



## ***In Christ, I Am...Alive!***

### **Main Truth**

God made us alive together with Christ.

### **Introduction**

Many people die physically every day, but it seems that many famous people have died in recent days—Michael Jackson, Karl Malden, Ed McMahon, Farrah Fawcett, and Billy Mays. Physical death affects the body, or flesh, but there is a part of man created by God that is eternal. The parable of the “Rich Man and Lazarus” in Luke 16 describes the destinies of the two men after physical death: one to Hades (a place of torment) and one to Abraham’s bosom (a place of comfort). It supports the understanding that there are two options of eternal life for man. One, a physical existence separated from the mercy and grace of God in Christ Jesus for those who are spiritually dead; the other, a life in the presence of God in Christ for those made spiritually alive by Christ.

### **Scripture**

#### **Ephesians 2:1–7 (NIV)**

*<sup>1</sup> And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> 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— <sup>3</sup>among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup>But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup>and*

*raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

The NASB phrases these verses in this way:

*<sup>1</sup>And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup>in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. <sup>3</sup>Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

*<sup>4</sup>But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup>and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

## For Discussion

A key verse in Ephesians is 1:3 where Paul writes, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” Among the many “spiritual blessing[s]” that we receive by becoming one of God’s beloved children, is the life (Greek “*zoe*,” spiritual life) that he made or birthed in us.

### Our Condition Outside of Christ (vv. 1–3)

Verses one through three set forth our desperate condition of “dead”—most interestingly one which many in our world are not aware. The text says we “walked” in this deadness of our trespasses and sins, so it was not a physical death. This death is one of not being able to respond or relate to God, of being *spiritually* dead. We responded to our environment out of this nature of *deadness*. Like a dog only knows how to do dog things (like sniff anywhere there is a smell), we only knew how to follow the prince of this world, Satan, and to try to fill our needs “carrying out the desires of the body and the mind.” We were under the condemnation of wrath in judgment for our sin.

- How would you describe your “walking” before you began trusting Jesus with your life?
- What were the longings and desires that marked your walk?

### Made Alive Together With Christ (vv. 4–10)

“But God” (quite possible the most beautiful conjunction in scripture), in verse four countermanded the course and destiny of our existence by fiat of love, mercy, and grace, “made us alive together with Christ.” *This* is salvation: that we have life together with

Christ, not a mere escape from the consequence of sin. Life! A joyful new relationship with the King of Kings, Lord of Lords that gives us new eyes, a new heart, and a new life.

- What does it mean to you that you are alive together with Christ?
- What recent experiences of your life can you attribute only to Christ's presence?
- How does (or should) this truth affect your thinking?

In addition, He "raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Although our physical senses do not tell us we are seated in a high and secure place of honor, we are.

- How could the spiritual reality of being seated with Christ affect your outlook on your daily circumstances?
- How does (or should) this truth affect your thinking?

## Application

Think about being in a place that is peaceful and restful. What feelings does such an idea stir in you?

Share with the group about your response to the truth that you are seated with Christ in the heavenly places.

How do these truths help us as we find ourselves being tempted to sin, or exhausted by efforts to prove our worth?

In what other ways does knowing that God and Jesus has made us alive with Him and seated us with Him affect our peace and joy?

## Going Deeper

On a sheet of paper, draw a line down the center and list on the left side those things that characterized your living outside of Christ (dead—verses 1–3). On the right, list the things that replaced them when you were made alive in Christ (verses 4–7). Consider why those things on the left persist—what need were you trying to fill, or what did you want?—and consider how Christ meets that need today. For those in the "dead" column that you still struggle with, ask Jesus to show you His answer—His satisfaction and healing in that area. Share the prayer request with your group if appropriate.