

Poetry in Motion

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Preacher: Darrell Johnson

[0 : 00] Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening. Amen. I do not think we can find a clearer articulation of the gospel of Jesus Christ than what we are given in the biblical text just read, especially in the verses we're going to focus on today.

After a series of long, complex, exquisitely crafted sentences, the Apostle Paul sums it all up in two simple sentences, each of which can be tweeted, each within the 140-character limit. Chapter 2, verses 8 to 10 of the letter to the Ephesians. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

It is a gift of God, not as a result of works that no one should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Bottom line stuff. A number of you have told me that you committed Paul's articulation of the gospel to memory when you were first made alive in Christ.

[1 : 31] For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is a gift of God that no one should boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. About as clear and concise as you can get.

Yet for reasons that will become apparent in a few moments, easily forgotten. Here is how I would like to explore this text this morning.

I want to simply ask a series of questions. Clearly the text is about our salvation in Jesus Christ. Verse 8. By grace you were saved through faith.

Echoing the earlier outburst of the gospel in verse 5. By grace you have been saved. I want to explore this salvation by simply asking a series of questions.

[2 : 39] But before I do, let me say a word about reading and preaching Paul's letters. No one gets it all on the first read.

No one gets it all on the second or third or fourth or tenth read. Is this not part of the reason why the Holy Spirit saw fit to have God's word written?

There is no way anyone could have listened to Paul speak his articulation of the gospel and get it all right away. People of the first century would get it quicker than we do because they lived in an oral culture.

And they were able to listen with much greater comprehension than we can. But even they did not get it on the first reading. They would not have been able to take in everything Paul was announcing and developing on the first reading.

They too needed it to be on paper, on parchment, so they could go over it again and again. A number of you have told me that you are finding Ephesians and my sermons on the letter too much to process.

[3 : 58] I am sorry about that. But it is okay. Because no one gets it right away.

I want to free you from the sense that one ought to be able to take away everything from the sermon and go home with it. You can't.

Take in what you can. Even little bits of the word of God works wonders in the human soul. Besides, the function of the word of God is not just to inform but to transform.

And as we soak in the word written and spoken, something happens even if we do not get it. Okay, to the questions.

Question number one. So what does it mean to be saved? Someone meets you at Starbucks and asks you, are you saved? What do they mean? You and I say, we are saved.

[5 : 08] What do we mean? What does it mean to be saved? It means to be forgiven of all our sins. It means to be cleansed from our sin.

It means to be justified before the judge of the universe. It means to be reconciled to the creator. It means to be adopted into the family of God. Into the family that is God.

Into the friendship of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. On and on it goes. Finally coming down to what Paul announces in the text before us.

To be saved is to become a new creation. Where does Paul say that in the text? In verse 10. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus.

The actual term that Paul uses for workmanship is the word *poiema*. Which comes into the English language in the word poem. Not that the word was used only for poems.

[6 : 12] The word meant handiwork of all kinds. With a particular nuance of rhythm, orderliness, and beauty. Poems being one expression of this.

But paintings also. And gourmet meals. And buildings and administrative systems. On it goes. For we. We who were dead in sin. Sold out to ways of life that brought disorder and bondage.

We are his poems. His handiwork created in Christ Jesus. That is what it means to be saved. The word *poiema* is used only two times in the New Testament.

And both times by Paul. The first use is in his letter to the Romans. In Romans 1. In Romans 1.20. Referring to God's first work of creation. Paul says. For since the creation of the world.

His invisible attributes. His eternal power and divine nature. Have clearly been seen. Being understood through what has been made. The phrase what has been made.

[7 : 14] Is rendering this word *poiema*. In the beginning God wrote a poem. Through which he revealed himself. God made the world and we who live in it. The world and we were his first poem.

His first work expressing rhythm, orderliness and beauty. God's first poem. God's first poem was ruined. The fact with which everyone on this planet is painfully aware.

So God wrote a new poem. God painted a new picture. God made a new creation. God made us people alive in Jesus Christ. We are his new work expressing rhythm and orderliness and beauty. And so Paul can say to the believers in the city of Corinth. If anyone is in Christ. New creation. The old things have passed away.

Look. New things have come. That is what it means to be saved. Now Paul will develop this further later in his letter. In the fourth chapter of Ephesians.

[8 : 14] And it will be the basis for his Christian ethics. He will appeal to us. Lay aside the old self. Which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit.

