**WE ARE GOD’S HANDIWORK**

Ephesians 2:1-10

Key Verse 10

 “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

**Introduction**



 Once C. S. Lewis was asked what makes Christianity unique among all the other religions of the world. Without hesitation, he answered at once, “It is grace.” How right he was! Grace is the very heart of the gospel. God, in His grace, forgives us who are helplessly sinful and wretched. By His grace He makes us his beloved children. In today’s passage, Paul so clearly illustrates God’s amazing grace upon sinners like us. He describes who we were without Christ, who we are now with Christ, and why we are saved. Let’s think about what he says through the study of this passage.

1. Read verses 1-5. What are the conditions of a man without Christ? (1-3) What has God done for us who were dead in transgressions and why? (4-5)

1-1, Read verses 1-5.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, **2** in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **3** All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29233a)] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.**4** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5** made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

1-2, What are the conditions of a man without Christ? (1-3)

 ***1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,***

* According to New King James Version, “and you he made alive”.(KJV-And you hath He quickened)
* Paul ended the last chapter by concluding that the greatest example of God's power is the resurrection of Jesus. Now Paul considers what the implications of Jesus' resurrection power are for our lives.
* Paul says that before knowing Christ, we were dead.
* Though Christians are now made alive, they must never forget where they came from and who they were before.
* There are many kinds of life: vegetative & plant life, animal life, mental life, moral life, and spiritual life. A being might be alive in one sense but dead in another.
* To be spiritually dead does not mean that we are physically dead. But it is a real state of death, for the most vital part of man is the spirit. The words of God enlighten us again and again about this condition.
* Before meeting Christ, we were powerless. We could neither commune with God, nor respond to God’s appeal. We also were corrupt because of our wretched sins.
* Transgression indicates that we have crossed a line, challenging God's boundaries. Sin means that we have missed the mark, the perfect standards of God.
* There are two ways in which we sin. They are called the sins of commission and the sins of omission. In short, we were dead in that we deliberately rebelled against God’s commands, and also we sinned sometimes unknowingly by our failure to do what we ought to do.

 ***2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are dis*obedient.**

* We used to live in trespasses and sins, following the course of this world, which is influenced by Satan.
* Satan (the prince of the power of the air) is still active among those in rebellion against God - the sons of disobedience.
* When we are in sin, we are being led according to Satan's "guidance,” and influence.
* This unique title for Satan speaks of his authority (Ruler) and his realm (the air, a way of referring to Satan's "environment").
* The ways of this world are godless, human-centered, and sinful. These ways of the world pressure people to conform to them.
* Christians are constantly pressured to conform to the ways of this world. But we are to follow the way of Jesus. We are the salt and the light of the world.
* When we were dead in transgressions and sins, we just followed the ways of this world. We committed sins because others committed sins.
* The devil tempts everyone to follow his way, the way of disobeying God. He whispers, “Do not obey God’s word. Live freely!”
* We must know that to be disobedient to God means to be obedient to something else.
* In other words, to be disobedient to God means to be obedient to the devil and to follow his way.
* The devil is at work in this world behind the scenes, to create an environment of disobedience.

 “If you’ve never met the devil, it’s because you and he have been going the same direction. You must change direction by turning to Jesus and start obeying him in life and you will meet the forces of hell head on!”

* We Christians are people who can see the subtle deceptions of the devil and fight against him by being obedient to God’s words.
* Sadly though, some Christians, in their spiritual blindness, do not engage in spiritual warfare, but in physical struggles under the devil’s deception.
* We must remember that when we were dead in our transgressions and sins, we followed the way of the devil, and we were unaware of it.
* But we have the words of God and vision that our enemy will surely face their final destiny under God’s judgement.

Revelation 12:9 says,

 **“The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”**

* The self that once walked is the old man, now crucified with Jesus at the time of conversion.
* ‘Once walked’ means we should live differently than we did before because we were made alive by Jesus Christ.
* A dead man feels comfortable in his coffin; but if he were to be made alive again, he would instantly feel suffocated and uncomfortable. There would be a strong urge to escape the coffin and leave it behind.

 ***3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.***

* We once were driven by the lusts and cravings of our flesh.
* For the momentary pleasures of the flesh, people do all kinds of evil and become factories of sins.
* When we were dead in transgressions and sins, we tried to gratify our fleshly desires and cravings.
* After enjoying sinful pleasures for a moment, we suffered in guilt, confusion, and meaninglessness. As human beings still in our transgressions and sins, we were utterly hopeless.
* In our sinful nature we provoked God. We were the objects of God’s wrath, and we deserved it. This was our past life.
* We must take seriously the idea that the children of wrath rightly deserve God's judgement. They are not "victims" at all. They are the rightful and just recipients of God's justice.

