

Ephesians. The Identity of the Church that Overcomes

Part 22: Created in Christ for Good Works

Houses of Light Church • March 16, 2025 • Pastor Netz Gomez & Ilse Marquez

Focus: Ephesians 2:8-10

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. **Ephesians 2:8-13***

Review Questions:

- Who initiated salvation for us?
- What determines whether or not someone is saved? — does our own goodness contribute to this?

Verse Breakdown:

I. "...by grace you have been saved through faith." (v. 2:8a)

- A. What the Holy Spirit is saying here through the apostle Paul is that salvation comes by the grace of God through faith in Him.
 - 1. Both GRACE and FAITH are gifts from God
 - 2. There is NOTHING we could do to deserve or earn salvation — IN fact, without grace and faith, we are dead and all our good deeds are "dead works."
- B. This is continuing what Paul was talking about at the beginning of the chapter — all of this happens because God took the initiative as a manifestation of His great love: "*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*" **Ephesians 2:4-5**

II. "...And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast..." (v. 8b-9)

- A. When we realize this is how our salvation happens, we can't boast. It is a direct confrontation of our religious spirit. We long to have control and power, to build a case for ourselves that proves or guarantees that we are loved and saved, but here we are learning, we can't. God did this because it pleased Him to do it out of His great love towards us. That's it. — There is nothing you can do to earn more of God's love.
- B. The response when we understand and embrace this reality is gratitude and praise! We worship Him because He is God — He does what we are powerless to do for ourselves.
- C. So when we do good, it is not to prove anything because let's be clear: Our good works do not earn us "brownie points" with God: **Galatians 2:16-21** - "*yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.*"

III. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (v. 10)

- A. So, since we know that our good works don’t build a case for our salvation, does that mean we do nothing? — For more on this, take some time to study Romans 6-7.
1. When we were saved, we were rescued from the power of sin and death — so now we are “dead to sin” and “alive in Christ” — **Romans 6:5-8** - *“For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.”*
 - a) Now, we are DEAD to sin, it no longer has permission to reign in our bodies, but we are set free by GRACE to make new choices and live connected to Jesus. — **Romans 6:15-19** — *“What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.”*
 2. Where before, we were bossed around by sin and lawlessness, now we yield to the Lord’s leadership and are FREE to walk in OBEDIENCE to Him. Where we used to present our minds and bodies to sin freely, now we get to present our minds and bodies to walk in HOLINESS freely!
- B. We might struggle with walking in holiness, believing the lie that somehow the sin and brokenness we’ve known our whole lives are the only option for our destiny — or that somehow we are fighting against our very nature. The reality is, that GOD dreamed a dream and called it you. — He created you, with talents, abilities, and a personality that was meant to display Him! You were made in His image! — **Psalms 139:16** — *“Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”* — He created you on purpose with a purpose. The enemy may have lead you to believe you were made to be an addict or you would never get anything right, but the truth is **you were created in Christ for good works.**
1. The good works you are invited into — the work of sanctification, discipleship, and outreach — all of those works were actually in God’s heart for you when He made you! — You died to them when you lived in sin, but now that you are in Christ, all things are made new (and your destiny in Him is restored)!
 2. Where the power of sin used to reign over your life, now you get to surrender to the power of God, to “will and to work” for His good pleasure! — **Philippians 2:12-13** — *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”* — this is how we “work out” our salvation.

- a) Our good works are not to EARN salvation, but they are EVIDENCE that we are saved.
- b) **James 2:14-18** — *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and **I will show you my faith by my works.***
- C. We are new in Him, just as our dead nature used to show in the evidence of our lifestyle, so too our salvation should be reflected in the way we live our lives. This is God's **masterpiece/poema**: You, redeemed, re-created, living out the good things He dreamed you would do!

Reflection Questions:

1. Do you believe you are a new creation in Christ? Why or why not?
2. With your group or in your prayer time, invite the Lord to remind you of His love and redemption over your life. Remember: Our salvation is rooted in Him! How does this understanding affect your daily life? How can this help you when you face temptation?
3. How is your salvation reflected in your lifestyle? What good things has the Lord invited you to do?