

CREATED FOR GOOD WORKS (Eph 2:1-10)

(2011 Congregational Theme: Daily Disciples: Good Works)

A. **This year** we are reminding ourselves to be daily disciples.

1. Following Jesus our Lord & Savior is not just for special days, it is a daily activity; we are to pray daily, study daily, & love the lost daily.
2. Last week we introduced something else disciples do daily: *good works* (e.g. Barnabas).

Heb 10:24-25 – And *let us consider one another in order to stir up love & good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together*, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, & so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

- a. One of the reasons for our assembling together for study & worship is that we are to go out from here & perform “good works”.

b. And we’re not going to be able to do that unless God’s Word is the featured object of our time together – *because it tells us what those good works are* (2 Tim 3:16-17).

B. **When it comes to** “salvation” & “good works,” there are two mistaken ideas.

1. 1st – If you do enough good works you will earn your salvation – *a view that leaves one with a lot of uncertainty & doubt.*
2. 2nd – Good works have no connection with salvation – a view that leaves one with a false sense of hope.

[But one verse will correct both errors ([Eph 2:10](#); cf. [Acts 19:4-5](#)).

In this verse there are **four simple truths** regarding the connection between salvation & good works.]

I. THE SAVED DO GOOD WORKS

A. **Salvation Is The Work Of God.** “For we are **His workmanship** created in Christ Jesus....”

Rom 1:20 – For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by ***the things that are made*** [same Greek word: “workmanship”] even His eternal power & Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

1. Just as God used the power of His word to create the universe, He also used the power of His word (gospel) to make us a new creation (new creatures) in Christ Jesus (**Eph 2:1, 4-5; 2 Cor 5:17**).

a. Our new lives are to bring as much glory to God as do the heavens above (**Matt 5:16**).

2. But we cannot take any credit for our salvation, nor can we take any credit for the glory our lives bring to God. Why?

a. Because we were “**created in Christ Jesus**” when we obeyed the gospel.

b. Jesus is the agent of both the physical & the spiritual creation.

c. Apart from Him, we have nothing. In Him, we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (**Eph 1:3**). **All glory to God is given to God through Christ Jesus.**

John 15:5, 7-9 – If you abide in Me, & My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, & it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. 9 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, & I in him, bears much fruit; ***for without Me you can do nothing.***

[That leads us to a ***second observation*** from verse 10.]

B. **Salvation Results In Good Works.** “For we are His workmanship, created in CJ **for good works**....”

1. What is that? We are saved to go to work!

2. To work for whom? To work for our Savior, for His Kingdom, His people the church.

3. If we could only get all new converts to understand; if we could only get all Christians to remember something:

- a. We have NOT been saved just to relieve our minds about our eternal destiny, we have been saved for an earthly purpose, we are saved "for (to come on or after) good works".

In the context of verses 8 & 9 some will say that we are not saved "by good works" but "for good works", meaning to minimize the importance of obeying the gospel. The "works" Paul mentioned in verse 9 are works that derive from "yourselves", works in which one could "boast". These verses do NOT mean that we don't have to obey the commands of the gospel to be saved, but that once we have done that "good works" should be evident in our lives.

- b. If there are no "good works" to follow one's salvation, then his salvation should fall under suspicion ([Matt 7:17](#); [Jas 2:14-26](#)).

Titus 2:7-8 – *Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, & in your teaching show integrity, dignity, 8 & sound speech* that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

1 Tim 6:17-19 – Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 **Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,** 19 **STORING UP FOR THEMSELVES A GOOD FOUNDATION FOR THE TIME TO COME, THAT THEY MAY LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE.**

1 Tim 5:9-10 – Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, & not unless she has been the wife of one man, 10 **well reported for good works:** if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, **if she has diligently followed every good work.**

Titus 3:14 – And let our people also learn to **maintain good works**, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

[Our salvation is a work of God, which ought to motivate us to work at serving and helping others.

The **third observation** from verse 10...]

C. God Planned The Good Works Ahead Of Time.

"For we are His workmanship, created in CJ for good works, which **God prepared beforehand**...."

1. When it comes to doing "good works," it is not left up to our imaginations.
2. We might be able to come up with a pretty good list of what we consider to be "good works", but if God prepared them "beforehand" – or in advance to our being saved – then don't you think we had better go to Him for the list?

3. Because God planned these “good works” for us to do before He ever saved us (cp. Acts 22:10).

4. Now, whatever these “works” are, which God calls “good” (and we’ve already looked at some of them), they will have TWO defining characteristics.

a. 1st – They will not be works that give you any legitimate grounds for boasting (Gal 6:14).

b. 2nd – They will be works that you can find Christians doing in the NT (Phil 4:9).

A case in point: The churches of Macedonia & Achaia providing for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

2 Cor 9:10-13 (NASU) – Now *He who supplies seed to the sower & bread for food will supply & multiply your seed for sowing & increase the harvest of your righteousness; 11 you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.* 12 For *the ministry of this service* is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but *is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God.*

- God not only “prepared beforehand” that they should do this “good work” of ministering to the saints (2 Cor 8:4; 9:1, 12), but He also supplied the workers with the materials they would need for the work.

[The **fourth observation** from verse 10...]

D. **We Must Do His Good Works.** “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand **that we should walk in them.**”

1. Paul commanded us to “walk” in these “good works”, not to step in & step out of doing them.
2. He is commanding a lifelong commitment to the performance of our “good works” on behalf of God – The One Who Created Us In Christ Jesus.
3. In another passage, Paul takes this a step further, by saying that we should be on fire with the desire for “good works”.

Titus 2:14 – who [*Jesus*] *gave Himself for us, that He might* redeem us from every lawless deed & *purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

4. The application is this, if God has saved us by His grace, then He has saved us for a life of good works.
 - a. If we are not engaging in these works, then we need to confess this to the Lord, search His word & start looking around us for ways to serve the needs of others.
 - b. He doesn't save anyone so that they can live for themselves.
 - c. He wants everyone who has tasted His grace to engage in a life of good works.

[Genuine salvation involves God creating something new. That new creation (a child of God) will inevitably live a life of “good works” because God planned it to be that way.]

CLOSING

A. Notice the contrast between the way this chapter started out, & the way it ends up in verse 10.

1. The life of a true child of God stands in stark contrast to the lifestyle of the children of wrath we all once were ([Eph 2:1-4](#)).

A little boy came out of Bible class after learning about the Good Samaritan. He told his mother the parable, & he had all the facts correct. So the mother asked, “What is that meant to teach us?” Her little boy replied, “It means that when we are in trouble, others should come to help us.”

2. When it comes to “good works”, we sometimes miss the point.
 - a. We think they're nice things to do when we can, & we like it when others do them for us, but we fail to see that “good works” are one very big reason we have been saved.

B. The great question of your life should be, “*Lord, what will You have me to do?*” That's what Saul asked Jesus on the Damascus Road. The Lord answered ([Acts 22:10](#)), “*Arise & go into Damascus, & there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.*”

1. God had prepared beforehand the work for Paul to do! But Paul had to learn God's plan & walk in it. So do you!
2. Paul began with faith, repentance & baptism ([Acts 9; 22; 26](#)).