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Sermon Notes

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But God

Ephesians 2:4-6

I. The Two Most Important Words in the Bible

A. “But God...!”

1. I am aware that the NIV starts with “But because...”
2. But every other major English translation begins with these epoch-making two words... “But God”
3. The words capture the essence of a God-centered gospel, a gospel of total desperation giving way to consummated hope

B. “But” is a Contrast... We Were Going in One Direction in the Sentence; now a completely different direction... a DYNAMIC GOD intervening and working in a mighty way

1. This is the God of the Bible... the One who moves everything, the One who controls everything
2. God is the greatest force in the universe... and “But God” captures His powerful actions in space and time

Genesis 7:24, 8:1 *The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days. But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.*

Genesis 41:15, 16 *Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."*

[Joseph said to his terrified brothers who had thought to murder him and had sold him as a slave into Egypt] ***Genesis 50:20*** *You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."*

[The wise woman of Tekoa to King David] ***2 Samuel 14:14*** *Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But God does not take*

away life; instead, he devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him.

*Psalm 73:26 My flesh and my heart may fail, **but God** is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

*Acts 3:15 You killed the author of life, **but God** raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.*

God is the center of the universe... Everything comes from God; and He alone can make the real changes in your life that must be made if you are to spend eternity in joy and peace instead of agony and torment

C. The Uniqueness of the Christian Message: The Only Hope for a Dying World

Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

1. The Christian message begins with total human desperation, total human depravity, complete inability, weakness... even worse—SPIRITUAL DEATH
 2. The Christian message doesn't end there, however... the words "BUT GOD..." mean that God stepped into our spiritual death, our total hopelessness and helplessness... salvation comes from OUTSIDE US...it is something that was done FOR us, as well as something done TO us
 3. It is God's doing, God's work from beginning to end
 4. This is so hard for prideful, self-sufficient human beings to grasp
 5. We are so used to "The American Dream", where we can be and do anything we want if we try hard enough, believe in ourselves, work diligently enough, and have the talent... America is a land of opportunity, a land of freedom of choice... you are what you make yourself
 6. But, you can't make yourself be a Christian anymore than you can raise yourself from your own coffin at your own funeral
- D. This Morning... Our task is to understand more completely our SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD through faith in Christ
1. We are going to do it based on these amazing words from Ephesians 2:4-6
 2. There the Apostle Paul clearly asserts that every Christian is an astonishing miracle of spiritual resurrection through faith in Christ
 3. This is true Christianity... and this astonishing spiritual resurrection is something that is true of every single Christian

4. Do you see Christianity that way? A miracle of God's grace that has been wrought in you by His sovereign power? Do you see the work of God FOR you and IN you? That is the goal of this sermon this morning...
5. And TO GOD BE THE GLORY!!!

1 Corinthians 1:31 as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

Ephesians 1:6 to the praise of his glorious grace

II. We Were Spiritually Dead (vs. 1-3)

Ephesians 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live 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 sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

A. This is the Starting Point for Understanding God's Grace

1. We vastly underestimate both our natural sinfulness AND the greatness of God's grace to us in Christ
2. Because we underestimate our dire condition in Adam and apart from Christ, because we don't realize that we were SPIRITUALLY DEAD in our transgressions and sins, we also underestimate how amazing is our spiritual resurrection in Christ

B. Last Week: A Thorough Probing of these dire verses

1. "dead in your transgressions and sins" = unresponsive, unable to respond to stimuli... "pupils fixed and dilated"
 - a. A direct result of our transgressions against God's holy law
 - b. Paul put it well for us

Romans 7:9-11 Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. ¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.

