

**Bible Verse:** Ephesians 2:10  
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For several weeks we've been looking at the nature of true salvation, looking at Ephesians 1 and Ephesians 2, and today we come to the final message in that series of messages from Ephesians. We are nearing the end of the entire mega-series of "Building a Christian Mind." What I'd like to do today is to reset the context of Ephesians 2 as we look at verse 10 eventually, and so I'm going to read from Ephesians 2:1 through 10. Ephesians 2:1 through 10 if you would like to turn there with me. We read this from the very word of God.

1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- 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. 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-- 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. 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.

Now as you read that passage, especially in light of all that we've said over the past several weeks, we're reminded again one final time in this series that Christianity is a supernatural religion that aims for nothing less than the spiritual transformation of the souls of sinners, to manifest the outworking of God's purpose in election, to redeem them in Christ, to adopt them into the family of God, to seal them with the Holy Spirit. This is a message, this is a promise, this is a work of God that is offered freely to all men everywhere at all time; whether you're Jew or Gentile, whether you're young or old, the free promise of grace is offered to you to enter into the family of God through faith alone

in Christ alone. And we need that message, every one of us. We must have that message because we are so spiritually destitute and bankrupt. Verse 1 says we're dead in trespasses and sins. Verse 2 reminds us that unsaved people are under the domination of their father, the devil, and the one who is our accuser and Satan, and that he enslaves us and blinds men to the gospel, and that men in their sin and rebellion against God walk under a black cloud of his wrath. And so mankind in general, mankind in particular individually, is in this desperate spiritual condition of being lost.

Now, before we go any further, beloved, that helps us understand what the nature of supernatural Christianity is and what the nature of the message of the gospel is. The message of the gospel comes to men in that condition and promises them deliverance, promises them salvation. It tells them of an accomplished work of Jesus Christ for sinners and invites them to lay hold of Christ, to receive him, to yield to him in order that they might be completely delivered through the work that he's already accomplished on the cross. He said, "It is finished." Now, beloved, in our day and age, as we enter into another presidential election, it will be the fourth one since the start of our church, and in the nature of competing presentations of Christianity that are given, sub-Christian, in some cases false teaching altogether, it's important for you to realize the nature of true Christianity, which we've just seen laid out for us here in Ephesians 2. We do not gather as Christians primarily to find out how to be better men. That's not the goal of Christianity. It's a subsidiary, secondary, tertiary reaction, an overflow of things, but we don't gather simply to find out how to be better men or be better women and walk in the midst of this world; you can aim for that and completely miss the point of the gospel, and people do it every single day. In like manner, we don't gather for political purposes. The church is not a political organization. It's not a subset of the Republican Party in conservative circles or a subset of the Democratic Party in liberal circles. True biblical ethics have implications for the way that you vote, but it's not primarily about the politics of this world. How could it be when Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world"? How could it primarily be about this world and the kingdoms of this world when Scripture tells us plainly that in the end this world will be destroyed by fire; God will judge this world and then enter into and bring about a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells. And so you've been persuaded by some, you've been tempted by some to look at Christianity in the wrong way. Of course, when you add to that the fact that, you know, you have people that stand in front of crowds like this and say that Jesus came to make you healthy and wealthy and, you know, all you just name it and claim it, God will give it to you if you just by faith name what it is that you want, or the foolishness of charismatic excesses and those things that we've talked about so many times. I'm just pleading with you, beloved, to soften your heart toward what the true nature of Christianity is. We see it laid out here before us. You could teach all of those things that I've just recited over the past five or ten minutes, you could teach all of those things long after all of those things and never get to the true point of the gospel, which is another way of saying you would completely miss the point.

Now wouldn't that be sad? Wouldn't that be tragic to, in the name of Christ, pursue certain things that seem to be in keeping with something in the Bible, and yet to miss the whole point? To miss the kingdom of God? To miss the glory of Christ? To miss the

