



**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Wednesday, January 13, 2021**

**Scripture: Ephesians 2: 4-7**

**TITLE: The Sweetest Words**

**SERIES: Ephesians**

What are some of the sweetest words you've ever heard? Was it "I do" at the wedding ceremony? Was it "Daddy" or "Mommy, I love you"? Was it, "You've won a new car?" That one would be pretty sweet, if you ask me.

Now, the "I do" from my wife, and the "I love you, Dad" from my kids are incredible - Life-changing. But two of the sweetest words I've ever heard are found in Ephesians 2, beginning in verse 4, where Paul writes, "But God."

Why are these words so precious? Because as we learned yesterday, in verses 1-3, we are born as enemies of God, totally dead in our sins. We were unable to revive ourselves, and save us from our sins. And then Paul writes, "But God." But God, what? Well, here's what Paul writes:

But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much,<sup>5</sup> that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) <sup>6</sup> For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup> So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:4-7, NLT)

I want you to think about how incredible Paul's words are. We were dead in our sins with no hope of revival, but God - God, who is rich in mercy, gave us life through Christ.

Now, I want you to think about this. Imagine with me, that you hated me. Imagine you hated me so much, you went out of your way each day, to post horrible lies and rumors about me on social media, in the newspaper, and on billboards. You regularly egg my house. You slash my tires. You even set my house on fire, killing my spouse. Well, the authorities catch on and arrest you, and the judge says, it's a death sentence. And rightly so.

But then, I turn to my son and say, "I love you, son. And I love this person - this enemy. Are you willing to take their place? Are you willing to pay the penalty for their sin? Are you willing to die, so they might live?"

Do you realize, this is exactly what God does for us? We were his enemies - sentenced to death - BUT GOD, being rich in mercy, sends Jesus, who willingly and lovingly takes our place.

Paul wrote this in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin so that we could be made right with God through Christ."

But God did this, so He can point to us throughout all future generations and say, "Look what I did, and what I can do for you today."

My challenge for you today is, if you're feeling stuck and discouraged because of where you are in life, or where you are in your walk with God, I want you to look in the mirror and say, "But God loves you." Even though we fail, God loves us. Even though we get stuck, God loves us.

So remind yourself of that, but also remind someone else you know. Share today's message with a friend, telling them, you needed to hear this message. Chances are, they need to hear it too.