1-3, What has God done for us who were dead in transgressions and why? (4-5)

 ***But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.***

* Here the word “but” marks a great transition. The subject of this sentence is God. “But God…” Not “But we…”
* When we were dead in transgressions and sins and utterly hopeless, **God** began to do his life-giving work in us.
* What moved God was his great love, his rich mercy, and his grace. Because of his love, because of his mercy, and because of his grace, he made us alive with Christ.
* Someone said, “Mercy is God not punishing us as our sins deserve, and grace is God blessing us despite the fact that we do not deserve it.”
* God saw our hopeless and miserable condition. Knowing this, He showed us mercy and grace.
* Our misery stirred the mercy of God. He saw that we were dead and powerless to do anything about our helpless, corrupt, and sinful condition.
* In His love and grace, He wanted to do something to take away our misery. In His compassion, He sent his Son Jesus. God demonstrated his love for us in this way.
* In his great love, rich mercy and grace, he made us alive with Christ. Now we can commune with God; we can hear God’s words and praise and worship God.
* We can have fellowship with God. We are no longer dead but alive. Our God made us alive.

 ***made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.***

* This is when God started loving us. He did not wait until we were lovable. He loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses.
* This is the requirement for being saved. You must first be dead, dead to every attempt to justify yourself before God.

John 5:24 reads,

 “He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me … has passed from death into life.”

* By grace you have been saved: Paul is compelled to add here that this is the work of God's grace. In no way does salvation involve man's merit.
* Our salvation - our rescue - from spiritual death is God's work done for the undeserving.

2. Read verses 6-9. How does God show us the incomparable riches of His grace? (6-7) Why should we not boast of our salvation? (8-9)

2-1, Read verses 6-9.

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, **7** in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. **8** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—**9** not by works, so that no one can boast.

2-2, How does God show us the incomparable riches of His grace? (6-7)

 ***And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,***

* God raised us up with Christ: This is what God did to those dead in sin. He shared in our death that we could share in His resurrection life.
* The old or corrupted and sinful man is crucified. We are now new creations in Jesus. The old things pass away and all things becoming new.
* Paul says “with Christ” three times. God first made us alive with Christ, second raised us up with Christ and third seated us with Christ (all past tense: God has already finished these works).
* In the past, we were the objects of God’s wrath but now, we are God’s new creations, heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ.
* Therefore going back to our old life of sin is impossible. No one wants to go back to the coffin and to the condition of decay.

 ***7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.***

* In the future, God will continue to show the exceeding riches of His grace to us. God will never stop dealing with us on the basis of grace.
* From this verse it is clear that Paul fully expected the gospel of the grace of God to be preached in the ages to come.
* Paul was also assured that the same gospel would be preached to the ends of the dispensation. He looked to the perpetuity of the gospel, through the ages.
* When we offer a gift to someone and they refuse it, God still reaches into His storehouse of grace and persists, pleading with us to receive His free gift.
* Praise His rich mercy and grace! Praise His indescribable kindness!

2-3, Why should we not boast of our salvation? (8-9)

 ***For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast.***

* Salvation is the free gift of God. When we remember God’s grace we can become humble.
* If we don’t remember God’s grace, we become proud, worldly and self-centered. This kind of pride leads to individual downfall and divisions among believers.
* Let us remember God’s grace and mercy. Let us participate in the works of God’s mercy and grace, out of gratitude to our God.

3. Read verse 10. What does it mean that we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus? What is God’s purpose for us? What are the good works that God prepared in advance for us to do?

3-1, Read verse 10.

For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

3-2, What does it mean that we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus?



* God’s handiwork can be God’s masterpiece. We Christians are God’s masterpieces. We were dead in sins. But God made us alive, forgiving all our sins. This was not done at random, but was wholly prepared in advance. Praise God!

3-3, What is God’s purpose for us?

 ***For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.***

* God saves us not merely to save us from the wrath we rightly deserve, but also to make something beautiful of us.
* We are His workmanship, which translates the ancient Greek word ‘poiema’. The idea is that we are His beautiful poem. The Jerusalem Bible translates workmanship as "work of art."
* God's love is a transforming love. It meets us right where we are at, but when we receive this love it always takes us where we should be going.
* The love of God that saves my soul will also change my life beautifully.
* We are His workmanship, His creation - something new He has made of us in Jesus Christ.
* Spiritual life cannot come to us by development from our old nature. Apart from the grace of God, we would come out worse than before this transformation began.

3-4, What are the good works that God prepared in advance for us to do?

 ***For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.***

* The words “to do” in Greek means to walk or to live. So this word refers to one’s way of life. Doing good works does not necessarily mean checking off a “to do” list for God.
* Rather, it means that as we walk with Christ in our new lives, we reveal the incomparable riches of God’s grace.
* It is a matter of lifestyle, not tasks to be marked off a checklist. Doing good works is not a condition for our salvation. Rather, it is the result and fruit of our salvation.
* When we fully receive God’s grace, we naturally do good works which reveal God’s glory.

**Conclusion**

 We were once dead in sins, but God in his rich mercy and grace made us alive with Christ so that we would reveal the incomparable riches of God’s grace. May we remember God’s grace upon us and share this grace with others. May we serve fall semester ministry joyfully and thankfully remembering God’s marvellous work in us and share it with many campus students. May God bless our one to one ministry at LBCC and CSULB with His great love, rich mercy, grace and kindness. Amen!

**One word: Grace, Mercy, and Kindness!**