forgiveness of sin? To miss the promise and reception of eternal life? Well, when you read through Ephesians 2, you see in crystal clear focus what the point is. Now in subsequent chapters, in 4, 5, and 6, you get instruction on practical matters of prayer and love and marriage and the spiritual battle but Paul doesn't start there because that's not the starting point. None of those things matter if you're not safely in Christ and so that's why we spent a dozen messages or more trying to deal with the nature of true salvation. And I'll admit, there are times where I get a little bit self-conscious. It's usually a passing feeling. A little self-conscious at how long I take to explain certain matters, but the truth of the matter is, beloved, that we're all, and I include myself in this, we're all very slow to learn. We're very slow to grasp things. We are conditioned to just live by the things that we've always known. We're conditioned to live by the presuppositions that we're comfortable with and even as Christians, we're slow to let go of lesser teaching that we've received in order to enter into the fullness of what truth is, and so it is necessary for all of our sakes that we go through these things carefully, we go through them again and again. Over and over again as you read the New Testament epistles, the apostles say things like, "I want to stir you up by way of reminder. We need to pay," in the book of Hebrews, "we need to pay much closer attention to the things that we've heard." In fact, with that text coming to my mind, I want to take you there specifically to Hebrews 2, so that you have a sense of why we have done what we've done over the past 12 months and what I hope to wrap up by the end of the year.

We're in such danger, beloved. There's spiritual risk all around us and in Hebrews 2:1, having introduced the deity of Christ and having set forth his excellency over even angels, the writer of Hebrews says in chapter 2, verse 1, he says, "Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it." Now, if he had just said we need to pay attention to what we have heard, I probably wouldn't be so insistent upon the point. I might have been persuaded to find a middle ground if he had simply said we need to pay closer attention to what we've heard. But he doesn't say that either. He says we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest we drift away from it, lest in drifting away we show that we were never actually saved to begin with. Or, lest we drift away from it, though we might be in Christ ourselves, we would minimize the urgency of the gospel to those that follow us. Those that follow from our loins, our children and our grandchildren, those that come after us in the youth of the church and and come up and, you know, the next generation of believers there's another generation whether it's physical lineage or simply spiritual lineage, beloved, don't you see, don't you see how critical it is for us to get these things right? And isn't it true in your own life and in your own heart that you're prone to wander? Isn't it true in your own life that you're prone to temptation, prone to turn away, prone to discouragement, prone to defiance even? I'm speaking to Christians here. Paul said in Romans 7, "I don't do the things I want to do. I do the things I don't want to do."

So we're all in the same boat and the spiritual food that strengthens us against these things is what God's word says to us in the Scripture and the spiritual food is nothing less than an accurate understanding of biblical doctrine that girds our mind and transforms our affections so that we are led by the Spirit of God who gives us the word of God in order to follow after the Son of God. And so we could never be too careful about this and while

I say, you know, there are times where I, you know, have little twinges of uncertainty, "Did you really need to take that long to say that or whatever?" In the end, you know, I'm going to stand alone before God and give an account for how I've taught, what I've said to you and, you know, whatever that moment is like, whatever it's like to stand before God, it frightens me, it's fearful to contemplate it, but I want to at least be able to say, "Lord, we tried to pay much closer attention to the things that we had heard." And so that's why we come to these things yet again here today. It's all for your upbuilding, beloved. It's all for the sake that when you stand yourself before Christ and give an account of your life, that you would be found a workman approved who does not need to be ashamed, that you would not be one who's sent away by Jesus saying, "I never knew you." See, there's an eternal, there's an ultimate goal that we have in mind as we gather day by day and all of those other things that I mentioned, health and wealth and how can I be a better man and all of those things, you see them in that light and you see how massively trivial it is if you've missed the main point, and so we don't want to miss the main point here and that's why we do what we do and why we have done what we've done.

Coming back to Ephesians 2 as we enter into our text here this morning, the title of today's message is "Salvation Works." Salvation works, and our primary text is verse 10, but I want to reread verses 8 and 9 to remind you of the context that we looked at last time. In Ephesians 2:8, and 9, we read this, "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." He repeats himself, he states it in different ways, but he repeats himself and even in the repetition of these two familiar verses, beloved, you see a reiteration of the purpose and the principles that I've just been articulating. Paul doesn't say it just once, he says it in multiple ways, back and forth, positive and negative, says it multiple times because we are in such grave danger of missing the point. So look at what he says. Having said, you're saved by grace in verse 5, that God made us alive together with Christ, he's emphasizing it's a work of God all along. God raised us up. God seated us. God will show to us the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. God is the subject of these sentences. We see the verbs and we're the direct objects. We receive the act of God and we were dead in trespasses and sins, and so everything about salvation has to come from God as the originating source, or a man cannot be saved. And so Paul here is coming to a crescendo, he's coming to a great climax when he's summarizing what he had said in the prior verses. Because you were dead in trespasses and sins, because God made you alive together in Christ, that's why he can say in verse 8, he's circling back and summarizing, he says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing." It's a positive statement, "it's by grace you've been saved." God did the saving, not you. Negative statement, "this is not your own doing." Positive statement number two, "it's the gift of God." Negative statement, "not as a result of works." The purpose of all of this is "so that none of us would boast." True salvation, one of the first works of true salvation is it utterly humbles us. It utterly rids us of self-righteousness.

