

Who Are You?

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Date: 28 August 2024

[0 : 00] Ephesians chapter 2 and mainly verse 10 is what we're focusing on together this evening. Ephesians 2 and at verse 10. For we are as workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

On Friday evening we heard Ramborda Campbell preaching on Ephesians chapter 1 and he asked a question as he began his sermon that evening.

He asked a question, how are you? And he was looking at the theme of how we are blessed in all the blessings that we have in Christ Jesus.

How are you? We are blessed. This evening as we go into chapter 2 I want to pick up on another question that we can look at together this evening. We've seen how are you? I want to think this evening of who are you?

Who are you? There's a TV series on the number of series of it. I think there's over 20 series of it. That's called Who Do You Think You Are?

[1 : 14] And in the programme there's mainly celebrities who trace back their family history. They ask that question, who do you think you are?

Who do you think you belong to? What's your background? Where do you come from? And it's fascinating to see how their different lives can go back in different directions. And very often directions they know nothing about.

They find out things that they never knew. It can be a real joy for some to find out something joyous experienced in their past, in their family.

But for others it can be quite a devastating blow at times as they hear of maybe tragedies or difficulties in their family's history. And it's always full of emotion.

There's always emotion involved in it. You cannot but be caught up in the emotion. And perhaps there's times in your own experience that you've looked into your own family background.

[2 : 12] Or you've heard stories about your family, the history behind it. And you've been moved by things that you find out. Things that you maybe never knew growing up and now you find out. And it can be times of joy or it can be times of sadness.

But behind it all is this question, who am I? Where have I come from and for what purpose?

But when we think of that in terms of the Bible, it's a question we have to ask ourselves as well. The more we learn about Jesus, the more we experience his love towards us, his grace towards us, it does make us ask that question, who am I?

Who am I? Psalm 8, as we sang together, echoes that question. As the psalmist looks at the wonder of all creation, the heavens declaring all the glory of God and the fingers traced across it all of God.

And the psalmist asks, you know, what is man? Who am I in the midst of all of this that you should remember me, that you should care for me? But we are told in that psalm that he has honoured his people with glory and with love.

[3 : 33] We are his workmanship. That's what we see in verse 10 here. We're given this powerful reminder that we belong to God. We are precious to God.

Who am I? We have this answer in verse 10. We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

And it's this I want to consider together, this verse, and three things from this verse. As we think of that question, who am I? I want to see that we are his workmanship.

Just taking the text as it is, we are his workmanship. We are made for good works, created in Christ Jesus for good works.

And we are to walk in his ways, the ways that he has prepared for us. So just these three things as we think of this question, who are you?

[4 : 32] Well, first we see we are his workmanship. We are his workmanship. See, the more we see of Jesus, the more we see of the work that Jesus has done for us, the more we see, as we did over the weekend, the love of God towards us that gave his Son, who came into this world to die for his people, to give his life, as it says, as a ransom for many.

What he has done for us, it all points towards his grace. And in chapter 2, these verses 1 to 10, it's all about grace through faith and what the grace of God has done for us.

Because you see in verse 1 to 4 that grace reached out to us. You were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you once walked.

You were dead, but grace reached out. You see that powerful verse in verse 4, the grace that loved us.

But God being rich and mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, the grace of his love towards us. You see in verse 5, the grace that made us alive.

[5 : 57] Even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. By grace, you have been saved. And then you see that grace in verse 6 and 7 gives us a future.

It's raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

It gives us a future. And it's grace that has secured our salvation. By grace, in verse 8, you have been saved through faith.

The grace that saves. And then when you come into verse 10, it closes off this little section by reminding us that grace gives us meaning and purpose.

We are brought from death to life. We are brought from that darkness into light. And it's with a purpose. That we belong to God.

[7 : 05] And it almost begins just by looking at our origins, if you like. Our beginning. We are his workmanship. It takes us right back to the beginning of the Bible.

It takes us back to Genesis chapter 1, where we are told in verse 27 that God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them.

