come to life again.

**Jeff:** Yes, and what is this? This is new birth. Incidentally, when you read Billy Graham’s book *How to Be Born Again*, the title gets it wrong, right?

**Tom:** Yes.

**Jeff:** *Born Again* is not a how-to book, right? *(Laughter)*

**Jim OBrien:** It seems to me that when we talk about regeneration, when we take it out of that category, out of that high-faluting language, what we really mean is that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.

**Jeff:** Yep.

**Jim:** We hate Him. Now there’s a fundamental love for God. Our flesh can still be angry and hateful. But this love of God hear that you go, “Oh!” And underneath I think there’s trust, because you don’t trust Him if you really don’t care about Him. And then, of course, repentance is sorrowful. I’ve hurt you, or I’ve defied you or I’ve dishonored you.

But I think that sometimes Protestants don’t talk that way.

**Jeff:** Right.

**Jim:** Because roman Catholics talk about love as more important than faith. But love is fundamental, and faith grows out of it. But it’s not our love for God that justifies us; it’s faith. I’m moving off in another direction, but you’ll have to find some other stuff.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Jim:** I hope you’re going to get to what *(unclear)* means.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** But not in the middle of this.

**Jeff:** Yeah, right. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** So now that we’ve clearly established that the roman Catholics are right and the Protestants are wrong, *(laughter)*

**Jeff:** I don’t know what conversation you were just having. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** Just kidding. I’m going to try to summarize this. I think the discussion about monergism and synergism is more nuanced.

**Jeff:** Okay.

**Ted:** Because we say there are Calvinists and Arminians. Actually Arminianism, if you read Arminius in his writings,--

**Jeff:** Right.

**Ted:** In my conversations with my son and daughter-in-law’s family are feminist pastors, really evangelical. What Arminius says is that we have a microscopic ability. Natural man has a microscopic ability. The examples you used I think are not Arminian. They’re semi-Calagian. And that says basically that God has his part and we have our part to become regenerated. And that is a heresy. That has been declared a heresy by the



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church from the very beginning. And many of us go to churches or go to conferences where that heresy is taught.

**Jeff:** All the time.

**Ted:** And the only other thing I also want to say is that the Eastern Orthodox are not Calvinists. They believe in the image of God, and that there is enough of God within us naturally to make that decision.

**Jeff:** So I would say that Arminianism is semi-Pelagianism.

**Jim:** Amen.

**Jeff:** And I would think that there are different stripes of Arminianism that give expression to that semi-Pelagianism. For instance, I think that John Wesley did emphatically believe in original sin.

**Ted:** Yeah.

**Jeff:** Which is why he had to believe in a prevenient grace which nullifies the effect of original sin, so that he could maintain something of a libertarian form of freedom rather than a compatibilist form.

**Ted:** I think that we throw “Arminian” around pretty easily.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Ted:** And I’m not an Arminian at all.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Ted:** But I really think that the problem we face is not Arminianism; it’s semi-Pelagianism. I think Pelagius was a British monk in the fourth century. He taught that man had the total ability to keep all of the Ten commandments. So semi-Pelagianism says that man has the ability with the help of God.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** Eastern Orthodoxy has rejected Calvinism. They believe that man was made in the image of God and that is not totally obliterated by the Fall.

**Jeff:** Yes. And I don’t think that—well, that’s a whole other discussion. But I’m thinking about the *imago Dei*. And I’m thinking about the broad and the narrow image. Calvinism wouldn’t say that the image of God was obliterated in the Fall. But they would say that the narrow aspect of the image—knowledge, righteousness and holiness—is removed, yes. Does somebody else have one? Yes?

**Sig:** When you talk about compatibilism, am I going along with what God would want me to do even before I’m regenerate?

**Jeff:** You are doing what you want to do prior to your being regenerate. And so God cannot be blamed for your sin. But God is sovereign. And God is not apart from any action by decree or secondary causes, or both.

