

"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—" (Ephesians 2:4)

We know that God is a God of love, for His word tells us so (verse). But if we're honest, what we really want to know is whether or not God loves us. That really is the question.

So how can you tell? Is there a way of knowing for certain that God loves you? There is!

In Ephesians 2, Paul begins the chapter by telling of our former condition in sin, in which we "...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 flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind." (Ephesians 2:1-3) This was the dire condition we were in.

But then in verse 4, it all changed for us. Two small words changed everything. "But God..." We were dead in sin. "But God..." We were under the domain of darkness. "But God..." We were children of wrath. "But God..."

"But God..." means that because of Him and what He was going to do, we would not remain in our prior dreadful condition. He was going to change us.

But before we learn of the fact that He was changing us, we learned of His motivation. He loved us! And not only did He love us, He loved us greatly. That is the Holy Spirit's description of God's love for us.

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us..." He loved us greatly, even when we were dead in sins, even when we were His enemy, even when we walked according to the prince of the power of the air, even when we were children of wrath..." He loved us greatly.

And what did His love produce? He raised us from the dead and seated us in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

So if God loves you, that is what He has done for you. Great, right? But how do you know for certain that He raised you from the dead? It is very simple.

You believe in Jesus Christ!

Your faith is evidence that God raised you from the dead, for there is no one who believes and who is not raised from the dead and there is no one who does not believe and who has not been raised from the dead.

We know this because the deadness that Paul speaks of is spiritual deadness. We have no spiritual life in us until God raises us from the dead spiritually. And He does that the moment we first believe.

In Ephesians chapter one, among all the other blessings listed, we find this one.

"In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire

possession of it, to the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1:13-14)

The moment you first believed is the first moment that God sealed you with (or simply gave you) the Holy Spirit. And with the giving of the Holy Spirit you are no longer spiritually dead, but spiritually alive in Christ. You are born again.

Notice in the above verses that if you have the Holy Spirit you have faith in Christ and if you have faith in Christ, you have the Holy Spirit. Putting it another way, if you have faith you have been raised from the dead spiritually and if you have been raised from the dead spiritually you have faith in Christ.

Let's put this together now. If you have faith in Christ, you have been given the Holy Spirit, and if you have been given the Holy Spirit, you have been raised from the dead spiritually. And let us now go back to our verse at hand today.

"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—" (Ephesians 2:4)

Consequently, you cannot be raised from the dead without the Holy Spirit in you. And you cannot have the Holy Spirit in you apart from having faith in Christ. And you cannot be raised from the dead (having faith in Christ and having the Holy Spirit) if God does not love you with a great love.

Therefore, if you have faith in Christ, you can rest assured, not only that you are loved, but that you are greatly loved by God Himself. And because of His great love for you, He did not leave you in unbelief, but granted you faith in Christ (Philippians 1:29), sealed you with the Holy Spirit and raised you from the dead in Christ.

Your faith in Christ is the evidence of God's love for you. May He cause you to rejoice exceedingly in this truth. Amen.