

Series: Ephesians
Title: Good Works
Text: Ephesians 2: 10
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Ephesians 2: 10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should [shall] walk in them.

Our text begins with the word “**For**” because verse 10 is putting finality to, as well as adding one more needed truth to, all that was written before.

From the beginning of the epistle, God declares that every aspect of a believer’s salvation, beginning to end, as well as every step throughout our lives, including the believer’s good works, is all by the grace of God, so that the believer has absolutely no room to boast of anything—not even our good works.

Ephesians 2: 1 gives a general statement of what the natural born state of God’s elect was (the italics are added by the translators so we can take them out)—**Ephesians 2:1: And you, who were dead in trespasses and sins;**

The next two verses elaborates—reminding believers of our former walk and conduct—**Ephesians 2: 2: Wherein [in death, in trespasses and in sins] in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.**

Verse 4 begins describing how God interrupts his elect, saving us by his grace. He even interjects with that very statement—**Ephesians 2: 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)** **6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:**

Verse 7 declares why God quickened us, raised us up and made us to sit together in heaven in Christ—**Ephesians 2: 7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.**

Verses 8-9 summarizes all that was said up to this point, declaring why it is the exceeding riches of his grace that God will spend ages showing us—**Ephesians 2: 8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

So we see the context is declaring the truth that believers “**are what we are by the grace of God.**” (1 Co 15:10)

Verse 10 is a most instructive verse because it does two things:

- 1) it gives an answer to what God knows sinners will say when they hear that salvation is NOT of works
- 2) it gives an answer to what God knows sinners will say when they hear that his people are created UNTO good works.

Ephesians 2: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Lest any vainly conclude that since we are not saved by works, then the believer does no good works, verse 10 says, Ephesians 2: 10: “**For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works...**”

Lest hearing that, any attempt to boast of their good works, it says of our good works, Ephesians 2: 10:...“**which God hath before ordained that we [shall] walk in them.**”

Proposition: Sinners are not saved by our works but every sinner saved by God's grace shall walk in good works because God has before ordained those works which we shall walk in.

I. BELIEVERS ARE NOT SAVED BY OUR WORKS, WE ARE GOD'S WORKMANSHIP CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS UNTO GOOD WORKS

God's Workmanship Created in Christ Jesus

If our salvation in any way was by our works—we would be our workmanship.—“**Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are HIS workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works...**

The Greek word translated “workmanship” is “poi-a-ma”. It is where we get the word, “poem.” (Turn to 2 Cor 3: 3)

2 Corinthians 3:3...ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

Believers are God's poem—the epistle of Christ. We are God's workmanship. The “we” is not our fleshly man born of Adam—that man is still nothing but sin and shall soon return to the dust—Paul said, “in me, that is IN MY FLESH, dwelleth NO GOOD THING;” (Ro 7: 18)

God makes a new creation—a newborn child—within the old man of flesh.

2 Corinthian 5: 17: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Our new man is not a reformation of our old man—nothing of our old man of flesh is involved or used of God. When Christ is formed within a sinner that sinner becomes a new man in Christ Jesus. It is not merely a change from a lower nature to a higher, but we go from being separated from Christ to being united with Christ.

The only other place “poy-ay-mah” is used in the New Testament is

Romans 1: 20: For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are **made**, [poy-ay-mah], even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Psalm 19: 1: The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

But the things made in heaven and earth do not show God's greatest “workmanship”. His eternal power and Godhead is manifest in the new birth when he creates a new child of grace in Christ Jesus.

Psalm 100:3: Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

This word “created” in Christ Jesus means “to make habitable.” Ephesians 2: 22: ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Can we boast that this was by our works? Of course not—we were dead. In time past, we walked according to the course of this world, under the power of Satan, according to the lusts of our flesh—we were under the dominion of Satan and sin.

What happened? Christ sent us the gospel—Paul said, “Ye are the epistle of Christ ministered by us” Paul was just an earthen vessel. Believers were not Paul's workmanship. God's preacher does nothing but preach the gospel as Christ gives him to preach.

1 Corinthians 3: 5: Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6: I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7: So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase... 9: For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

But through the gospel, Christ came and bound Satan who ruled our house and Christ spoiled his goods—Christ delivered us from Satan's power. We can't boast of that work! We're God's workmanship!

The Spirit of the living God entered in and used nothing of us—but gave us a new heart and Christ wrote the gospel on our hearts. He made us to behold that “we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus.”

- God the Father blessed us according as he chose us **IN CHRIST**
- God predestinated us unto the adoption of children is **BY JESUS CHRIST**
- **IN CHRIST** we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of Gods' grace.
- God gave us faith to lay hold of Christ—“**IN WHOM** ye trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salavation.”
- In the end God shall gather us together **IN ONE—EVEN IN CHRIST JESUS**

We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus.

Unto Good Works

None of the workmanship was by our works—but his grace in creating us in Christ Jesus is unto good works—for the first time, we began to “do truth.” What is that?