That in all of creation, in all the glory of creation, that we were made in his image. That we are his workmanship. It wasn't just Adam and Eve that were his workmanship.

We are all made in the image of God. So it takes us right back. We are his workmanship. We are made in God's image.

All of us. All that we see around us, we are all his workmanship. Created in the image of God. And so as Paul is writing to the Ephesians here, saying you are his workmanship, he is saying God is still working in you.

[8 : 16] Because we know we're not perfect. We know that we are a sinful people. And yet God is still working.

Workmanship. It's his ongoing process in us. He speaks of here a workmanship that almost has a new beginning.

Like we see when we go back to verse 1. You were dead in your trespasses and sins. Verse 4. God being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our sins, he made us alive together with Christ.

So you're brought from one place to another. There's a new beginning. And this is all by grace. We are his workmanship.

And what workmanship means, another word that can be used in translating workmanship, is masterpiece. You are his masterpiece. Now, is that how you see yourself today?

[9 : 22] As a masterpiece of God? Paul, if you think of himself, how did he look on himself? Did he see himself as a masterpiece of God?

God's workmanship, who God had worked powerfully in to bring from darkness to light. How did he see himself? Like many of us see ourselves. He said in Romans chapter 7, O wretched man that I am.

That's how he looked on himself. Wretched man that I am. But he didn't stop there. He went on to say, Who will deliver me from this body of death, this body of darkness that we're seeing here?

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. There is deliverance. There is being brought from death to life. Being brought from wretch, being a wretch, to being God's masterpiece.

As John Newton, in that famous hymn, Amazing Grace, it was grace that saved a wretch like me. And I'm sure many of us, all of us even, can think of that for ourselves.

[10 : 30] We see ourselves, the wretched one that we are. But when we see who we are in Christ, we are blessed, as Mordor reminded us.

And we are his workmanship. It's ongoing. Michelangelo, very famous for all his artistic talent.

He was once working on a large piece of rock. It didn't look like anything. It was just edges and chips and blemishes all over.

And yet here he was, starting to chip away at this rock. And one person had said, passing by, he asked a question. As he was chipping away at this rock, he was asking, What are you doing?

What on earth are you doing? Because the task just seemed so enormous that nothing could be done with this huge rock. And yet Michelangelo replied, I am liberating an angel from this stone.

[11 : 33] And sure enough, in the hands of a master craftsman like Michelangelo, this rock that looked beyond anything was turned into a masterpiece.

And that's what God is doing with us. We are, as described in the Old Testament, the potter and the clay. We are just this lump of clay that he is working in to create a masterpiece.

We are in the hands of a great sculptor. And we know sometimes what it's like just to be pressed by the hands of God. There's so many ways that he gets rid of the blemishes and the faults within us.

He chips away and sometimes it's hard. But yet we are his workmanship. We are in his hands. That is who we are.

We are his workmanship. Just go back to Psalm 8. Remember as a young boy, over on the west side where you actually see the sky so clearly, looking up to the stars on a winter's night and just being amazed at it, amazed at the clarity of the stars and of the moon was out, just seeing the wonder of it at a very young age.

[12 : 54] It spoke so powerfully. There's got to be something behind that. That's not just by chance. There is a creator behind all of that.

And that's what the psalmist is saying there. He's seeing all of this and he's asking, who am I in the midst of this? We are his workmanship.

We are his creation. Even the wonder of all that we see in the skies, we are his masterpiece too. We are being made more and more into his image as we go on, as he's making us imperfect as we are, to one day to be perfect in glory with him.

So if you are saved, if you know the Lord, you are a testimony to the world. Just like any artist would put their work on display to show it to the watching world, to show what can be created, well, God puts us on display.

He uses us, imperfect as we are, to be on display before others. We are his workmanship. And that leads us into the second thing.

[14 : 18] We are his workmanship and we have a purpose created in Christ Jesus for good works. Going back to the programme, Who Do You Think You Are?

And even if you look in your own life perhaps, and you look back down through generations of your own family, you often find that people go into a career maybe thinking there's nothing behind it and actually find out that there's a history in the family of working in that line.