I've been in ministry for a while and there are certain things that you observe when you stand in front of a group of people, different groups of people over time, you see the way they're responding and sometimes you worry about attitudes that are expressed by body

language that just say, "You know, yeah, yeah, yeah, I've heard all of this, I'm okay." And you worry about that. You worry that while affirming superficially a true view of salvation, that there's this impatient self-righteousness that animates that says, "You know, let's move on to something else. I don't need this anymore." Well, you know, there's just a limit to what you can do on that.

Twice, by grace you've been saved, gift of God, twice, not of your own doing, not as a result of works that no one should boast. You know what else it reminds me of? Galatians 2:16, turn there with me. Turn back just to the prior book in the Scriptures, Galatians 2:16. You see the same pattern of positive and negative, only in Galatians he does it three times each, not just twice. Galatians 2:16 he says, "yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ," negative then a positive, "so we also have believed in Christ Jesus," a positive, "in order to be justified by faith in Christ." There's the three positives: through faith in Christ, believed in Christ, justified by faith in Christ, And then he finishes it on two negatives, "not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified." So he starts out negative, not justified by works. He ends on two negatives, this is all in the same verse, beloved. not by works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified, but through faith in Christ Jesus. We've believed in Christ Jesus, justified by faith in Christ, over and over and over again.

And so we see from all of this that the clear teaching of Scripture is that salvation is a work of God, not a work of man. We cannot make ourselves presentable to God. It's like a little kid that's fallen into a mud puddle, it's much more than that, but picture a little kid that's fallen into the mud, played in the mud, he's just covered in a mess, and it's time to come to dinner. That kid cannot possibly clean himself up. He doesn't have the capacity, the maturity to be able to do it. He must have a cleansing bestowed upon him by his parent in order to be presentable to sit at the parents' table for dinner. Well, multiply that exponentially by infinity, and that's what we need. We need to be washed from our deadness, from our sin, from our guilt, from our condemnation, and we cannot do it on our own. It must be something that God does to us, applying the work of Christ to us through an operation of the Holy Spirit to our souls. Man cannot save himself. God must do the saving.

Now, with all of that settled and repeated in so many different ways in the pages of Scripture, now and only now, then and only then, does the writer of Scripture come to talk about what the outward effect of true salvation is as we look at verse 10. Look at verse 10 with me. This will be our primary preoccupation for today. And even then he doesn't abandon what he's been saying. He says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Now I'm going to build this message around two primary points: the source of salvation and the purpose of salvation. The source of salvation and the purpose of salvation but notice the four clauses that we're dealing with here within those broader categories. Verse 10. Clause number one, we are his workmanship. Paul is once again re-emphasizing the fact that salvation is a work of God. If you are in Christ, it's because God has done a work in you and on you that you did not do yourself. Second clause, we're

created in Christ Jesus. Again, a creative operation of the Spirit of God upon you with the purpose that there might be good works that come out of your life. But even those good works, third clause, are things which God prepared beforehand. God saved you, God made you alive in Christ, and he did so in order to bring you into the realm of good works that he prepared before the foundation of the world that you would walk in them. God sovereignly saved you, God sovereignly regenerated you, and along with that, he had a sovereign plan that he was moving toward all along in order to have you enter into the life that he wanted you to live. Created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, fourth clause, that we should walk in them. The source of salvation, the purpose of salvation.

Well, let's look at this verse in the time we have remaining, the source of salvation, and let's just ask the question plainly for today's exposition, who is the source of salvation? Where does biblical salvation come from? Whose idea was it? Whose act was it? Well, Paul answers that when he says we are his workmanship there in verse 10. We are his workmanship. In the original language, the emphasis comes out even more than what we see and what we've already described in the exposition here. When you read verse 10 in the original language, the first word in that verse is the word "his." It's hard to replicate in English. I guess you could say, if you were going to say it, his workmanship we are, is how you would say it in English. In the Greek it's very evident and obvious. And so there's emphasis yet once again by the way that Paul has structured the grammar to emphasize that salvation is God's achievement and nothing of our own. It's his. We are his workmanship, not something that we've done or attained on our own, all of that flowing from the fact that he created us in Christ Jesus. By grace you've been saved. It's the gift of God. Not as a result of works. His workmanship we are, in other words. God is the source of salvation.

