

We are His Workmanship

Eph 2:10 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Last week, Paul described the means by which Grace was applied to our lives...“through faith,” Grace is the means, or basis of salvation, “through faith” is the conduit through which we are saved—it’s what allows grace to be applied to our lives. God saved us because of His rich mercy, and His great love toward us. God has saved us, done all the work, so it’s no surprise that our verse today says:

“For we are his workmanship,”

The word poiema, “workmanship,” was used to indicate the work of a craftsman, such as the making of a crown. God calls us His workmanship or His artwork, something crafted, with skill and a purpose, by God, for His purpose.

having been created in Christ Jesus

This was the case at our creation. Christ was there at the beginning. Through him, all things were made, and in him was life Jn 1:3-4 **3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of mankind.** All creation, and especially our new life is In Christ. 2 Cor 5:17 **Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.** When we were made new, that is, by the Holy Spirit and our regeneration in Christ we were created anew, new creations. This is only accomplished in Christ, in his finished work. And we who have been born again in Christ are a brand new creation—a masterwork of God.

for good works which God prepared beforehand.

God’s workmanship is not achieved by good works, but it should result in good works as God has purposed them (Titus 2:14; 3:8). These works are both morally good, and beneficial. We are created in Christ Jesus for works that are morally and beneficially good for us, for those around us, and for God.

The word for “to prepare beforehand,” is used in the NT only here and in Rom 9:23, where He’s preparing us at the same time he’s preparing the good works **23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon objects of mercy, [that would be us believers] which He prepared beforehand for glory,** He prepared both us, and the good works before we were created in Christ Jesus, as a part of his plan in eternity past. This corresponds with Eph 1:4 where it states that God “chose us in him before the foundation of the world in order that we might be holy and blameless before him in love.” So, God not only chose his own before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame, but he also prepared beforehand good works for them. But what good works did God prepare beforehand? It is the good works or conduct, given in chapters 4–6, that proceed from salvation. Does this mean leading people to Christ? Certainly. Does it also mean operating in our spiritual gifts to benefit other believers especially, and the world as well? Certainly. But, can it much larger than that.

in order that we might walk in them.

We are God’s workmanship because we were created in Christ Jesus for the goal of good works in order that we might walk in them. God has prepared beforehand good works for believers that he will perform in and through them as they walk by faith in his power. It is not doing a work for God but God doing a work in and through the believer (Phil 2:13). If no good works are evident, it may indicate that that one is not a believer, because what God has purposed in the believer is not being accomplished. Works are an evidence of salvation—God’s working in the believer his prepared works. That means that whatever God has us doing, whether it’s working at a job or volunteering, or working around the house, Col 3:23 **23 Whatever you do, do your work [a]heartily, as for the Lord and not for people,** we Cor 10:31 **31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.** So our work is a blessing, not a mere means to a greater end. It’s not some burden that we are required to bear on our way to heaven, it’s prepared by God for us, and will do others good, and benefit us. What we do during

the day to earn an income or manage our homes, or volunteer may not seem as important as what is done at the Church, in the Sunday school room or on the mission trip, but God uses it all!

After the reformation Luther recaptured the word “vocation” and used it to refer to every calling a Christian might legitimately fulfill: cobbler, farmer, baker, blacksmith, wife, mother, civil servant, and so on. To Luther, the cobbler’s work was just as valuable as the priest’s precisely because justification was received by faith alone. A sinner did not come into union with Christ or earn his right standing with God on the basis of mystical contemplation or religious activity. Saving righteousness was received immediately at salvation—by faith.

good works

Since we are justified by faith, there are no unique spheres of religious activity that provided exclusive access to the kind of works that were pleasing to God. Rather, when a sinner is declared righteous apart from works, he is free to perform good works in every area of his life: in the home, at the workplace, on the farm, or in the public square. Delivered from the need to secure his salvation by rigorous attention to the sacraments, the believer is now truly free to serve his neighbor. In Freedom of the Christian life. Any work that God has us doing, conducted in faith is an opportunity to reflect his Creator and love his neighbor. A mother provides food, clothing, and a well kept home for her closest neighbors—her children and husband. A craftsman makes good products for his customers and a reasonable living to anyone he might employ. The farmer supplies food for the greater community. The blacksmith forges tools that will enable his neighbor to work efficiently and effectively. The pastor provides spiritual sustenance for the men and women in his congregation. In every case, the Christian is exercising dominion in their specific calling and serving their neighbor. Such work, when conducted “in faith, in joy of heart, in obedience and gratitude to God” is pleasing to the Lord. As Gustav Wingren famously quipped in a summary of Luther’s teaching at this point: “God does not need our works, but our neighbor does.”

As Christians, we live out our life IN FAITH. Faith doesn’t end when we are saved. Salvation is the beginning of the life of faith in God, not only for salvation, but for the continued power to walk as Jesus walked, to live out this life of faith. Rom 1:17 **For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written: “But the righteous one will live by faith”**. We certainly weren’t righteous before we came to Christ, so it is Christians, who are made righteous by putting on gift of the righteousness of Christ who are to live by faith! Doing all that we do to the glory of God!