It may be teaching, it may be seafarers, it may be doctors or farmers or whatever it is, fishermen, all of these things, and you think it's just something you've chosen. But sometimes you look back and you find out it's almost something that's been in the family.

It's come down through generations. Well, what Paul tells the Ephesians Christians here is that as they find their meaning, their purpose in Christ, they find too a path that leads them back to something that has been in generations, that we were made with a purpose.

Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. It's been lost almost. We don't see it in our life until that point we are taken from death to life by the grace of God and then we begin to realise we have purpose.

[15 : 44] We have a purpose. We are God's workmanship. We are his workmanship. But we were created in Christ Jesus for good works. He gives us a life to live.

That's what verse 10 reminds us. Now verse 9 reminds us that our works are not what saves us. Not a result of works so that no one may boast.

It's not we do the works so we can boast in our salvation. No. But it's a product of our salvation. We are made for this purpose, created in Christ Jesus for good works.

And when you look at this word works, it's linked to employment as we would say today. What is our work? What is our employment? Who am I in that?

We can say we've all got maybe different careers and different works that we're involved in. But yet here is our greatest work of all for the good works that we are created in Christ Jesus for.

[16 : 55] We have our identity in him. We have our purpose in him. We are blessed in him for this purpose of who we are.

Again, Paul writing to the church in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 10 reminds us that whatever we are doing, we are to do it for the glory of God. Whether you eat or drink, whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

And so whatever work, whatever way we spend our time, that's what it's referring to, how we spend our time, what we are doing with ourselves, we are to be involved in good works.

And that doesn't just mean setting a time aside to do the good works that we see, maybe of helping or visiting. It's everything that we do.

When you think of putting our time into compartments, if you like, how much time do you spend in church?

[18 : 01] You might spend two or three hours a week gathered together as church in this way. But how much time do you spend actively working in other ways?

You could be in your work, working a 35-hour week, but then you're doing other things outside of that as well, involved in sports or activities, involved in clubs, involved in family, involved in so many different things.

You can be 80, 90 hours a week just going about your daily business, and that is your work. Whatever you are doing, you are to do for the glory of God.

God. Paul reminds us of that so often through his letters, that we see ourselves as we are in Christ, and then there's a practical outworking, as we heard over the weekend.

Ephesians is almost split in two, learning what is behind our faith, and then applying our faith to our day-to-day lives. We are to be bearing fruit in every good work, as Paul says to the Colossians.

[19 : 15] Whatever we do, we do for the glory of God. Martin Luther understood what this meant when he said, the maid who sweeps her kitchen is doing the will of God just as much as the monk who prays.

Not because she may sing a Christian hymn as she sweeps, but because God loves clean floors. The Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty, not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes.

Because God is interested in good craftsmanship. He's interested in our giving our best in everything that we do. And so apply that to your life on a day-to-day basis.

Your good works is not just being in church. Your good works is not just having your quiet time at home where you read God's word and pray.

Your good works is how you behave among others, in the workplace, in the school, away from here, everywhere we go, whatever we do, it's all part of our good works.

[20 : 27] Who I am is seen in what I do and how I do it. Who are we? We are his workmanship and we are created in Christ Jesus for good works.

When we belong to him, we honour him in all that we do. And the third thing that we see from this verse is these last words, which God has prepared beforehand that you should walk in them.

God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. There's two aspects to this last part as well. We think first of all of the walking in them.

It's the last bit we were thinking of at first here. Walking in them. Walking in them means direction. It means it's our aim, it's our goal to keep going in this way.

Last Wednesday, we had Colin McLeod preaching to us on Psalm 86 and one of the vowseers there says, teach me, Lord, your way. And again, it's a recurring theme that you find throughout Scripture.

[21 : 44] Teach me, Lord, your way. And here we have it again. Walking in the way, if you like, the way of good works.

It's almost like we make sure that the Lord has a hold of us. That we're not trying to go our own way and just give time to Him for a short while and then do our own thing.

That's not what it's about. It's about walking with Him day by day. It's not a switch we turn on and off. It's not saying, well, I'll give six months to the Lord and then I'll take time off for myself.