John 3:21: But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

The result of God's workmanship is that his child walks continually works God wrought:

Walk by Faith and Repentance

Zechariah 12:10) “And I will pour upon...[them]...the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for [his] only [son], and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for [his] firstborn.”

Before we walked according to the course of this world. Now we walk by faith continually and we never stop repenting.

Note: God tells us what constitutes a good work. For example: for any work to be a good work it must be done in faith with Christ as its object—“walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had yet being uncircumcised.”

That eliminates most of what men call “good works.” It may be a good work in itself—but not before God—“for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” (Rom 14: 13)

Walk in Love and work by love

1 John 4:7: Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God....19: We love him, because he first loved us.

A man could be a generous giver—but except it be done in faith constrained by the love of Christ—it is not a “good work” with God.

1 Corinthians 13:3: And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Galatians 5: 6: For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. 7: Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

We walk in submission and worshipping God

Jeremiah 32:39: And I will give them ONE HEART, and ONE WAY, **that** they may fear ME for ever.

After they cast the blind man out of the synagogue—Christ came to him, and found him and revealed himself to him,

John 9: 38: And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

Philippians 3:3: For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Remember Saul? He brought back the best sheep to sacrifice to God. Was that a good work? No, he did not submit to God...

1 Samuel 15; 22: And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23: For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

A man can sacrifice much and it not be a “good work” because it is not submission to God or true worship of God.

Psalm 51:17: the sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

By God’s workmanship creating us anew in Christ Jesus we persevere—

Jeremiah 32: 40: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

A man may be doing what appears to others as “many wonderful works” yet be drawn away from Christ and joined with will-worshippers because of a fear of persecution.

Hebrews 6: 10: For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11: And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

God makes us to walk in good works—our walk is altogether new:

- Walk in newness of Spirit (Rom 7: 6)
- Walk in newness of life. (Rom 6: 4)
- Henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind (Eph 4: 7)

- Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. (Eph 5: 2)
- Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. (Col 4: 5)
- If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 Jn 1: 7)
- I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (3 Jo 1: 4)

II. EVERY BELIEVER SHALL WALK IN GOOD WORKS BECAUSE GOD HAS BEFORE ORDAINED THE WORKS WHICH WE SHALL WALK IN—Ephesians 2: 10:...which GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED that we shall walk in them.

This part of verse 10 further takes away all room for boasting by declaring that even the good works which the believer shall do is not of himself but good works are “ordained before” of God, which God brings every believer to walk in—therefore we shall walk in them—“not ought to, we shall!”

We see an example of this in the making of the tabernacle in the wilderness. God gave Moses the pattern for all the work that God before ordained to be done. All of the works involved in making the tabernacle and everything in it were works God ordained before to be done.

God ordained that the children of Israel would offer all the materials needed from a willing heart. So first, God provided them with all the materials needed, by giving the Egyptians a heart to give those items to his people just before they left Israel.

Exodus 3: 21: And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: 22: But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

Not only did God provide the materials necessary, God also gave a willing heart to the people to offer those materials, because God before ordained they would.

Exodus 35: 21 And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD’S offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. 22: And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the LORD....29: The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.

See, God before ordained this work that they were to bring these items. So first, God before prepared the workers, providing them with all the items they were to bring and gave them the heart to offer them—so they walked in the work God before ordained.

Furthermore, God ordained someone would do the work of making those items into curtains and furnishings. The making of those items was a work God before ordained. So God provided the workers, gave them wisdom, and they made all things necessary to do the work.

Exodus 35: 25: And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen....30: And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31: And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; 32: And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in

brass, 33: And in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. 34: And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35: Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work...36: 1: Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded. 2: And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it: 3: And they received of Moses all the offering, which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it withal...39: 32: Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.

2 Co 9:8: And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

So you see these are not works specifically laid out in the scriptures, where God says now it's up to you to do them. Nor are these works which men speak of, which seem good in the vainly religious world's judgment.

These are not works you set out to do to be seen of men so everyone around you will think you love God—that is self-righteousness and men who do things to be seen of men—have their reward. Self-righteous folks will say in the day of judgment, “When did we not do these works!” Believers’ will say, “Lord, when did we do these things.”

These works are the everyday life of a believer! These are works God has prepared for you for each day which when you come to them you shall do them not even giving a second thought to them being good works—they are works of faith, labors of love, done with submissive hearts to God, as unto the Lord, as you persevere in faith. You don't have to worry and second guess yourselves. When the ordained time comes, God will have equipped us for everything necessary to do the work, God will stir your heart to do it—and you will do “what you can do.” Remember, that alabaster box of ointment?—Christ said, “she hath done what she could.”

These are works of a new creature which God created, performed by us by God's grace, all of which was in God's mind and all ordained before we were ever born. There is not a possibility that you will not do them. So we have no room to boast even in our good works.

Ephesians 2: 10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Amen!