**Sig:** But that can be really confusing and sticky. Who does what and when?

**Jeff:** You do your sin. *(Laughter)*

**Sig:** I’m good at it too. I don’t know if you knew that or not. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Yeah, Matt?

**Matt:** We’re discussing this from a theological point of view. But from a human and rational point of view, again the unredeemed don’t understand this. I love what Jesus says here. *“If anyone loves Me he will keep My word. And the Father will love him, and we*

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*will come to him and make our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My word. And the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father who sent Me.”* So we aren’t the Holy Spirit. We don’t really know. It’s exciting when suddenly in someone the light is turned on.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Matt:** And they know the idea that there is a God. But I had an experience of Jesus, of the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ. And the Holy Spirit has come in and has given me this desire. I have a new hunger.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Matt:** And I think as a church that it’s our responsibility to say, “Do you desire to obey the Lord?” We still call people to faith.

**Jeff:** Yes. We still call people to faith and repentance, when we know that faith and repentance is only the fruit of the monergistic work of God. Yet Jesus says, “Have faith and repent.” So does John the Baptist and others. Yes, absolutely.

**Jim:** There was a time when I did shows in civic centers. It would get slow in the afternoon. Somebody would come out, and you could just sort of sense that they were Christians. You’d raise the question and get into a spiritual conversation. When you asked them how they came to Christ, they always, without exception, said, “God changed me. God saved me.” They used this language of monergism. God did it.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Jim:** Their experience told them that. But if you started to raise the theological question, “Oh no! It was my free will!”

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Jim:** So you see, theology doesn’t always work. But the reason people get confused is that everybody knows that the Calvinist view is right, because if you ask them what free will is, in general they’ll say, “the ability to do what I want.”

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Jim:** And it’s an illusion that we could do otherwise. If you have options, (I eat spaghetti while you eat fillet mignon—I’ll pick spaghetti; sorry)—*(Laughter)*, but you have options and you weigh them. But perhaps most of us make decisions that aren’t so encompassing. But I could have done the other. But the truth is, you could not have done the things you rejected because you didn’t want to do them.

**Jeff:** That’s right.

**Jim:** And so, as Jonathan Edwards said, “*to choose is to prefer.*” And once I prefer something I don’t prefer the others.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Jim:** And therefore I’ll not choose them because I don’t want them.

**Jeff:** Yeah. And it’s like the Arminians. When you talk to them, they say, “Hey, pray for my brother-in-law to be saved,” right? Well,--

**Brave Man:** He has free will.

**Jeff:** Yeah. He’s got to respond and then the Lord will reach out to him, right? So why should I pray for him? Let me know when he chooses, and then I’ll start praying for him, right?

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**Jim:** Well, yes. And as Packer said,—oh, I just lost it. Sorry.

**Jeff:** That’s all right Since we’re talking about this, let me jump down and let me direct your attention. We’ve been talking about verse 4. *“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.”*

Now listen to this. *“(By grace you have been saved.)”* Now jump down to verse 8. *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God.”*

Now the question is, what is the *this*? What is the antecedent of *this*? *“And this is not of your own doing.”* Well, I would say it’s the faith. The faith is not of your own doing. The faith is not yours. It’s the fruit of the monergistic work of God.

But somebody,—the Arminian,—will take issue with that. He will say, “No, no, no; that’s not what that means. If you look, grammatically *this* can refer back not only to the faith, but to the grace of the whole process.”

And I want to say, “Oh! Yeah, okay; I’m good with that too, because it is all God.” So whether *this* refers back to the faith—just a part of it—or *this* refers back to the whole saving grace of God in my life, it doesn’t matter regardless; yes and yes. It does refer to the whole process, and it does refer to the details of it. And so very clearly in verse 8 we find that the whole process is of God.

