

Good works

Introduction

- Much has been written by people smarter than me on these topics.
- I want to look today at Ephesians 2:8-10 (and the surrounding context)
- And share thoughts the Lord lay on my heart
- **Eph 2:8-10 (ESV)** *(8) 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. (10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Message

Saved by grace, not our works

- The key point is we have been saved by grace, and not anything that we did (or didn't do)
- Paul, a former pharisee was given an insight into God's grace which he powerfully shares in his letters, and this epistle

Former condition (2:1-3)

- Written to the church
- We were dead in our trespasses and sin! See **Eph 2:1-2a** *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world...*
- We were born sinners and have lived according to our sinful natures. See **Eph 2:3** *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.*
- We *were* dead in our trespasses. Past tense. We had nothing to commend ourselves. We brought nothing to offer/give/prove our worth!

- We had no hope
- No ability to *save ourselves*

God's intervention (2:4-5)

- But God had a different plan for us!
- See **Eph 2:4-5 (ESV)** (4) *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--*

But God

- He himself acted on our behalf.
- It was not us, but him
- **Rom 5:8 (ESV)** (8) *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Rich in mercy

- God is merciful! It's part of who he is!
- Who He's revealed himself to be.
- He has plenty of mercy - it never runs out/runs dry.

Great love

- It is his love that expressed itself on our behalf!

Grace saved

- First stated here
- Reiterated in a couple of verse

Present condition (2:6-7)

Eph 2:6-7 (ESV) (6) *and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (7) so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

Raised with Christ

- He raised Jesus from the dead
- First - Jesus is alive
- Second crucified with Christ
- If we have been crucified with Christ - then we will be raised with him.

- God made us alive, though we are dead
- His blood paid for our sins
- His body was raised from the dead - and we are made alive with him

Seated with Christ

- *See and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*
- Having been raised - we are seated with Jesus
- Our life is now hidden with Christ in God
- **Col 3:3-4 (ESV)** (3) *For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.* (4) *When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*
- **Note:** That's why we set our minds on Christ and heavenly things

Bring God glory in the future!

- As those who have been saved by His grace, we are on display
- All of creation will glorify our wonderful savior!

Works through the Spirit from His grace

His workmanship (Eph 2:10)

- **Eph 2:10 (ESV)** (10) *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*
- We are created and gifted by God!
- He made us on purpose
- He fills us with His Spirit giving us gifts of ministry
- **Illustrate:** I love art museums (though am often overwhelmed by them), because as you study the painting or sculpture - you can see the design and intelligence of the artist! (Although I've been to MOMA in New York and can't always say that is true lol)
- We are designed and created by God - and when choose to shine your gifts - He gets the glory!
- When we are who we are in Christ - our creator gets the glory!

Created in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 5:17)

- This is a key point. You were born in a fallen world, and it has shaped you too.
- Yet Paul himself teaches **2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)** (17) *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*
- When you were born again you were (re)created in Christ. Even the old things are repurposed for His glory.

For good works (v10 again)

- We can't be saved by works - there's nothing we can do to earn our salvation
- But having been saved - we are now free to do good works!
- Remember our future is to bring God glory
- We do that now - in this born again life, we do for God's glory!
- This has been a very consistent theme in my teaching for 15 years.
- God doesn't make mistakes - and as His child, I am not a mistake, failure, loser or reject.
- In Christ there is work that I can do!
- **God prepared beforehand** God's already got a plan for your life.
- As we allow His Spirit to transform us, and put away all the lies and negativity the enemy has tried to feed us, we will walk in His path doing His works.

Closing

- Today: A reminder of who we are in Jesus
- We cannot earn his salvation
- He already loves us and has provided salvation for us
- We bring him glory by doing what he has for us to do