Now this word workmanship, it's used elsewhere to talk about God's work of creation in the physical universe. In the physical universe, if you look, go back a couple of books, three or four books, to the book of Romans 1, Romans chapter 1. What we're doing here is we're just seeing how this same word, workmanship, is used in other places in Scripture so that we can rightly understand it here in Ephesians 2:10. So in Romans 1:20, we read that God has made his existence known, he's imprinted it on creation so that men are without excuse in denying his existence. In verse 20 we read this, "For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world," here it is, "in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse." The workmanship of God, his creation of the world, is his workmanship. His workmanship is displayed in the things that have been made. And there's no disputing. I mean, it's just very obvious to a biblical student, a biblical Christian, that God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1, I mean, Scripture starts on that point, right? God created the heavens and the earth. None of us, I trust, none of us would be so foolish as to say, "No, no, I think man did that." None of us would be that foolish. Man doesn't have the power to create ex nihilo out of nothing. Man wasn't there to do it. God created the heavens and the earth by an operation of his power. It's creation, physical creation is his workmanship.

Well, what you see as you follow the argument throughout Ephesians 2 and you come to this word here, this term here in Ephesians 2, we see it all over again, that believers in Christ are the workmanship of God. It's something that God did, that God created. God made us alive. God made us a new creature in Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:17. And so we're brought face to face. Now it's like we're up on the top of a great mountain looking out over, let's say, the splendor of the Rocky Mountains, whether in Canada or in Colorado. We're at the top of the mountain on a clear, crisp, glorious, sunny day, and we're looking out and we're seeing the vast vista that is before us and it's hard to take it all in. And you look and look and you just see, man, there's beauty there and there and beauty everywhere, and I turn around and it's all around me, the splendor of the view. Well here, after all of these weeks of teaching on salvation, we're in a position to take it in in that kind of comprehensive way, taking it all in at once without looking at particular details. Beloved, if you are a Christian here this morning, and I know that many of you are, Scripture is teaching you that you're a workmanship of God, a spiritual workmanship. God has exercised his expert spiritual craftsmanship on your soul to bring you into Christ. Having chosen you, having adopted you, having redeemed you in Christ, having sealed you with the Holy Spirit, there is this great accomplished work of God that is his workmanship so that he gets all of the glory. We don't even want to boast about it and we're left with a simple, staggering reality that we stand in Christ today because of what the Creator of the universe and the only begotten Son of God and the Spirit of God did for us to secure that result. And you say, if you understand it at all, you say, "Why would he do that for me? Why would he do that?" Well, he did it because by nature he's a gracious, loving, patient, good God and not because he needed you, not because there was anything about you to attract him to you, but it simply pleased God to show that grace to you by name and now here you are standing secure in Christ as a result of something that God has done.

Now, beloved, the implications of that as we stand on this great spiritual mountaintop and look at these wonderful things, it's hard to contemplate moving on from them, one of the consequences, just stating this in different ways, is this: you were not an equal partner with God in securing your salvation. It's not that Christ did his part and then you did your part, and by the synergy of those two things, the outcome was that you were saved. No, we're not equal partners with the eternal Son of God. The holy, uncreated Christ, who alone suffered on the cross of Calvary, who alone bore our sins, who alone lived a perfect life, who alone said it's finished, we don't share in that at all. That's something that he did. We're not an equal partner and so we have to see ourselves as his workmanship, meaning we were on the receiving end. We were, again, using a very inadequate analogy and illustration, we were a formless blob of lifeless clay and the Master Potter, came and took that clay and did something with it. By his creative power, by his own genius, he did that and produced and what was once dead clay now is a living heart responding to him. And so you and I, we did not bring ourselves to spiritual life. It was God's work. And so Ephesians 2:10 is reinforcing yet again in a passage that just shouts and screams this emphasis to us, that salvation is a gift of God freely given to undeserving sinners to which they could not contribute anything to make it happen.