So not only that, but *“He raised us up.”* Notice what it says in the text. Verse 6. *“He made us alive together, raised us up with Him, and seated us in the heavenly places with Him in Christ Jesus.”*

Now let me simply say that what we found early on in Ephesians we find here. And what I mean by that is this. I mean that Paul prays that the eyes of their heart would be enlightened. And then he talks about how they’ve been enlightened. And there’s an already—they’ve already been enlightened,—and a not yet; he prays that they would be enlightened. There’s an already but a not-yetness to this discussion. And what we find here is that He raised us up and seated us with Him in heavenly places. It’s something he says again in Colossians chapter 3. In Colossians chapter 3 he says, *“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”*

So he says, “You’ve been raised with Christ, seated with Christ. And now seek the things that are above.” And you want to say, “Well wait a minute. I thought I was already there. If I’m already seated there with Christ why do I have to seek the things that are above?”

And the answer is because although I may already be seated there in Christ, I’m not yet there. So there’s an aspect of Christ by virtue of His resurrection where He has brought the age to come into my life in this present evil age. And so I’m a man who lives in the overlap of the ages. And in a sense here is the present evil age, and here is the age to come. And I live in the overlap. In other words, by virtue of Christ’s resurrection He has pulled the future into the present. And by virtue of being in Him I enjoy the future in the present. But the future will be consummated at the appropriate time. In other words,

## *“The Family of God” continues*

at that time I will take my seat. And I would say that it’s just the already but not yet idea. Yes?

**Don Bishop:** Would you say that one is a legal aspect and that the other one is actual? Such is my inheritance. The will says that’s mine, but not yet.

**Jeff:** I would say that it’s not just a legal aspect, because in Christ I have renovative benefits. I have the Holy Spirit who is a deposit and a guarantee of the things that are yet to come. So it’s not just a legal standing. I have a legal standing. But I also have the Person of the Holy Spirit as a down payment. I also have Him at work in me renovating my life and really preparing me for the future in the present. The future is coming to effect in my present life right now. Yes?

**Ted:** I just think this is so important. This is the whole crux of the Christian life; it’s essential that I died with Him, been buried with Him,--Romans,--and raised with Him and seated with Him. Aren’t we all? That’s what I would call an essential. And I wouldn’t even call it “already but not yet.” It’s more than that, because when he says, “*Seek the things that are above,*” he’s talking about that I’m already there; I just haven’t experienced it. It’s essential versus existential.

And we get that in Romans 7. He says, “I desire this, but I do another thing.”

**Jeff:** Well, it’s one of these things where it’s hard. For instance, when we talk about predestination we talk about it in terms of decree, in terms of existential experience, and in terms of Spirit. And what we mean by that, trying to grasp all three of those, is that what I experience now is by the decree of God. It is real experience that I enjoy, the future in the present now. But it is also Spirit-born. It’s because of the Holy Spirit living in me that I enjoy the decree of God as it stands in my life now.

So with all of these things we try to grab for what it is that the Bible is expressing. And you know, this is the great thing about it. Oftentimes guys get into theology. And they think about monergism, and they think about the hypostatic union. And all these words are so deep and rich. And surely they’re deeper and richer than the bible.

But when you actually try to lay hands on what the bible actually teaches, the bible is always deeper and richer than any confession of faith. And that’s just the fact of the matter. So what does it mean that I’m seated now in the heavenly places, and yet will be seated in the heavenly places? That’s what I’m trying to grab. Yes, Bishop?

**Bishop:** One of the categories that is used much in Scripture, (I’m just looking at the Johannine tradition), is that we are children of God. “*Behold, what manner of love is this, that we are the children of God.*”

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Bishop:** And that’s your existentialism, and essentially who you are.

**Jeff:** Yes; that’s a great verse. 1 John 3:1 is what I think that is. What sort of love is this, right? What kind of love, what manner of love! And it’s the idea of that *agape* love. What sort of love is this that starts with Him and ends with me when I’m so undeserving of it? Yes.

