

Text: Eph 2.10

I suppose our long intervals between sermons in Ephesians might cause you to lose your place, but I'm not going to review today, other than to read a few of the preceding verses.

Read Eph 2.8-10 (text 10)

We make a big deal about salvation as grace because the Bible makes a big deal of salvation by grace.

We keep repeating things like this:

- You can't earn salvation (nothing you can do)
- You don't deserve salvation (you are condemned)
- Your salvation doesn't depend on how much 'effort' you put into your faith (faith is not a work)
- Your good works have nothing to do with salvation

Yet everyone knows Christians are supposed to be good, right?

You ask any person in the world about it, how are Christians supposed to live? They will tell you something like, "Well, they are supposed to be good, not do all the bad stuff everyone else does..." and so on.

So, what is the relationship of salvation and good works? That's what our text answers.

Proposition: If you are born again, you have a purpose and a path.

I. God did everything in salvation (and it is good)

A. Our verse opens by pointing back "for"

1. Salvation is the gift of God
2. Salvation removes all grounds of boasting
3. The reason: God did it. Everything

B. God is active in shaping the new Christian

1. Workmanship: *poiēma* — we get "poem" from this word
 - a. The word has to do with the product of a skilled craftsman
 - b. It refers to a work of art, or a masterpiece

“Rather than salvation being a masterpiece that we have produced, regenerated believers are a masterpiece that God has produced.”¹

c. The product doesn't produce itself: the workman does

“The position of the pronoun at the beginning of the sentence renders it emphatic. *His* workmanship are we. He has made us Christians. Our faith is not of ourselves. It is of God that we are in Christ Jesus.”²

2. The work of God is a new creation in Christ Jesus

a. The word is used in the NT only of God's activity

1) Things physical and spiritual

Col 1.16 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him.

2) This creation has to do with someone who is already created

a) Dead in trespasses and sins (2.1)

b) Made alive with Christ (2.5)

3) Called a new creation

2 Co 5.17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Gal 6.15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

Eph 4.24 and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Ep 2.10.

² Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Robert Carter and Brothers, 1858), 120.

On the last day of the original creation, God said, “behold, it was very good” (Gen 1.31). This new creation is also very good.

II. God intended for salvation to produce good works

A. Every created thing has a purpose

1. The world was created to house all the living things that exist upon it
2. The plants and animals were created to enhance and sustain human life
3. Man was created to walk with God and have dominion over the earth
4. Even human creations are made for a purpose

A frivolous example: you can bang away at a nail with a wrench, pliers, or a rock: but a hammer is better. There are so many tasks, and men have made specialized tools for many of them.

B. We were created in Christ Jesus for the purpose of good works

1. The original purposes for human creation remain
2. But the new purpose of spiritual creation is that good works by sinners are a consequence of the new creation
3. Dead in trespasses and sins ... created for good works

III. God prepared the good works for us to walk in them

A. The works were prepared beforehand

1. The word has the idea “pre-made”
 - a. A previously prepared supper
 - b. A previously prepared legal argument (before you show up in court)³
2. These works were prepared before the first creation: Adam and Eve were supposed to walk in them

³ Illustrations from Frank Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians* (Baker Academic, 2010), 146.

B. Walking a prepared path

What are these good works?

1. The prepared path is at least the instructions of Eph 4-6
 - a. The working together as one body in the church
 - b. The working together of husbands and wives
 - c. The working together of fathers and children
 - d. The working together of masters and slaves
 - e. The standing against the attacks of the devil
2. The intention is that Christians walk on this path

“The purpose of these prepared-in-advance works is not ‘to work in them’ but ‘to walk in them.’ In other words, God has prepared a path of good works for believers which He will perform in and through them as they walk by faith.”⁴

“He intended that we would ‘walk in them’ like a pedestrian walks along a path.”⁵

- a. Walking is a dominant theme of Eph 4-6: (4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15)
- b. This walk contrasts with the old walk (2.2)

“Paul’s readers no longer walk in sin, according to the standards of the world and the prince of the demonic realm, but in the way carefully planned by the Creator for his creation from a time before the world began.”⁶

Conclusion:

Proposition: If you are born again, you have a purpose and a path.

God did everything for you. You now belong to him. The next step is to throw yourself into knowing him and living for him. Find out all the beautiful features of the walk prepared for you.

⁴ Harold W. Hoehner, “Ephesians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Victor Books, 1983), 624.

⁵ Constable, *Expository Notes*, Ep 2.10.

⁶ Thielman, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Ephesians*, 147.

Sometimes people object to a life of trying to please God and do everything the Bible says to do as best you can. They call it legalism, too narrow, and so on. They claim salvation gives them liberty to live their life according to their own ideas.

That's not it. True joy and freedom are found in living life for God's glory in God's ways.

Don't look for the things in life that most appeal to you — learn to fall in love with God and seek to do those things that most appeal to him.