Let's state it another way, shall we? By a work of his Holy Spirit, God enlightened your mind, God opened your blind eyes, God opened your deaf ears, God loosened your mute tongue, God did a work on you so that you could understand the things of Christ, that you could understand the reality of your sin, that you could look to Christ through a mind informed by the word of God and say, "He and he alone is the only one who can deliver me from my guilt and shame and the condemnation that I deserve." You didn't figure that out through any intelligence of your own. God opened your mind. Just like in Lydia in Acts 16:14, he opened her heart to believe the things that Paul was saying to her. But God did more than that. God did more than that. It wasn't just an impartation of mental acuity that he blessed you with. God did something even more miraculous than that in that God renewed your will. The Spirit of God operated on your stubborn, resistant, dead will to God and breathe the life into your will in the act of regeneration so that your will changed. Whereas before you were defiant against him, refused to listen to the preaching of the word of God, refused to read Scripture, refused to pray, refused to acknowledge him, refused to gather with the people of God, because you had none of those affections in your heart, God did a work on the very inner man, on your heart, on your will, and changed that and drew you to Christ. John 6:37, verse 44, Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father draw him."

Now listen, when we speak about the new birth, the new nature that God imparts so that we may repent and believe, understand this and don't ever fall for the misrepresentation of this teaching at the hands of its opponents: God did not draw you kicking and screaming against your will, God did not force you to do something that you did not want to do in order to make you a Christian. He did a work inside you to change your will so that you willingly came to Christ. You willingly turned to him. You wanted to turn to him but you wanted to because God had done a prior work in you. The reason that you got up and walked out of your spiritual prison cell is because God first broke the chains. God, in the language of Wesley's hymn, "Thine eye diffused a quickening way. I woke, the dungeon flamed with light. I went forth and followed Thee." You came freely because God first broke the chains and enabled you to come. Left to your own desires, you never would have. And I know that in a room of this size, I know that as people watch this video later, there are those who still would resist that in your heart. You don't have an answer for it biblically because there is no answer for it biblically, but the pride of man, the pride of women is such that we resist that because we've got to have some credit of our own. That's why it's so important for us, go back to Ephesians 2:10, so important for us to read the simple, clear, unqualified language of the Apostle Paul, appointed by Christ, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to say exactly this, his workmanship we are. It's his workmanship, not ours, verse 8, look up at verse 8, it is not your own doing.

So left to our own desires, none of us would have ever been saved and let's draw out an implication of what this means if you're not a Christian today. May God give you help to understand and open your eyes as he once opened mine. You see, the non-Christian, the pagan, they're hopelessly lost. They're hopelessly lost, and I grieve for them. They're hopelessly lost because there is nothing that they can do to change their position. There's nothing that they can do. It's not in their power to save themselves in any way, shape, or



form. Not at all. You know, you might as well go into a funeral home and tell the one lying in the casket, "Get up and fix your meal." He can't even say, "That's a stupid idea. Why would you say that to me?" There's nothing for him to say. There's no breath in him to say it. That's the position that you're in as a non-Christian. Now the gospel's presented to you, Christ calls you to come, but you're in that dead state, you simply have to simply cry out to God for mercy and say, "Have mercy on me, the sinner. I'm in a desperately bad situation here. Have mercy on me. Help me. I realize I can't do anything for myself. Help me." And you'll know God is helping you when you find yourself willingly wanting to pick up a Bible, reading the book of Romans or the gospel of John, and saying, "It's desperately urgent that I read and that I understand this and that I find Christ in the pages of Scripture because the Bible tells us it is, you know, that faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God." It does absolutely no good to say, "Well, you know, I'm worried about my soul," but if you don't have any interest in the word of God, you're not too worried about it. If you're not interested in the only one source by which these things are revealed and through which faith is created in your heart, let's not pretend that you're interested in spiritual things, shall we? No, the urgency is shown when you say, "I must have the word of God. I've tried reading it in the past. It was gobbledygook to me. I didn't understand, but I'm going to try again. Somehow God makes himself known right here. We know the existence of God because he has revealed himself in creation, in the canon of Scripture, and in Christ." And so, go to where he has spoken if you would be saved and ask him for mercy in your desperate condition.

