**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**Saved By Grace for Good Works**

Ephesians 2:8-10

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 We are in our series, Brought to Life; Brought Together, from the New Testament letter to the Ephesians, looking at chapter two today so if you have your bibles, turn to Ephesians 2:8-10. Paul continues the theme of God’s work in our salvation. So far in chapter two he has described the human condition as so dead in sin (1-3) that the only remedy is salvation, God making us alive (4-7). Now he describes how God saves us by grace through faith for a life of good works or obedience.

Big Idea: We are saved by grace for a life of good works.

**Salvation is Work of Grace (8-9)**

Paul describes salvation as a work of grace not human achievement, we are saved by grace through faith and this not of your own doing, it is the gift of God so that no one may boast (8-9). Let’s look at those verses in detail. First, Paul tells us that we are *saved by grace*. Verse four describes what is salvation, God making dead people alive. Verse eight describes how salvation occurs, God saves us by grace. Salvation is God making dead people alive by him coming in saving grace to awaken us to our need for salvation. It is God giving spiritual life to those who are spiritually dead so that they see Jesus as a Savior (John 3:3-5). Second, we are *saved through faith*. Faith is the human heart turning away from its own human insufficiency and turning to God’s all sufficiency to save us. Faith is always accompanied by repentance, turning away from our sin and turning toward Jesus (Mk 1:15; Lk 13:5; 1 Th 1:15, etc). So, we are saved by grace through faith. Grace is God’s power intervening in a spiritually dead person making them alive so that they exercise faith in Jesus for salvation.

Third, *salvation is a divine gift*, we are saved by grace through faith and this is not from your own doing, it is the gift of God, not a result of works. “This” is a relative pronoun, which refers back to the phrase, saved by grace through faith. Salvation, grace and faith are not of you, they do not find their source in the humanity will rather they are God’s gift. Salvation by grace through faith is God’s free and sovereign gift. Then he draws a conclusion, this is not the result of works so that no one may boast. Works describes human effort is our attempt to gain God’s favor or put God in debt to you. Grace by its very nature is opposed to works and boasting. If grace mingles with or includes human work or effort then it is no longer grace. Now we are called to believe, to exercise our wills, to choose to believe but that is the fruit of grace, the evidence that we have been made spiritually alive (1 J 5:1). And this is why *grace excludes human boasting*. The reason salvation is by grace through faith as a gift and not of human effort is so that we have no ground for boasting, as if we have accomplished something. Grace crushes any attempt to boast in human achievement. Then Paul goes on to describe the importance of works in the lives of those God has saved. It can sound confusing if we do not understand what he is saying. He goes on to describe good works as evidence that you have been saved by grace and not your own effort.

**We Are Saved for Works (10)**

First, we are *God’s creation*, that is, God’s workmanship, God’s creation in Christ. Self-creation is an oxymoron. In the same that you contributed nothing to your physical creation, you created nothing to your spiritual creation (Jn 1:12-13). Second, we are *created in Christ*, meaning everything we are as Christians is because we are in Christ, in union with him and so are united to his life. And it is his life in us that produces good works in our lives (Jn 15:5). Third, we are *created for good works*. We are not saved by works, but we are saved for works. Good works follow salvation as the fruit of faith. United to Christ, we are united to the life of God in us that bears fruit of good works so that we no longer walk in the passions of our flesh or sinful nature (2:3). Good works are the evidence of our being in Christ, united to him so that we do not boast in our own work but boast in his good work in and through us (Jn 15:5). We are saved from a life of dead works to a life of good works or you could say we are saved from a life of disobedience (2:2) to a life of obedience. Obedience being the fruit of grace through faith. This is because the gospel does not just save us, it transforms us for a life of good works. Lastly, our *good works are planned by God*, we are created for good works which God planned beforehand, that we should walk in them. In eternity past, God not only chose us to be his children (1:4-5), but he also marked out a path for us to walk. This walk is living a life characterized by good works which God preplanned for us. This verb translated prepared beforehand is similar to the verb predestined from chapter one (1:5, 11). God determined to conform us through good works to the image of his Son (Rom 8:29). It is inconceivable for someone whom God has saved, not to live a new life of good works, a life of obedience. But this life of good works that God preplanned for us is not accomplished by trying harder, it is by abiding in Christ, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” ([John 15:5](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.5)).

And it is this promise that gives us hope for living a life of good works, that is why he says that we should walk in them though it is a daily struggle. The beauty of that struggle every true follower of Christ has is evidence that we are in Christ. This life is a fight to walk according to the life of the one we are in union with. We must preach the gospel to ourselves. We must fight and strive by faith in God’s empowering grace (Phil 2:12-13). But we must also preach the gospel to each other. Following Christ is nurtured in community, fighting for each other. The message of Ephesians is that God has brought us to life and brought us together. A necessary element of our discipleship is belonging to a band of brothers and sisters who will encourage us, who will challenge us, help us fight the unbelief in our hearts, and even carry us if need be as we walk down the road of discipleship together. We all need others who will *encourage* your own discipleship to become more like Christ and to *equip* you to reproduce this process in others.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. What is the big idea of Ephesians 2:8-10?
2. What does it mean to be saved by grace?
3. How is grace opposed to works in salvation?
4. What are we saved from and what are we saved for?
5. What did David mean that we are not saved by works but saved for works?
6. What are examples of good works?
7. How are good works produced in our lives?
8. What would you say to someone who says they are saved yet are not living like it?
9. How is God speaking you through this passage?
10. How does this text encourage me in my own discipleship?
11. What are the implications of this passage for the command to make disciples?