- c. In other words, in our infancy and childhood, we were alive spiritually in some sense... though still positionally in Adam seen to be sinners

d. But as soon as we understood the existence of God and his moral requirements (“You shall have no other gods, you shall honor your father and mother, you shall not murder, you shall not covet...”) we TRANSGRESSED

e. At that instant, we DIED spiritually

2. Spiritually though physically alive

a. We were “dead even while we lived”

b. We were functioning biologically, breathing, eating, sleeping, walking, thinking, loving, hating, dreaming, doing many things in God’s world

c. Our eyes worked fine (if we were normal), so did our ears, so did our brains

d. BUT these amazing capabilities were all meant for GOD the creator... they were meant to live toward God, to love God, to see God’s glory, to speak God’s praises, to serve God’s people... we did NONE of these things

e. The essence of our spiritual death was in our minds and hearts

i) In our minds: how we thought

ii) In our hearts: what we loved and hated

f. The sinful corruption went to the core of our being

i) In our minds, our thinking was corrupt and dead

Romans 8:5-8 those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

ii) In our hearts, our loving and hating was corrupt and dead

It says of Christ:

Hebrews 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness

But the natural man, the unsaved man, the unregenerate woman... HATES righteousness and loves wickedness

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Micah 3:2 you ... hate the good and love the evil

3. Followed the ***“ways of this world”***
 - a. The worldly system of rebellion against God
 - b. Every culture has its own patterns, but the essence of it all is IDOLATRY in worship and the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and boastful pride of life
4. Followed the ***“ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in the disobedient”***
 - a. We were enslaved to Satan in ways we could scarcely imagine
 - b. He dominated us with temptations and accusations, with false ideas and visions of angels of light who are really demons; he is the “god of this age” and he blinded our minds especially concerning Christ:

2 Corinthians 4:4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- c. Satan is the “strong man” who is fully armed and guards his dark fortress with relentless watchfulness, and will not allow any of his human prisoners to escape
5. Universal sin: ***“All of us also lived among them at one time...”***
 - a. There were no exceptions, NOT EVEN ONE
 - b. Every single human being born in the world is born into Adam’s rebellion and soon follows Adam’s pattern of sin... there are no exceptions of all that can understand God’s moral law, written on the human heart in conscience... ALL OF US ALSO... every single person!!
6. Universal lusts: ***“gratifying the cravings of the flesh and following its desires and THOUGHTS”***
 - a. It was sin with the body’s lusts, and sin with the pride of the mind
 - b. It was a prison of sin, and that was the ESSENCE OF OUR SPIRITUAL DEADNESS in Satan’s dark kingdom
7. Effects in our bodies, our minds, our souls
 - a. We were living corpses
 - b. We were dying daily... corrupting ourselves by our lusts

- c. We were storing up wrath against ourselves for the day of God's wrath when his righteous judgments will be revealed (Romans 2)
- d. Our bodies were storing up toxins, decaying and dying... preparing for the day when our heart would beat its last, our lungs will fill one last time with air, then exhale one last time... we were DEAD ALREADY even while we lived

C. Application: Meditate on this Truth!!

1. Non-Christians: this is true of you RIGHT NOW!
 - a. You are physically alive, but you couldn't have come here
 - b. BUT God says you are spiritually dead even while you live
 - c. This is the spiritual reality of your lives every single day... and you prove it by what you love and hate, what you live for, what you choose to do, especially when no one is watching
2. Christians: this WAS true of you in the past!
 - a. If you don't understand this... if you underestimate this, you will fail to give God the proper glory for the spiritual resurrection he has worked in your life
 - b. You will fail to fall at Christ's feet and dissolve in tears of thankfulness for dying on the cross for you!!

