



The Result of Grace

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Ephesians 2:10

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*<sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

*(Pastor prays)*

Sometimes when you are reading the Bible, you come up on a verse that is so meaningful and so assuring and so balancing that it's worth just thinking about for a little while. You and I live in a world that has fallen—mudslides and earthquakes and falling plains and warring nations and random shootings—we live in a world where what is biblically right will soon be legally wrong. And if you believe and live by this book and teach your children the same, you will find yourself marginalized first, then ostracized, and—pretty soon—victimized. And if you listen to it enough and dwell on it enough, you can work yourself into anxiety or depression or senseless worry. And if you are a Christian here today, that is not how we are called to live. Paul told young Timothy, who was a pastor of a church in a Pagan nation, in 2 Timothy 1:7, “For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” And today I don't want to tell you over and over that our country is in trouble; you already know that. In fact, as a whole, I believe we are living Romans 1:24 as a nation: “Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves.” My sermon today is not about that. You see that today's sermon is from Ephesians 2:10 and focused on how

we live and manage and be joyful in this world. How we understand ourselves. How does a young woman find the strength to push back against everything that this world is telling her to be? How does a young man find the moral courage and ironclad self-control to live each day as a Christian? I think the answers to these questions are found, in part at least, in Ephesians 2:10. Martin Lloyd Jones said that this is one of the most important and vital statements we can ever consider. This is Paul's definition of what it means to be a Christian. There is a word in the text and we must learn to think of ourselves in this way. If you're a Christian, you need to know who you are. You are His workmanship. The Greek word is, *poiema*, where we get the word *polling*. The broader definition is "a masterful work of art." If you get a hold of what you are and not just who you are, it's going to free you up to live with joy and confidence and purpose.

### In Christ, You Are A Work of Art

Let's look at this verse and talk about how we become His workmanship.

### **We Belong to Him**

Take a look at verse ten. Notice what the text says: "we are his workmanship." In the original language, Paul put a pronoun here at the beginning of the sentence. He did this for emphasis, to make a point. When you become a Christian, you are not simply ascribing to a certain system of beliefs. There is this transformation that takes place that results in you belonging to God. He chooses you. He adopts you. He purchases you. That's the transaction. When you think of yourself as a Christian, you must learn to think of yourself in this way. In fact, the fullness of the Godhead expressed in the Trinity came to bear on you, belonging to Him. God the Father chose you, God the Son redeemed you, and God the Spirit convicts and seals you now. If you are His workmanship—His artwork, His treasure—that will inform everything about your future and how you see yourself. This will inform what you do with your life, and how you raise your children. You are His—God's and no one else's. In the Bible, God is called the Shepherd, the Creator, the Vine Dresser, and the Potter. And He does His work in and through you. When Christ died, He

purchased you, and you now belong to Him. You never have to be afraid or lonely or ashamed. In Christ, you are a work of art, and you belong to Him.

## **You Are Different Than Other People**

in verse ten, Paul says, “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.” He is setting us apart from the rest of creation, the rest of humankind. And this is an important distinction to make. If something is a piece of art, workmanship is different and valued and exclusive. The way Paul describes us is that we were created in Christ Jesus. If you are a Christian, the process it took to create you in Christ Jesus is astounding. There are hundreds of years of foreshadowing and prophecy in the Old Testament culminating in a virgin being with child. A child that would grow up never committing one sin, fulfilling every detail of God’s law. He was baptized by His cousin, claimed deity, and preached the Kingdom of God. He performed miracles, raised people from the dead, and claimed He and the Father are one. He met with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. He accepted the Father’s will in the Garden of Gethsemane and took your place as a substitute on the cross, receiving God’s punishment for our sin. He died, and on the third day, He would rise again victoriously and declare anyone who believed in Him righteous. By God’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, based on Scripture alone, to the glory of God alone. And because of that, you have been created in Christ Jesus. And you are a new creation. The old has passed, the new has come. So far in Ephesians, salvation has been called, we’ve seen the resurrection—Jesus raised from the dead—we’ve seen liberties from slavery and a rescue from condemnation, and now Paul speaks of it as you being created in Christ Jesus. From first to last, God did it. He chose you, loved you, redeemed you, convicted you, prompted you by faith, and saved you. He remade you. And now, as a new creation, you are different than other people. Being different shows up in a few places. It shows up in what we love, what is entertaining us, what motivates us, and what we sacrifice for. In Christ, you belong to Him. In Christ, you are different than other people. In Christ...

## We Have A Clear Purpose

We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, for something. For good works. He saved and redeemed us and bought us and created us in Christ Jesus for a purpose, and that purpose is what we do with this life we are living. There was a time when we walked differently, when we were dead in sin. We followed the course of this world and we followed the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. We lived in the passion of our flesh carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and we were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. But now, we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, for good works. We were created for a life of living the gospel. Elsewhere, Paul called this bearing fruit. The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Just get to it, if your life is not different, then you are still what Paul called a child of wrath like the rest of mankind. And that is not God's plan, that's a scheme of the devil. God does have a plan for your life. Look, this is not a worn-out cliché. It's right here in this verse: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, for good works." Here's the plan which God prepared beforehand—that we should walk in them.

In chapter one verse five, it says we were predestined for adoption. In chapter one verse eleven, we were predestined according to His purpose. In chapter two verse ten, God prepared beforehand. That's what a plan is, a life of living for Him. And this verse becomes the litmus test of your Christianity: Is your life a picture of God's plan in Christ Jesus? Are you a masterpiece created in Christ Jesus? Are you on the path that God has planned for you? Are you clay in the Potter's hand?

I'd like to end with the picture from Jeremiah 18:1-6: "The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 'Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words.' So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. Then the word of the LORD came to me: 'O

house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done?’ declares the LORD. ‘Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand. By God’s grace through faith in Christ, place your life in God’s hands so that you might become his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works.’”

*(Pastor prays)*