And put on the new self. Which in the likeness of God. Has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. To be saved is to become a new creation.

We have been saved from. And we have been saved for. We have been saved from the stronghold of sin. From the finality of death.

From bondage to the powers of evil. From the wrath of God. And saved for. For being alive with Christ. For being raised up with Christ. For being seated with Christ.

For living as new creations. That is what it means to be saved. We are God's handiwork created in Christ Jesus. Question number two. Who does the saving.

[9 : 12] Who makes all this happen. Who does the saving in the world and in the church. Why?

We do. Of course. We make ourselves into new creations. Right? We make ourselves into rhythmic. Orderly. Beautiful works of poetry and art.

Right? We free ourselves from the stronghold of sin. We break the grip the rebel world has on us. We overcome the power of death. We avert the wrath of God ourselves.

Right? We make ourselves alive with Christ. We raise ourselves up with Christ. We seat ourselves on the universe with Christ. Right? No. Not at all.

But we act as though we do. What else accounts for all the striving and agonizing. But that we think we do.

[10 : 14] We do not make it happen. Ah. But the ministers do. Right? They make it happen.

The ministers pull us out of the pit. Right? Especially the senior minister. He's the one who makes us alive. He's the one who lifts us up in Christ. He's the one who seats us in Christ.

Ah. The senior minister is a kind of junior savior who makes the new creation happen. Not. God. The living God. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. As Paul delights to call it. God is the one who makes it happen. If we are going to really be saved. We've got to get this clear.

No one can write the poem of the first creation. And no one can write the poem of the new creation. But the new creator. The re-creator. God's workmanship says Paul.

[11:13] God's. God's. His. Not ours. Only one person can save anyone in this room. The God who comes to us in and as Jesus Christ. Question three.

Why does he do it? Why does God do it? Why does he save us? Because we deserve it. Right? Right? Because we've done so much good.

Because we are inherently good people. Right? No. God does it because of his grace. He saves us by grace.

Paul says it twice. He needs to say it a hundred times. God saves us by grace. Unmerited favor. Undeserved kindness. Unearned blessing.

Grace. Grace. Now this is both good news. And offensive news. Which is why it takes us so long. To finally get it. We want to be able to say.

[12:14] We did this on our own. Jacques Ellou says. That grace is odious. Grace stinks. In the nostrils of those. Who want to be able to say. They did it themselves. Grace humbles us.

Grace lifts us up. But first. Grace humbles us. We cannot do it ourselves. We are in desperate need. For grace. Jesus tells the parable.

Of two men. Who go to the temple. In Jerusalem. One is a Pharisee. The other is a tax collector. One thought of himself. As quite godly. Thank you. The other knew himself. To be broken and helpless.

The Pharisee stood up by himself. Which is what people do. When they don't know grace. God. Says the Pharisee. I thank you. That I'm not like other people. Swindlers.

Unjust. Adolaters. Are like this tax collector. Over here. I fast twice a week. And I pay tithes of everything I make. Not a bad thing to do. It's just that they do not earn.

[13:11] The favor of God. The tax collector. Says Jesus. Stands off at some distance. He won't even lift his eyes to heaven. And Jesus says. He began to beat his breast. Saying God be merciful to me.

The sinner. Who that day. Goes away as the new creation. The tax collector. Because. Of grace. You know the name.

Bernie Madoff. Bernie Madoff. Swindled people. Of millions of dollars. And now he's serving. A 150 year jail term. In a recent interview.

In the claims magazine. He says. I just want people to know. That I'm basically a good person. And I read that article.

And I wanted to say to Bernie. Forget. Trying. To justify yourself. Throw you on grace. Because now only grace. Is going to free you.

[14:07] I have a friend. Who's processing something. They did. It was horrible. And the person. Is going around. And around. This deed. And the person. Keeps saying to me. But I'm basically.

A good person. You believe that on me. Don't you Daryl. I never answer that question. During the most recent conversation. I simply said. Don't go there.

Don't go there. Whether or not. You're a good person. Is not helpful now. Accept the grace of God. Because only grace. Is going to free you. Church historian. Richard Lovelace.

Has it right. He says that. Too few of us believers. Know how to take our stand. On grace. He writes. Many professing Christians. Draw their assurance. Of acceptance with God. From their sincerity.

From their experience. Of conversion. From their recent religious performance. Or. From the relative infrequency. Of their conscious. Willful disobedience. Few.