Summary: WE WERE SPIRITUALLY DEAD, even while we lived

BUT GOD...!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

III. But God Raised Us from the Dead (vs. 4)

Ephesians 2:4-5 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved—

Or simpler... BUT GOD RAISED US FROM THE DEAD

A. God Raised Us in Christ Spiritually

1. Radical spiritual transformation!!!

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2. God has created something NEW in your soul!! Something eternal!!!
Something that can never die!!!
3. We became RESPONSIVE... our spiritual pupils were no longer FIXED and DILATED!.. God shone a spiritual light in our spiritual eyes, the “eyes of our hearts” (Ephesians 1:18) and we were stunned by the radiant beauty
 - a. We saw the glory of God in the face of Christ in ways we had never seen it before
 - b. We understood the significance of Christ... His identity as the Son of God, his various glories—
 - i) his kindness in dealing so gently and lovingly with sinners;
 - ii) his power in performing so many awesome miracles, especially his own resurrection from the dead;
 - iii) his love in laying down his life for sinners
 - iv) his wisdom in how he spoke, how he taught the parables and the sermon on the Mount
 - c. We understood the glories of the cross for the first time... and we saw the radiant display of the perfections of God and of Christ
 - i) The cross became a “prism” for God’s glory... it took the white light of biblical truth about what happened when Jesus died and broke it out into a spectrum, a RAINBOW of glory for the first time
 - ii) You could see in the cross the LOVE of God manifested plainly in the cross

Romans 5:8 God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Here was perfect, unconditional love on full display... a cherishing of wicked sinners not BECAUSE of who they were or what they’d done, but IN SPITE of it...

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Romans 5:7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.

The kind of love Christ displayed at the cross is unlike any love there has ever been in history

We saw, gazing with the eyes of our hearts at Christ in agony, we realized the same truth that the thief spoke for us all:

Luke 23:41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.

iii) You could see the JUSTICE of God at the cross... God's fiery passion to pour out his just wrath for sin... not to simply let it pass by

Romans 3:25 God presented Him as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to demonstrate His righteousness

The cross of Jesus Christ is the greatest display of the righteousness of God in history in that God would rather crush his Son as our substitute than allow us sinners to enter heaven with our sins unpunished

God's righteousness is as immense and perfect as his love!!

iv) You could see the POWER of God and the WISDOM of God at the cross

1 Corinthians 1:23-24 we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

4. These things were always there in the cross... but Satan, the god of this age had blinded our eyes to them, and we were DEAD to them... they meant nothing to us
5. BUT GOD suddenly raised us from the dead... he transformed our hearts radically so that suddenly we could see the beauty of Christ crucified and resurrected... he gave us spiritual perception to see all these things and to DELIGHT IN THEM

B. Key Concept: Our Spiritual UNION with Christ by Faith

Ephesians 2:4-6 But God... made us alive together with Christ... ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus

1. The key idea here is our mystical spiritual UNION with Christ BY FAITH
2. Romans 6 is the main discussion of this essential idea

Romans 6:3-5 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. ⁵ ¶ If we have been united with

him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

3. At the moment we believe in Christ we become UNITED WITH HIM spiritually; God considers us dead to sin but alive to God IN CHRIST JESUS
4. We are also free from the Law in its power of CONDEMNATION; we are free from Satan's power to accuse; we have died to sin once for all and been raised with Christ from the dead spiritually
5. Thus we are MEMBERS of Him eternally... part of His body; He is our head, we are part of Him forever
6. So Christ's death once for all has become ours, and Christ's resurrection has become ours
7. This results in an entirely new way of living... we WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit

IV. What Moved God: Mercy, Love and Grace

A. Salvation Glorifies God

1. Clearly asserted three times in Ephesians 1

Ephesians 1:6 to the praise of his glorious grace

Ephesians 1:12 for the praise of his glory

Ephesians 1:14 to the praise of his glory.

2. To "glorify" = to put God's perfections, His attributes radiantly on display for all to see
3. Nothing has so clearly put God on display as

B. First Attribute: POWER

1. Back in Ephesians 1, Paul prays for the Ephesian Christian to know God better

Ephesians 1:17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

2. He then prays for three things

Ephesians 1:18-19 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his

glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

3. He then zeroes in on one of these: POWER... the “incomparably great power of God” shown to us who believe in Christ

Ephesians 1:19-21 That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰ which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion

4. So, there is an ANALOGY being set up between Christ’s PHYSICAL RESURRECTION from the dead, and our SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION from the dead

a. We were dead in transgressions and sins

b. God made us alive in Christ and raised us up with Him to sit with Him in the heavenly realms

5. This is an act of SUPREME POWER on the part of God... something only our sovereign God could have done

6. And we must realize this power is something God has ALREADY EXERTED in our souls... this is not something that is yet to happen... it has already occurred

7. Note the verb tense

Ephesians 2:5 it is by grace you have been saved.