His workmanship we are. It's a work of God. It's not something that you can turn on and off. One of the great delusions in the minds of the unsaved is, "I'll live my life of sin and then I'll repent on my deathbed. I'll enjoy sin and then when the time comes to go, that's when I'll turn to Christ." Everything about that mindset presupposes that you have control over your own fate. Everything about that mindset assumes that it's within your power to repent. That's the only reason you'd say that, "I can repent any time I want to." And the Scripture says you can't. You can't repent whenever you want to. It's a gift of God. And why on earth people think that they could harden their hearts in 70 or 80 years of sin, just continually growing deeper and deeper in rebellion against God, and then just suddenly, because they're under hospice care, to think that they can repent. This is a great deception. You know, you pour concrete in a driveway, it doesn't get softer and easier to mold and shape the more time goes on. The more time goes on, the more you can't fix it. It hardens. And again, that's the nature of the unsaved heart.

So today is the day of salvation. Today is the day that you must turn. Today is the day to go home, open your Bible, and say, "God, what about me?" Now, we do that because the source of salvation is God himself, his workmanship we are. Look at verse 10, and you see salvation's source again in the following phrase, "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works." Created means God caused something to come into existence. God caused a physical universe to come into existence out of nothing. He spoke and the worlds became. Well, from the physical to the spiritual, to say that we are created in Christ Jesus for good works, created means that God made something spiritual come out of nothing. Where it wasn't that he blew on an ember and then caused it to flame up like he was hovering over some charcoal grill someplace, there was no ember,

there was no flame there to blow upon. What had to be blown out was spiritual life into a dead heart, and that's what he did, created in Christ Jesus for good works. And this word, the same word, just like workmanship, the same word created, it refers to the act of physical creation. I want you to see this a couple of times so that we make the connection between what God did in physical creation with what he did in spiritual creation. God worked and functioned in harmony in the physical and spiritual realms within himself. He did not work at cross purposes.

So turn a couple of books to the right to Colossians 1 and again, all we're looking at is the word created here to see, to get a sense of understanding of the spiritual realities of which the Bible speaks. So in Colossians 1:16, speaking of Christ, the word of God says, "For by him all things were created." There's our word again. They "were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him." The physical creation, the reality of lesser spiritual beings, Christ created them all. He brought something out of nothing and brought them into existence. In like manner, in your new birth God gave birth to something new that had not previously been there.

Look at Revelation 4. Revelation 4:11 and here we go from a metaphorical mountaintop and we enter into the revealed throne room of heaven. We've just gone from glory to glory to glory here this morning in the word of God. It's really a magnificent thing to read Scripture and to understand it. Revelation 4:11, the 24 elders are giving worship to God and they say to him, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." You created all things. By your will they were created, speaking of the physical universe. Well, beloved, we could say the same thing about our new birth. "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power for here we are in Christ, created in Christ Jesus, and you created us all that are truly saved. By your will we exist and were created in Christ." And see, we learn from the parallel here that what this understanding of salvation, this creative work of God does, there is profoundly permeating every aspect of our inner man that looks to God and say, "God, when I consider my salvation, you receive all the glory. You receive all the honor. It was by your power that I've been redeemed. Nothing of myself. I give all the worship to you. Is there a crown on my head? I fling it at your feet. I will have nothing, I will have no credit, I will not boast in myself, I will not boast in anything except," Galatians 6:14, "the cross of Jesus Christ." That's the impact that this has.

And so this word created, you can go back to Ephesians 2:10, the same word being used shows that you are a Christian today by the will of God. This is what God wanted. Your regeneration in Christ, the impartation of the new birth, was a creative act by God. It was a divine resurrection. It was a divine liberation. The force came from outside, broke through the strongholds of the enemies of your soul, and liberated you and brought you out, no longer under the kingdom, the dominion of Satan. God did all of these things in order to deliver you from that dark realm and bring you into the blessed white light of his perfect, glorious kingdom. And so, as we read here in verse 10, Paul is not congratulating the people at Ephesus for figuring out salvation and making it happen. He ascribes the

glory to God. There is no room to boast. His workmanship. Created in Christ Jesus. The source of salvation being God himself.

Now, Martin Luther, the former monk, the champion of justification by faith alone in the Reformation, the first champion of it, we should say, Martin Luther said this, "A man cannot be thoroughly humbled until he comes to know that his salvation is utterly beyond his own powers, counsel, endeavors, will, and works, and is absolutely dependent upon the will, counsel, and pleasure of God." Let me read that one more time. "A man cannot be thoroughly humbled until he comes to know that his salvation is utterly beyond his own powers, counsel, endeavors, will, and works, and is absolutely dependent upon the will, counsel, and pleasure of God." So my friend, I ask you, has your view of salvation, has your understanding of biblical salvation, of justification by faith alone, and all of these other great doctrines that we've considered, has your view of salvation as you sit here today, has that humbled you or has it made you self-righteous? If there's anything in you of a self-righteous nature, you need to repent of that more than you need to repent of anything else because true salvation humbles us because we know the source of it was completely, 100%, without exception, without mixture, the source came from God, the Triune God, and nothing of ourselves.