[15:02] However. Know how to start. Each day. With a thorough going stand. Upon Luther's platform. Looking outward. In faith. And claiming. The holy. Alien. Righteousness of Christ.

Is the only ground. Of acceptance. Saved. By grace. Says Paul. That no one should boast. Says Paul. It all comes down to grace. Amazing grace. How sweet and sound.

But save a wretch like me. I once was lost. But now am found. Was blind. But now I see. I once was dead. And now I live. God saves us. By grace.

Question four. So what's our role. In this salvation. Faith. Says Paul. Saved by grace. Through faith. Our role is to trust.

To believe. To bank it. On grace. That's it. Just faith. That's all it can be. When you're given a gift.

[16:01] All you can do is receive it. It's the only way to honor the giver. And what is faith? I used to say. That faith is reaching out.

And taking the gift. But the verb reaching out. Began to smack too much. For me. Of works. Paul says we're not saved by works.

And the verb reaching out. Can too easily be thought of as a work. So. I started saying. Faith is. Throwing yourself on grace. On God and his grace.

But then. God. I mean. That verb. Throwing yourself. Could begin to smack too much of work. So now I'm saying. Faith is. Falling in grace. Falling into grace.

Faith is. Giving into the new reality. Created by grace. And simply. Falling. Into the new reality. You see. The good news. Is not. That the savior.

[16:59] Has come to the edge of the pit. Into which we have fallen. Reached his hand down. Into the pit. And asked us to take hold. That's not the good news. The good news. Is that the savior. Has gone all the way.

Down into the pit. To the very bottom. And invites us. To drop in his hands. At the bottom of the pit. I'm willing now. To say. That faith is. Collapsing into grace.

After all the striving. And agonizing. Just stop. And collapse. Into the grace of God. Saved by grace. Through faith. Christ alone. Grace alone.

Faith alone. And that not of ourselves. Says Paul. Verse 8. That not of ourselves. To what is the that referring? That not of ourselves.

It is the gift of God. To salvation. To grace. To faith. Could be each of those. It could be it all. Many take it as a reference to faith. Maintaining that even faith.

[17:55] Is a gift of God. That no one believes. Except by the gift of God. That is theologically true. But I don't think. That's Paul's emphasis. In this text here. The word that.

Is neuter. The word faith. Is feminine. And so is the word grace. So it's most likely. That that. Refers to the whole package. Saved by grace.

Through faith. Saved by grace. Through faith. That. Is the gift. Of God. Okay. Question 5. Where is grace taking us?

Or. Where is faith. In grace. Taking us? We are just to sit around. And wait for Jesus to come. Right? We just wait for him.

To bring in the new heavens. And the new earth. And then once he brings. The new heavens. And the new earth. We're just going to sit on clouds. And have this. Pray service. Right? Come on. Right? Not.

[18:50] Not. Grace. Picks us up. And puts us to work. Grace. Grace. Grace. Helps us. To begin to walk. We begin to walk.

In good works. Says Paul. We are not saved by good works. But we are saved for good works. We are his workmanship. Created in Christ Jesus. For good works. Which God prepared beforehand. That we should walk in them. You see. Salvation is not just a state of being. It's not just a new status. Salvation is a new vocation. Not vacation. But vocation.

To be saved by grace through faith. Is to be given. A new. Glorious. Vacation. New creations. Now walk. In good works. That the creator. Has prepared for them.

We walk. A new walk. We used to walk. In the death of our sins. According to human society. Organizing itself with God. According to the prince of the power of the air. According to the lust of our flesh.

[19:51] Says Paul. Was awful. Now we walk. A new walk. And this word walk. Will be. The major verb. To describe the Christian life. In the rest of the letter to the Ephesians. Walk worthy of the calling.

To which you've been called. Walk no longer as the Gentiles do. In the futility of their mind. Walk in love. Walk as children of the light. Walk full of the Holy Spirit. And here in the text today. Walk in good works.

Which God has prepared for us. Well what is Paul referring to here? I think he's referring to a wide range of good works.

All new creations. Are created to walk in. As a lifelong Jew. He would certainly have in mind. The ten commandments. We are not saved by keeping the commandments.

But we are saved for walking in the commandments. As a lover of Jesus. I think he would have had in his mind. Jesus sermon on the mount. We are not saved by living the new. Radical kingdom

commands.

[20 : 49] Jesus speaks. Love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you. Treat others the way you want to be treated. We are not saved by doing those good works. None of us can do them perfectly. But we are saved to walk in them.