**Bishop:** And who are we?

**Jeff:** And who are we?

**Bishop:** I mean, we’re actually God’s children.

## *“The Family of God” continues*

**Jeff:** Yeah, that’s right.

**Don Maurer:** And then it says further on that “*what we will be has not yet been made know.*”

**Matt:** So I didn’t know what verse you were going to use today, but this is a verse that I love. This is my mind, why I do what I do. But it’s kind of the “Star Wars” version. Are you familiar with it? Don, you can play the music. (*Matt and Don hum the “Star Wars” theme.*) God created these lives so that we would spend these lives helping others.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Matt:** Do you know what verse that is?

**Jeff:** 2:10?

**Matt:** Yes; thank you. It’s the Authorized Living Bible Version. (*Laughter*)

**Jeff:** Oh, is that right?

**Matt:** A paraphrase!

**Jeff:** Okay.

**Matt:** It’s a paraphrase. But I love the context of that because, like you were saying, we were positionally made alive, raised and seated. And you know, when I memorized Ephesians 2:8 and 9, 2:8 and 9 was all I learned. Nobody ever taught me verse 10.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Matt:** And it’s incomplete until we get to 10. And the cross-over there is why are we still here? Positionally we are experiencing the glory of God. But why are we still here on this earth?

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Matt:** And 2:10 answers that, especially the “Star Wars” version. (*Laughter*)

**Jeff:** Well let me get to that now. And we’ll do it in less than five minutes. But we’ll come back to it.

**Sig:** Are you referring to Romans 2:10 or Ephesians 2:10, Jeff?

**Jeff:** Ephesians 2:10. What we’ll do is, I’ll give you the theological construct for it. And then let’s talk about it next week.

So when we think about the twofold grace of God—the *duplex gratia Dei*—the twofold grace of God is both forensic and renovative in terms of its benefits. That means that every blessing is mine in union with Jesus Christ.

That means, for instance, that I am justified and adopted. Now that also means that I am sanctified. And here we’re talking about good works, right? But when we talk about sanctification in terms of the twofold grace of God, we’ve got to think both of the *definitive* and the *progressive* aspect of sanctification.

Listen to me now because this is really important. And you can chew on it over the course of the week. In terms of the definitive aspect of sanctification there is no priority.

**Bishop:** Right.

**Jeff:** In other words, this is not the ground for the definitive. These benefits are mine simultaneously, okay. When I say *definitively*, I mean that I am taken from one realm and placed down in another realm.

But when I talk about the progressive aspect of sanctification I am talking about it in terms of a logical and temporal priority.

## *“The Family of God” continues*

**Bishop:** That’s right.

**Jeff:** Why is it that I am talking about forensic and renovative benefits in terms of a distinct and inseparable manner? It’s because I’m talking about them in terms of their union with Jesus Christ. But when I talk about the progressive aspect I’m talking about it in terms of a logical and temporal priority. In other words, the progressive logically and temporally flows out of these benefits—forensic and renovative.

And yet here’s the point. If this, the definitive aspect is part of the renovative benefits, and they enjoy no priority one over the other, then what I’m saying is this. The person who is experiencing forensic benefits must also experience the renovative benefits. And if the renovative benefits are not in the person’s life, then he has reason to question whether or not he can claim the forensic benefits.

That’s pretty strong. But it’s true.

Now this raises all sorts of questions, right? And I want to say those quickly before I have to go, because I have to go. But let me say this. The relationship that I have with the law is different as a result of the definitive aspect.

Remember, Paul said that “when envy seized the opportunity afforded by the law, I died.” But after conversion remember what he says? “I still envy. But I died to the law in Jesus Christ. And so the law has no power to kill me. So I envy, and I do what I don’t want to do,” right? But the law doesn’t have the power that it once had over me.

So this is not a covenant of works again—do this and live. I do this because I live.

**Bishop:** That’s right.

**Jeff:** Let me pray with you and then I’ll have to take off. Father in heaven, thank You for this day. Thank You for your time together. Bless us, Lord, and strengthen us by Your grace especially in what we’ve learned today, because it’s the gospel and we thank You for it. And we pray it in Jesus’ name. amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen. (*Applause*)