It's not the kind of job where you go away and do two weeks on and then you come home for two weeks off. That's not what being a Christian is about at all. It's about living God's way day by day.

He's working in us because we are His workmanship. He is giving us good works that we should do them for His glory and we are to walk in them.

[22 : 52] We are to keep going in them. And again, you think of how God's people, how are we to walk? The scriptures show us again and again we are to walk in obedience to Him.

We are to walk in faithfulness. We are to walk in love. We are to walk in holiness. It goes on. The list goes on. But we are to walk in these ways.

And so we are walking with God. But that reminds us that we have a companion. We're not walking alone.

He is walking with us. We are still His workmanship. He doesn't leave us. He is with us. And so there is this reminder again we are not perfect.

Immediately we are saved. We are not this perfect person. We don't need the Lord now. We are changed. But we are being changed all the time as we go on.

[23 : 58] There was a little boy in Sunday school misbehaving and his teacher was getting much more and more frustrated with him to the point where she got to speak to him and say why do you act like that?

Do you not know who made you? And the little boy replied quite quickly yes I know God made me but he hasn't finished with me yet.

It's a smart reply. We could all say that word as well. It's not an excuse but we're not finished yet. There's truth in that and that we are still a work in progress.

But we have good authority in God's word that where he has began a work he will bring it to completion. We are walking in these works but we are not walking alone.

We are walking with him. But then you see too that it's the works which God prepared beforehand. Prepared beforehand.

[25 : 12] And this reminds us that God has always had a plan for your life. Who are we? We are his workmanship. We are created in Christ Jesus for good works.

We are to walk in them. But God has a plan in it all prepared beforehand. And again that's a theme you see throughout the scriptures over and over.

You read we saw it in Psalm 139 even as God was forming us in the womb he had ordained the days that were before us they were written in his book. It was all there his plan and his purpose.

You think of the prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament he was asking who am I? Well in verse 5 of chapter 1 the Lord is saying before I formed you in the womb I knew you.

Even before you were in the womb I knew you. Before you were born I consecrated you I set you apart I appointed you a prophet to the nations.

[26 : 19] God had a plan and a purpose for Jeremiah from the very beginning. And if Jeremiah was asked who am I he could answer I have been created by God and created with a purpose.

And the same is true for you and me. We are created for the works that God prepared beforehand that he has a plan and a purpose for us.

Psalm 37 verse 23 the steps of a man are established by the Lord when he delights in his way. There's a plan and a purpose.

And so we are to give ourselves over to the Lord. Proverbs the book of wisdom the heart of man plans his way but the Lord establishes his steps.

The Lord has a plan and a purpose. And so our duty is to glorify him and to enjoy him in looking to him as his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works for the works that God prepared beforehand to walk in them.

[27 : 40] Martin Luther he said faith is a living busy active powerful thing. it is impossible for it not to do us good continually.

It never asks whether good works are to be done but has done them before there is time to ask the question and it is always doing them.

we don't sit here tonight asking I wonder if there is a good work for God for me to do for God.

God has prepared them beforehand we are to walk in them. His word reveals to us again and again how we are to live.

so we don't just sit back and say Lord what will you have me to do? Listen to him love him with all your heart serve him with all your heart love the Lord with all your heart and love your neighbour as yourself.

[28 : 52] There are so many things that we could apply to this the works that God has prepared beforehand that we are to walk in they are all before us and by faith we don't ask whether there are good works to be done we do them.

We do them before there is time to ask the question and we are always doing them. So who do you think you are? How are you?

You are blessed. Who are you? You are God's workmanship you are God's masterpiece created in Christ Jesus brought from death to life by his grace for good works that God has planned and had a purpose for beforehand from the very beginning of time that you should walk in them.

That is who we are. The song of Solomon says I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine and when we know the Lord we know we are loved by him and we look to him as his workmanship created for good works prepared beforehand and we seek to walk in them.

May God bless his word to us. We're going to conclude by singing to God's prayer.