As a disciple of Jesus. And as a witness. To the works of the Holy Spirit. In the early church. Paul would also be thinking of Jesus works of healing. And deliverance. Which the Spirit was enabling the church to do.

We were created in Christ Jesus. To do the works of Christ Jesus in the world. This is how Paul said it to his friend and colleague Titus. Our great God and Savior Christ Jesus.

Gave himself for us. That he might redeem us from every lawless deed. And purify for himself a people. Zealous for good deeds. Now I think Paul also has in mind.

God's unique and specific call. Upon each new creation. Of all the possible good works. In which all disciples might walk.

[21 : 51] He calls each of us. To particular good works. For which he uniquely prepares us. No one disciple of Jesus Christ. Can be engaged in all the good works.

Of the new creation. Would you agree with that? No one disciple. Can be involved in all the good works. Of the new creation. Each of us has been wired. For a few good works.

And we are not to expect. Others to be engaged. In the good works. For which we are prepared.

We are to encourage one another. To do the one.

Or two. Or three works of the kingdom. To which we are called. Now we see this being worked out.

In the early church. A dispute arose. About the feeding of widows.

A very good work. The church was doing. At that time. But things were getting out of hand.

Necessitating the apostles. To spend lots of time and energy. In this crisis.

[22 : 48] They finally say to the church. It is not good for us. To neglect the word of God. In order to serve tables. They are not saying. They are not saying.

That it is not a good work. To wait on tables. They are not saying. That it is not good for them to do. Not at all. No one worthy. Of the name of Jesus Christ. Whatever say. I am not going to serve tables.

They were simply saying. That they could not do. The good work. Of waiting on tables. And do. The hard work. Of the good work. Of teaching and preaching the word.

Just as. Those who are waiting on tables. Could not do the work. Of the word. And do the work.

Good work. Of table serving as well. We are each called.

To do the good work. Uniquely prepared for us. And we are to encourage. And free. One another.

To be engaged. In the good works. For which we are prepared.

[23 : 46] I bless. Those of you. Called to the good work. Of administration. Hats off. I bless.

Those of you. Called to the good work. Of nursing. I bless. Those of you. Called to the good work.

Of teaching. Free school children. I bless. Those of you. Called to the work.

Of engineering. And counseling. We are not. Saved. By doing the good works. But we are. Saved.

For walking. In the works. Of the kingdom of God.

And do you know. What the reward is. For walking. In those unique. Good works. It's a surprise.

The reward. For walking. In the good works.

For which we are. Uniquely. Prepared. Is the joy. Of being given. More work. To do. To do. That's. The reward.

[24 : 41] I like. What Dallas. Willard. Develops. In his book. The divine. Conspiracy. Many of you.

Know this. Passage. Well. He's speaking. Of the coming. Of the new heavens. And the new earth.

And he says this. We will not sit around.

Looking at one another. Or at God. For eternity. But we will join. The eternal. Logos. Reign with him. In the endlessly. Ongoing. Creative work. Of God. It is for this.

That we were each. Individually intended. As both priests. And kings. A place. In God's creative order. Has been reserved. For each of us. From before the beginnings. Of cosmic existence.

His plan. Is for us. To develop. As apprentices. Of Jesus. To the point. Where we can take. Our place. In the ongoing. Creativity. Of the universe. Isn't that cool? He continues.

In due time. We will begin. To assume. New responsibilities. Well done. Good and faithful servant.

Our magnificent master. Will say. You have been faithful. In the smallest things. Take charge.

[25 : 39] Of ten cities. Five cities. Or whatever is appropriate. And then Willard says this. I suspect. There will be many surprises. When the new creative. Responsibilities.

Are assigned. Perhaps. It would be a good exercise. For each of us. To ask ourselves. Really. How many cities. Could I now govern. Under Christ. If for example.

Baltimore. Or Liverpool. Or Vancouver. Or Vancouver. Were turned over to me. With the power. To do with it. What I want. How would things turn out? New creations.

Created to do. Creative work. No. I didn't quote Paul. Accra. Paul does not say. Good works. That we should.

Do them. He says. Good works. That we should. Walk. Walk. In them. And that's a big difference. The good works. That we're to walk in. Are not our good works. The good works.

[26 : 35] Are God's good works. The works that God is doing. And we are invited. To join him. In the good works. It's not that we're there. Working for God. In the world. As much as we are working.