Now, Paul pivots in the remainder of the verse to another aspect of salvation, and he deals with the purpose of salvation, the purpose of salvation there at the end of verse 10. Now, God did not save you, and this is a whole other realm of sub-Christianity originating often in Texas, the idea that you can be saved, truly, genuinely saved, and yet not actually bring forth any fruit as a result of it, that salvation is disconnected, that justification is not intricately, inseparably linked with sanctification. You can be saved and justified without it actually affecting your life. You can have Jesus as Savior but not as Lord, they would tell you. It's not true. See, God didn't save you, God didn't wind up like he's winding up a cheap alarm clock, didn't wind up your spiritual life at conversion and then walk away and say, "I'll see you in heaven. Just do what you want to do. Go in peace, be warm and be filled." No, that's not biblical salvation. Beloved, God saved you so that you would do good works. God saved you so that you would walk in the Spirit, you would walk with Christ and be conformed to his image, changing away from the old man that you once were and has now died in Christ and growing in the new birth, the new life that Christ has given to you. He saved you to do good works. Nothing could be clearer than the way it is said here in verse 10.

Look at it there, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." The point of your salvation is to live a different kind of life than what you did before, separating yourself from sin, growing in righteousness, walking in the way that God established for you, that he prepared for you, that you should walk in it. That's the purpose. It's not simply to go from walking an aisle and praying a cheap prayer at some so-called altar under the influence of music and lights or whatever, and then you walk away unchanged and call that conversion. No! No! The whole thing is that you come and God changes you to live differently and to belong to him, to be in his family, to live for his glory. I mean, stated another way, in a Romans 6 kind of way, the whole reason a man truly comes to Christ is

that he wants to be delivered from sin. He hates sin. He doesn't want it having its effect on him any longer. He wants to be delivered from that in order to live in liberty and in obedience to God. That's what true salvation is. You want to be delivered from sin, not just hell.

And so we see in the last half of verse 10, the goal of salvation was not merely that you would go to heaven, God saved you to live to the glory of God, and when he says created in Christ Jesus for good works, you could think about this as another way of saying godly behavior, a godly heart. The true Christian lives with biblical attitudes and priorities in his life. And watch this, beloved, this is enormously practical. This is enormously practical. You say, "Well, how do I know what that looks like? What are the good works that I am supposed to do?" Beloved, it's not difficult, it's not complicated, it's right in front of you. God saved you to live to his glory in the midst of the very life that he's given to you. Whether you're older and struggling with ill health, whether you're a young person entering into adulthood and everything's in front of you, whatever the course may be, whether you're married and, you know, glad that you are, whether you're single, wishing that you were married or, you know, sometimes that goes in opposite direction too, doesn't it, the life that God has given you is the life where you are to work out these good works. You know, God, look at it there with me in verse 10, "which God prepared beforehand." How do you know the life that God had prepared beforehand for you? What is the life that you have? He hasn't given you someone else's life. He's given you your life and it's within your life that you get the privilege of sifting through these things and understanding what it means. If God imparts new inner life to you, your outer life will flow from that new disposition. And in the rest of Ephesians, Paul makes this plain and so I just say this one last time so the point isn't lost, beloved, look at your life. Look at your hopes and dreams. Look at maybe the regrets you have in older age. All of that God has providentially worked out to this very day to where you're at right now. It was his plan from before the beginning of time. Remember we talked about the decree of God by which he established everything that would ever happen? Well now you're catching up with the plan of God if this is new to you. Look at your current life. God has appointed precisely these circumstances that you have today to do good works to his glory that no one else can do.

It couldn't be any other way. God's providentially in control. God's overall. We covered that too. God laid out the path for you ahead of time so that your footsteps would walk in them and for some that may say, "Man, but this is hard." I get that. If that's you, you say, "This is hard. I want to live to the glory of God, but it's hard and I don't know how to do this." You know what? Show us all, show us all how to live a godly life in the midst of hard circumstances like what you have. Live it out before God. Live it out before the people of God. Start today and say, "I will live for the glory of God in the midst of these difficult circumstances. And I want, I aspire to be someone who could look at my life and say, oh, that's how it's done. "That's how you trust God in trying times. And if you're prosperous and things, you know, and the Lord has just blessed your path and you know, you just see the blessing of God all around, well, you know, if you prosper, show us how a prosperous, godly man lives. Show us how a prosperous man lives to the glory of God and does not become puffed up in his mind.

