

WHAT DID IT TAKE TO SAVE US?

(Ephesians 2:4-7)

As believers of Christ, we have experienced the greatest rescue mission of all time. We were rescued from the worst calamity there is, which is the eternal judgment and divine punishment of our sins and unending torment in the pit of hell. Hence, our salvation in Christ is the greatest rescue mission that God alone could ever accomplish. Praise God for the good news of Ephesians 2:4-7, for it is all about the gracious intervention of God through Christ in rescuing spiritually dead sinners like us who are saved to be the eternal trophies of God's redeeming grace. As we reflect on this greatest rescue mission, let's consider these three divine necessities of our salvation in Christ.

1. It takes God's _____ in Christ to save us.

The wonder and glory of our salvation in Christ is this: God's own nature and character moved and motivated Him to sovereignly intervene to save and rescue helpless and hopeless sinners like us (Eph. 2:4). Paul mentions two attributes of God as the grounds of our salvation: the mercy of God and the love of God. God's rich mercy is His infinite compassion and kindness towards wretched and rebellious sinners who deserve nothing but God's wrathful judgment. Mercy is God's goodness to those who are in sin's misery and distress (Micah 7:18; Psalm 51:1; 1 Tim. 1:15-16). God's great love speaks of the unconditional affection and steadfast commitment of God to seek the highest good of the one He loves. The greatness of God's love towards us is demonstrated by the sacrifice of His own Son Jesus to redeem us (Eph. 5:2,25).

2. It takes God's _____ in Christ to save us.

Paul uses three phrases to describe God's life-giving work in Christ: God "*made us alive together with Christ, raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places*" (Eph. 2:5-6). Paul's repeated emphasis on the words "*with Christ*" conveys the glorious reality of the believer's union with Christ. By virtue of our union with Christ, we were "*made alive together with Christ*" (Eph. 2:5). This is the supernatural act of God whereby the Holy Spirit implants new life in us, a new heart that is alive to God, a heart that desires and loves God above all else (Ezek. 36:25-27; 2 Cor. 5:17). God has also given to all Christians an entirely new and glorious status: we *were* "*raised up with Christ and seated with Him in the heavenly places*" (Eph. 2:6). This simply means that we are now citizens of heaven who in Christ are endowed with power and victory over sin, death and Satan (Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:3; Rom. 6:14; 8:37).

3. It takes God's _____ in Christ to save us.

The purpose why God graciously intervened to save and rescue us, the purpose why Jesus died on the Cross and rose from the grave is so that in the coming ages, for all eternity, God would be worshipped and glorified through the display of the immeasurable riches of His grace and kindness towards sinners like us (Eph. 2:5,7). In other words, the purpose of our salvation is the glory of God, in particular the display of the glory of God's infinite grace. For all eternity, God would be universally exalted and praised for His wondrous saving grace (Rev. 7:9-12).