With God. In the world. So. Question number six. How do we do this? How do we actually. Live the saved life? How do we live. As God's workmanship.

In the world. By pulling. Up our bootstraps. And mustering. All the human. Strength.

We can. Right? By just. Working. Hard. Right? Not. We are beginning.

To get it. That we do not. Save ourselves. That we do not. Make ourselves. Into creation. But we still think. That we can live. The saved life. On our own effort. Right?

[27 : 34] Here's the good news. We do not live. The new creation. Ourselves. In Christ Jesus. Says Paul. Created. In Christ Jesus. In.

He uses that little preposition. 36 times. In his letter. In. In relationship. In relationship. With a person. In intimate relationship. With a person. Abide in me.

And I in you. He says. He has to say it to us. Again and again. Because we easily forget it. Abide in me. And I in you. For. Apart from me. You can.

Do. Nothing. And he needs. For us. To learn that. Apart from Christ. We cannot. Save ourselves.

And apart from Christ. We cannot live. To save life. Ourselves. Apart from Christ. We cannot.

Become new creations. And apart from Christ. We cannot. Live. As new creations. It is.

[28 : 28] As we live. In him. That he. Equips us. For walking. In the good works. He goes. Before us. And prepares. The works. To walk in. Someone put it this way.

I know he will not. Permit. That to come to me. For which I am not prepared. We are his workmanship. He is equipping us. In Christ. For all his will appoints. He is appointing.

In his will. Things for which. We are created. In Christ. We are created. For good works. And the good works. Were created. For us. Not to work them. But to walk.

In them. By walking. In the Savior. And this. I think. Explains. The rhythm. And orderliness. And beauty. Of the letter. To the Ephesians. Paul is in prison.

In Rome. Chained to a Roman soldier. But he is also. He is primarily. In Christ. You know. That he wanted to be out there. Proclaiming the gospel. In the cities of the empire.

[29 : 24] But instead. He is locked up. In this miserable room. Somewhere downtown. In Rome. And yet. Because he was. In Christ. He was still. Able to walk.

In the good work. For which God. Had prepared him. Indeed. It turns out. That being locked. In that crummy room. Meant that he could. Proclaim the gospel. In ways he never. Ever imagined. It is in relationship.

With the great poet. That the poems. Begin to emerge. It is when we live. In the master poet. No matter where else. We live. It is when we live.

In the master poet. That we begin. To walk like him. Like poetry in motion. Irenaeus of the second century. Got it. Irenaeus.

Read Paul. And he got it. And so he wrote. The glory of God. Is a human being. Made fully alive.

That. Is what it means.

[30 : 22] To be saved. By grace. For faith. I think we have. A little bit of time. For some questions. I'll start.

Where it's safe. Abe. Are you in here? I can't spot you. There you are. There you are. Abe. I'm sure.

I know you think about this a lot. Do you have a question. You'd like to put to Paul. Or to me?

Well. As you're speaking about. How grace helps us to walk. I was wondering. Do you have any words. Of encouragement. Or advice. To people who. Feel like they're sitting. More than walking.

I think a lot of us. Feel like that. Or. And then also. Could you. Maybe share your dreams. Or what you feel like. God's placing. On the hearts of the leaders. In terms of. What that walking. Would look like. In the city. Okay. I heard. Two questions. Abe. Let me clarify. You're saying. Can I first speak to. Those who feel like. You're sitting. More than walking. Right. And then secondly. [31 : 21] What would be my dreams. About what this would look like. If we were all walking. In the good works. In the city. Okay. That second one. Is a couple sermons. In itself. Isn't it. Yeah. First one.

It feels like you're just sitting. Let me ask you some more. Is. Is that sitting. Feeling like. You're wasting time. You're lost. You're kind of looking for something. Or is it. Because you're feeling like. You've been called to rest. That's the difference. That you're frustrated. You don't know. Where to go. What to do. How. So what is the good work. In which I should be walking. Walking. And so you're sitting. Because you're stuck. Is that right. I got it right then. Yeah. Same question. I was asked in the first service. I think. In a different way though. Anyway. I would say a couple of things. Well. Three things. First of all.

[32 : 14] I think. That the good work. Prepared. By God. Beforehand. Has been there. All your life. I think. If you played a videotape. Of the first. Ten years. Of your life. You would get clues. About what that is. Now the problem.