And beloved, you don't have to wonder what the godly walk looks like. The rest of Ephesians tells you, beginning in verse 4, chapter 1. Look, chapter 2, verse 10, says you should walk in them. Let me just show you very quickly that Paul explains the walk of which he speaks later in the letter. It's not difficult. It's not mystical. Chapter 4, verse 1, "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called." What's that look like? Spiritual attitudes, humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. That's one aspect of the walk. Verse 17, chapter 4, "I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds." Don't walk like that, but verse 22, "put off your old self," verse 23, "be renewed in the spirit of your minds, put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." And then he goes on and talks about other virtues. Chapter 5, verse 2, "walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us." Verse 8, chapter 5, "Walk as children of light." Verses 15 and 16, "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil."

The rest of Ephesians calls you to walk in godly living within the body of Christ, within the context of a local church, your personal conduct, your family, Ephesians 5:22 through 6:4, you know, wives, husbands, children, parents, the workplace, prayer, Ephesians 6. The walk that Paul lays out after saying God called you to walk in good works, well, in the rest of Ephesians, he says, "Don't sweat it, I'll tell you exactly what works I have in mind. Walk in love. Walk in humility. Walk in prayer. Walk in godliness." Here's the point: beloved, when you read Ephesians, you realize that this walk of which the Bible speaks, it isn't spectacular. It's not that you have to go out and suddenly become a missionary to Africa in something that you had no plan to do beforehand. You don't have to do that. You don't have to drop everything you're doing and choose a completely different course of life. Start with the life you have, focus on godliness within those contours, and you'll be doing the good works that God's called you to do. This is within your grasp. to do.

Now, again, I only say things like this because I feel like it's necessary to say in our day, this godly walk of which he speaks, beloved, it is not centered on beer and cigars. It's not centered on things like that. A godly life is faithful in small things that go unnoticed. And so your circumstances may be good or bad, they may be painful or sweet, the outward form is secondary to the deeper spiritual reality of setting your heart on living to the glory of the one who saved you by his workmanship, by his grace, by his goodness and kindness. God saved you to walk in precisely the life that you have right now. It's a noble purpose, even if outwardly it seems modest. It's not modest in God's estimation. It's not lowly in God's estimation. It's not unimportant in God's estimation. Look at it from God's perspective. God decreed this by his wisdom from before the foundation of time, loved you, saved you, numbered the hairs on your head, and said, "This is the life that I have given to you to walk in." All of a sudden, your difficult life, your boring life, is elevated, brought back up to that mountaintop of which we were talking, and ennobled with the purpose of God to live it out while he gives you breath, to live it out to his glory. Precisely the life you have now is precisely the life where these things begin to play out

in your life and a true Christian accepts and even delights in the life that God has given him because it's the life, it's this very life in which God saved you and set you on a course that leads into eternal glory and if for no other reason, out of gratitude for the outcome, you can live to his glory in the meantime. Gratitude, fear, respect, appreciation for the God who did a work. His workmanship you are. His workmanship for his glory. Now the one who embraces that shows that God is at work in them. God saved you for good works. God saved you to change you, to conform you to the image of Christ. He did not save you, this is, you know, I'm walking away after this message, you know, we're going to pivot to other things, he did not save you because you were starting to look like Christ and he thought he'd help you finish the job. No, he saved you because you were ungodly. Romans 4:5, God justifies the ungodly. God saved you in order to change you and to make you like this. Charles Spurgeon said God's choice of us was not because we were holy but to make us holy. And so you and me today, let's run the race that he set before us and thus fulfill the purpose of God.

Let's pray together.

*Thine is the glory, O risen conquering Son. Yours is the workmanship. Yours is the purpose. Yours is the glory. And so we bow before this great teaching from Scripture, from what your word says, we bow before it, we embrace it, we ask for the help of your Holy Spirit to conform us to the image of Christ. O God, may your Holy Spirit work deeply in the inner recesses of our affections, the inner recesses of our will. May the meditations of our heart and the words of our mouth and the deeds of our hand be acceptable in your sight, O God, our Rock and our Redeemer. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.*

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