Paul is speaking about what has already happened to them spiritually... we need to know that, if we are Christians, we are already MIRACLES of God’s grace

Yes, there is still much to be done, much of our salvation journey yet to come, and we’ll talk more about in a moment

But Paul was praying for the Ephesians to have the eyes of their hearts enlightened to KNOW the astonishing power that God has already unleashed in our souls to raise us from the dead in Christ spiritually

So... the first attribute Paul mentions here in the long train of thought that connects Ephesians 1 and 2 is God’s POWER

But in these particular verses, Paul zeroes in on three others, very closely related: God’s mercy, love, and grace

C. "Being Rich in Mercy"

Ephesians 2:4-5 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ

1. The mercy of God is that character trait by which he sees his children in MISERY and yearns to alleviate their sufferings

We see it regularly in Jesus' amazing compassion for suffering sinners:

Matthew 9:27 And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David."

Matthew 15:22 And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon."

2. In another sense, it has to do with his refusing to mete out the just punishment that a sinner deserves... but granting them mercy and forgiveness

Daniel 9:9-10 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him ¹⁰ and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by walking in his laws

In Jesus' parable of forgiveness (the Ten Thousand talents), the master speaks of the forgiveness of the debt as an act of mercy:

Matthew 18:33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?'

Picture some guilty murderer who in an act of passion killed a man he was arguing with; but he is instantly sorry for what he's done. He is immediately arrested and brought before the king for judgment... he has a wife and two small children; he falls on his knees before the king and pleads for MERCY... that he would NOT receive the punishment he knows he deserves.

3. The scripture teaches us that God is under NO OBLIGATION to give it:

Romans 9:15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

Romans 9:18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

4. And yet, this text tells us that God is RICH IN MERCY... lavishly forgiving all who call on the name of Jesus!! Lavishly freeing them from the agony of eternal torment in hell!!

D. "Because of the Great Love With Which He Loved Us"

Ephesians 2:4-5 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ

1. Here the text also links God's actions in raising us from the dead with his GREAT LOVE
2. This love is a stunning marvel in all the universe! It is the love of a holy God for snarling, rebellious, murderous, God-hating, insolent sinners... it is an electing love, set on us before the foundation of the world
3. It is a love that comes from God's sovereign heart, not drawn from him by anything we are or have done...

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but it is because the LORD loves you

In other words, "I loved you because I loved you..."

4. Love is somewhat the way we understand love in this world... but infinitely more
 - a. A husband loves his wife
 - b. A mother loves her children
 - c. A child loves ice cream
 - d. A photographer loves a great action shot
 - e. A sightseer loves a spectacular sunset
 - f. A fan loves it when his team wins the championship
 - g. All of us love to be praised and encouraged
5. The word "love" has to do with an inclination of the heart toward something... an attraction, like a powerful magnet to a large piece of iron... like the gravitational pull of the earth on everything on its surface
6. Love is a dear affection in which the heart of one is bound up in the object of his affection

7. God has sovereignly set his love upon us before the foundation of the world, and elected, and predestined us to be adopted as his sons and daughters

8. Love plays itself out in some clear patterns in human relationships

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

These are the human characteristics of love person to person

God is like that with us, his adopted children... he set his infinite affection on us and will never let us go! He is passionately attracted to us as a husband is to his wife; he is affectionately doting over us as a father is his beloved daughter; he is protectively nurturing over us like a mother with her nursing infant

Notice that the text speaks of the GREAT LOVE with which God loved us

Love is measured by its level of cheerful generosity... God has been infinitely generous with us, giving us his only begotten Son to die in our place rather than lose us to hell; God will be infinitely generous with us in the future, giving us a Kingdom in heaven which he is DELIGHTED to give us

