

Eph 2:4-5 Alive together with Christ: 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

4 But God--Before we were saved we were following the ways of the world, living according to the plan of the enemy of our souls, sons and daughters of disobedience to God, just going along with the desires of our flesh, appointed to wrath. There was nothing that we could do to save ourselves; our situation was completely hopeless. And then we come to verse 4 and read how God came in and changed everything, shedding a light upon our hearts, and changed us completely, making us into a new creation. And it begins with the words "But God". This phrase "But God" has quite a history in the Bible.

Sometimes, in our lives we face obstacles and challenges that seem too difficult to overcome. In these times that we have to remember that we're not alone; that God is in this situation with us. The phrase 'but God' reminds us that God is much stronger, wiser, and capable than we are, and it's His strength that we lean on—the battle is the Lord's. He can overcome any limitation or impossibility.

God has the ability to intervene with His mighty power and change circumstances for the better. He is powerful on our behalf. For example, in Genesis 50:20, Joseph tells his brothers who had sold him into slavery **20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about [n]this present result, to keep many people alive.** This verse contrasts the brother's evil actions with God's ability to use that circumstance for a greater good that no person could have ever achieved, or foresaw while it was happening. "But God" is often used in Scripture to demonstrate God's sovereignty, omnipotence, and ability to redeem even the most broken or desperate situations.

In Genesis 8:1 when God was sorry that He had made man, because all our acts were wicked and violent continually and caused a flood to cover the whole earth, we read **But God remembered Noah and all the animals and all the livestock that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided.** We're all descended from Noah—we wouldn't be here without that but God phrase.

It's God's power that changes things, and when He shows up, everything's different. Ephesians 2:4-5 – People were dead in sin, but God made them alive in Christ. Romans 5:6-8 – People were powerless, but God showed His love for them through Christ's sacrifice. 1 Peter 2:9-10 – People were not a people, but God made them His people and gave them mercy. The point is that man faces limitations – physically, morally, and spiritually – but God offers redemption through His Son Jesus Christ. No obstacle is too great for God to overcome and no expectation too incredible for Him to defy. In fact, the very promise of a son to Abraham, involves a **but, God** statement: Abraham asked that God establish his covenant through Ishmael, that he would walk before God, in Genesis 17:15 we read **But God said, "No, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.**

"But God" sustains us through circumstances when situations seem impossible. Humanly speaking, the lame man by the temple gate would never walk again and Lazarus would remain dead four days in the tomb. But God's power overcame these natural limitations, resulting in healing and resurrection. God can do the impossible. As Jesus declared, **"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible"** (Matthew 19:26)

Rich in Mercy--This word elios "mercy," meaning "steadfast, loyal, or covenant love" is used of God who shows his mercy to his people with whom he has made a covenant. It means God's kindness, sensitivity, and actions of loving-kindness. It is God's compassion or pity on the sinners who are suffering the calamity of sin. In life, God can allow many curveballs that seem impossible

to overcome. And, it's knowing the God that we serve, that He is merciful and lovely that gets us through. God is not only merciful; he is "rich in mercy" (Ephesians 2:4). The Greek word for "rich" means that God abounds in mercy. As Jeremiah testified, **"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness"** (Lamentations 3:22–23). In other words, God's mercy is overwhelmingly generous. We do not deserve it, yet He continues to give it.

Mercy is not only about what God does; it is about who He is: **"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort"** (2 Corinthians 1:3). He is always loving, compassionate, and forgiving. We can get through the circumstances He allows, because He allows them for a reason. As Romans 8:28 reminds us, **"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."** There is a purpose, even when we don't see it. God offers endless hope, even in our darkest moments of helplessness. As the Psalmist said in Psalm 34:18, **"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."** When we feel crushed by circumstances, God draws near to lift us up with His hope. When we read in the bible about the circumstances that God has got other believers through, we begin to understand that God will get us through whatever He has allowed to come into our lives. By turning to God in our moments of helplessness or hopelessness, He can fill us with a hope that not only helps us endure but equips us to help others enduring hardships as well, which is one of the reasons that He allows these circumstances into our lives in the first place.

"because of his great love with which he loved us." Even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, God was still merciful to us **"because of his great love for us"** (Ephesians 2:4). God's love is more than sentimental feelings; it is a love that moved Him to action: **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life"** (John 3:16). God loved us so much that He gave His only Son for us. Now, that is true and unconditional love!

"even when we were dead in transgressions" Even when we were dead in our transgressions and sins. God is able, even to take such sinners as we were and make us a new Creation, because if He couldn't save the worst of us, then He couldn't save any of us. But He can!! Even while all of us Christians were dead in our transgressions and sins, God was able to save us through the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

God made us alive together with Christ.--God has made us alive together with Christ. It's a word that Paul created to describe being born again. It's only used in Eph 2:4 and Col 2:13. The word comes from the words *συν-*, *syn* "with," and *ζωοποιέω*, *zoopoieo* "to make alive,". The verb *zoopoieo ζωοποιέω* was used in classical literature as "to make alive" with reference to the birth of animals or the growth of plants. So, the word *epizoopoieo* means, "to make alive together [with someone]." You can imagine why this word wasn't really needed much before Paul started talking about the new birth in Christ—no-one had ever been made alive together with someone, or in someone before Jesus. In Romans 6:3-11 Paul emphasizes that we died with Christ as he died to pay the obligation of our sins, and in this identification with his death, we were also buried with him, raised up to the newness of life, and will be united with him in the future resurrection. Ephesians states that we were dead in our trespasses but were made alive with Christ to the newness of life. And, our identification with Christ does not end in the newness of life but continues until the time This new life occurred at the time of our conversion, when we were saved by grace.

By grace you are saved--Paul is making sure that we who have been made alive together with Christ understand that this salvation is based on God's grace. God's response to the sinners' plight is one of mercy, the motive for his compassion is his love for them, and the basis for his action is his grace. Grace is God's unmerited or undeserved favor.