Was. For many of us. We didn't live in a context. Where this whole idea. Was nurtured. We were to be brought up. In the image of our parents. Or uncles. Or other kinds of people.

So. All that was happening. Is that people were. Forcing us. Into moles. Of good works. They had for us. By the way. This is. This is a key for parenting. You got to listen. Got to listen.

The good work. That God has for your child. May not look like. Anything you've ever done. In your life. So. There are clues. To that. And if we had more time. I could tell you. The clues I had.

[33 : 09] Before I was ten. Secondly. I. I would want to ask the person. So where do you find joy? You don't find joy. Just sitting here. That's why you're asking the question.

What are you doing. When you experience. Joy. Joy. And then thirdly. What do other people say about you? When they see you operating.

When. When. When do people see. That you're really. Really alive. And so he listens to that. And so God's good works. Are going to be along those lines.

Those clues you've had. The joy. And when you're alive. Now. Like Paul. You may be stuck. In a crummy room somewhere. There. But still. In Christ. That can be lived out.

So you might be stuck. With a crummy job. Right now. But within the context. Of that crummy job. You can begin to live. This good work. That you've been fundamentally. Called to. Does that. So what would it look like.

[34 : 07] Well. If I had my heart's desire. And I can't pull it off. I said that earlier on the service. I can't make this happen. But my heart's desire would be. That every single one of you. Would be so full.

Of joy and passion. In what you're doing in the city. The city would go. What has gone wrong. With those people. At First Baptist Church. I mean that. I think it's joy. That's going to capture. Our culture right now. And sensitivity to suffering.

But joy. And if we're alive. And doing what we've been gifted to do. It's just joy radiates. Can I help? I could take one more. Tim. When. When people find. Find themselves facing a challenge. To move into a new area in God.

Very often. Back of their minds and hearts. There comes. There comes. A feeling of fear. What's this going to get me into? What am I opening the door to? How would you cope with that.

[35 : 07] As you. Want to launch out. You want to launch out. How would you deal with that. Commendation. See if I got it right. You're saying that people. Will hear something like this. They want to launch out.

Like in the front of the bulletin. Alexandro drew for us. A launch out. They're afraid to launch out. Because they don't know. What they're going to get into. Yeah.

They think it might be something. They might be. They might be. More than they can handle. More than they can handle. Or they might fall down on the way. Or fall down on the way. I've got good news for the fall down on the way.

He'll pick you up. Seriously. If you just move. He'll pick you up if you fall down. Do I have a witness to that? He'll pick you up. The fear. How would I overcome that?

I would want to. I need to know the person really well. But I would say two things there. One. The fear is probably due to not understanding the father of the Lord Jesus Christ correctly. If he has something for you.

[36 : 03] It is going to be ultimately good. So I've got to get to that place where I really trust his goodness. And the second thing then. Would be to soak in the New Testament. And discover what those good things are that he has prepared for us.

We might find ourselves in a difficult place of persecution. Paul says don't worry about that. Thank you Paul. Difficulty having to make hard choices.

But there's going to be this sense that I'm being drawn into that for which I am created. And so it's going to come down to trusting the character of the one who's pulling me in this new direction.

He would only call me to do something that will glorify him by me being who I was created to be.

Does that help? A little bit?

Okay. Oh, there was one more? I think I can take it. Brad. Brad. What's the relationship between two words and the two? What's the relationship between?

[37 : 05] Good works and the kingdom. As you know in Ephesians Paul doesn't use kingdom language as such. So that we can't make any kind of one-to-one correspondence through the letter.

The kingdom of God. Now there's a whole other sermon. The kingdom of God is God's rule breaking into the world even now in Jesus Christ. And when you read Matthew.

In fact if you want to see kingdom work. Read Matthew 8, 9 and 10 tonight. Jesus begins to restore people. Lift people up. People who've been distressed start to come together.

People who are discouraged start finding hope. People who are sick start getting healed. That's kingdom work. And so I think good works are going to involve that. So back to Abe's question.

I would love to see those works of deliverance and freedom and healing begin to emerge out of the community too. Does that help?

[38 : 01] Yep. Okay. Let me conclude with a prayer by D.T. Niles of Sri Lanka. I have this prayer written on the front page of my journal.

Jesus, Master Carpenter of Nazareth, who on the cross through wood and nail has wrought our full salvation.

Weald well your tools on us that we who come to you rough hewn may by your hand be fashioned to a truer beauty.

In your name we pray. Amen.