Luke 12:32 "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

E. "It Is By Grace You Have Been Saved"

Ephesians 2:4-5 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved

1. We will talk much more about grace in the sermon on Ephesians 2:8-9
2. It means here that God saved us from what we truly deserved, an eternity in hell, and gave us what we truly did not deserve... eternity in heaven
3. It means God's lavish generosity CONTRARY to what we deserve
4. We try to EARN things... heaven is something we cannot earn
5. More when we consider these words:

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

V. Seated With Christ in the Heavenly Realms

Ephesians 2:4-6 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved-- ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus

- A. This is the final step for us today... a staggering journey for sinners like us
- B. Christ has already made this infinite journey, and it was described in chapter 1:

Ephesians 1:19-23 That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰ which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way

- C. Each Individual Christian is UNITED with Christ... that means we are in some mysterious way seated with Christ in the heavenly places
- D. What Does this Mean?
 - 1. Total security!! Satan cannot reach so high as to seize us from the throne of Almighty God! Infinite power surrounds each Christian, keeping us far beyond Satan's reach

John 10:28-30 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one.

- 2. Influence: Christ is at the right hand of God and is constantly interceding for us... we also have total access to the throne and can plead with God to accomplish his eternal plan... and God will listen to us through Christ

Hebrews 10:19-22 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith

John 14:14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

3. Honor

Revelation 3:21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

4. Wisdom

Queen of Sheba, overwhelmed at Solomon:

2 Chronicles 9:7 How happy your men must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom!

Matthew 12:42 she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.

We are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms, so we are privy to his wisdom through the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 1:9-10 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

5. Joy

Psalms 16:11 you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

6. Fellowship

John 17:24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

Seated with Christ in the heavenly realms means all these things... but it doesn't mean we have become gods and goddesses ourselves! Everything we have comes through our union with Christ!

VI. Applications

A. Marvel at the Astonishing Blessing of God's Intervention for Us... BUT GOD!!

1. Meditate deeply on our lostness... our spiritual deadness... how enslaved we were
2. Understand how only the intervention of Almighty God could have saved you

B. Understand that Every Christian is a Miracle of God's Sovereign Grace!! A Spiritual Resurrection

1. What that means is that we should be in awe at what God has already done in us
2. We should also be humble in reference to evangelism and missions
 - a. There are no DIFFICULT RESURRECTIONS for God!
 - b. Lazarus was no more difficult to raise from the dead after four days in the tomb than Jairus's daughter was after just a few hours...
 - c. On the other hand, there are no EASY RESURRECTION for man to accomplish
 - d. Resurrection is IMPOSSIBLE for man, but nothing is difficult for God

Luke 1:37 For nothing is impossible with God.

Matthew 19:26 "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

3. So that means that we should approach all evangelism and missions with an absolute trust in the sovereign power of God... our task is simple: proclaim the gospel which is the POWER OF GOD FOR THE SALVATION OF EVERYONE who believes... the rest, the real working is up to God

Illus. Like Elijah on Mt. Carmel... he built the altar, arranged the firewood, placed the bull on the altar, dug a trench around it, poured water on it... then he prayed and waited for FIRE TO FALL FROM THE SKY!!
Conversion is like that... a sovereign action from God

4. So, Parents who yearn to see their kids come to Christ, do your task—share the gospel daily with them, live out the gospel before them... and pray for God to work in their hearts... the REST IS UP TO GOD

John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

C. Marvel at the Attributes of God Listed Here

1. God's power
2. God's mercy
3. God's love

4. God's grace
5. Cherish each one as it relates to your salvation

D. Understand Your Union with Christ... and Its Ethical Implications

Romans 6:1-4 *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 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.*

Romans 6:8-11 *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

E. Rejoice in Being Seated with Christ in the Heavenly Realms

1. Rejoice in the access to the throne of grace that means
2. Rejoice in the security that gives you, that Satan cannot pluck you from heaven
3. Rejoice in the fellowship and joy that gives you...
4. Set your minds much more on those heavenly places

Colossians 3:1-4 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

F. Unbelievers: Come to Christ!!