

For We Are His Workmanship, Created in Christ Jesus!

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Bible Text: Ephesians 2:10
Preached on: Sunday, June 10, 2018

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If you will this morning, turn with me to our text which is found in Ephesians 2:10. Ephesians 2:10. It should be pretty familiar ground to the saints this morning as it's right in the middle of one of the blessed passages that the Lord has blessed us with this morning. Ephesians 2:10 says,

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, how gracious and holy thou art, how good thou art, how precious thou art to thy people. O Lord, may you be pleased this hour and the hour to come to bring our minds and our hearts away from this world, away from self, and Lord, may you exalt thee in our minds and our hearts and our souls. May you show us, Lord, the crown that thou would wear in our lives. May you show us, Lord, you are the rightful wearer of that crown. O Lord, be pleased now to come with power, to come and settle us at thy feet to be instructed. We pray for those, Lord, who are not with us this morning. May you bring them back to us safely and may you bless this time that you have ordained for us to have here in thy word for the praise and glory of thee. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Our text this morning, Ephesians 2:10, Paul declares, Paul cries out, Paul exclaims with great exuberance, happiness, that "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." These are the words that define the union that the people of God have in his Son. These are the words that define life in Christ. These words define God's plan for his sheep.

I wonder this morning, I thought about this this morning as the Lord brought me here this morning and I was up and praying and preparing for this time and asking the Lord to prepare me, I wonder this morning how concerned you are with the crown whether the Lord Jesus Christ is wearing that crown in your life this morning, is it a crown that you believe you are rightful to wear. Is it your crown? We are told in the book of Revelation that that day that the saints will throw their crowns at the feet of the Lord and I ask you this morning because that's really the crux of the whole matter when we come to Paul

defining the workmanship of God and when we come and Paul is defining what we are in Christ in your life of however many years its been, has the Lord ever impressed upon you a desire, a holy desire only given by him, brought forth by him, that in your life as you live in this life, that the people and the witness that you have toward the people that live in this world, is that in your life, your Lord wears the crown in your life? He is Lord? He is your sovereign Lord? He has done all things for you? He has performed all things for you?

Sometimes I think in this life we get so caught up with those that we talk to and we get into these matches of people talking about what they've done for God and we get caught up in that too and we start speaking that language and, "This is what we've done. Or this is what..." But that's not the language of the saints. It's certainly not Paul's language here. When Paul is brought to say these words, it has the connecting word "for" and we're going to talk about that because that's the crux of our message today is where is he coming from. But he says we are his workmanship. He is the Potter, the sovereign Potter over the clay. Therefore the witness that you have in this life, is it all of him? Is it what Christ has done in your life? Is he life to you? Has he revealed that as you live it's not you living, it's Christ living in you? The works spoken of here, are they the works of faith by his faith? Or are you going to argue with him this morning? Are you going to wrestle with God to say, "No, no, no, this has to be my work. Lord, I know what you've done, now let me show you what I've done." That's not grace at all. That's not what Paul is talking about here when he says we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.

David said in Psalm 138:8, "The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me." The Lord will do it. He will perfect all that concerns me. "Thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands." The Psalmist, David, is called and just like Paul, he cries out to the Lord and says, "Lord, I know that I am your workmanship. Forsake not the works of your own hands," meaning, "Lord, bring forth that fruit that you have ordained that I am to walk in. Let it be, Lord, by your power, by your mercy, by your grace."

Paul later in Acts 17:28 said this when he was preaching on Mars Hill. He said, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." That had to come to such a shock to superstitious people or people who are so self-centered, self-centered in religion, self-centered in what they did for their gods, self-centered in how they preserved their own life, Paul would say that the testimony that Christ wrought in his soul and brought forth to preach to these people was that, "in him we live," "we" being the body of Christ. "In him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." That's union. That's this entire book of Ephesians, Paul writes about union and what we have in Christ, what we have before the foundation of the world, what the Lord in time works in every one of our souls to glorify his name, to glorify his work. That's that question: where is the crown in your life today? Do you speak from your wearing it? What you do? Your obedience based on what God did in one event sometime in your life? Or is your life a continual outflowing of what the Lord does in your life day after day after day? Because we are his workmanship. That's the question we have for us this morning.

Paul later in Philippians 1:6 said this, "Being confident," I am confident, "of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you," Paul wrote that to the people there at Philippi, he said, "I am confident that what the Lord has begun in you, he will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." He will preserve you until the moment that Christ comes forth in your soul and he will preserve you until the day that the Lord brings you and sets you on his right hand to welcome you into the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. He will perform it. He will do it. Faithful is he that calleth you. He will do it.

That's my question this morning as we sit here this morning and Paul says these words, "we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works." You say, "Oh, well, there are those works..." We don't preach against works, we preach against them being our works. It's not my work. If it is, it's not worth anything. It's marred by sin. It's marred by my fallen nature. If I'm left to perform something of my own self, it's going to come from self, it's going to come from the marred person that I am. There is only one good thing in me and that's the seed of Christ. Paul said, "In my flesh, I find no good things." That means I can't perform anything of myself. The works that the Lord brings forth from his people is his work. It's his faith. It's his love. And make no mistake about it, the people of God will perform good works by Christ. He's faithful to do it. He's faithful to himself. He can swear by no other. He's not going to swear by you. You are a fallen man. He's not going to swear by me. I'm fallen man. He swears by himself. He is the great faithful Creator.

We are his workmanship. All of those things that we hear in Hebrews 11, the great works of faith, that's what they are, the works of his faith. If you walk out of here today after hearing all the Scriptures that the Lord I pray will bring forth today of what he's done and you still believe you are the cause of the good work, you don't know grace. You don't know the mystery of the Gospel of Christ in you, the hope of glory, that it's him who performs all things, it is he who is faithful to himself, to bring glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. And if we be in Christ, we glory. Let him that glory, glory in the Lord. In the Lord.

So this morning, I want to speak about his work. I want to speak about his workmanship and before I've quoted Paul, I've quoted David, how about we quote the Lord Jesus Christ? John 15:16 said, "Ye have not chosen me." You disciples have not chosen me. This is that great chapter of the vine and the branches and how he is the vine and all life flows from him. He even tells us right there in verse 5, "Without me you can do nothing." We'll argue that every day. We'll argue it, "No, Lord, I can do this. I can do this." My wife gets agitated with me many times, "I want to do this for you. I want to do this for you." If I'm sick, "No, I'll do this." That's my fallen nature. I want to do it myself. I want to feel like I have an accomplishment. I want to feel like something that will help me look at me, that I've done something. That's my fallen nature that I fell in Adam. We always underestimate the greatness of the fall. There is nothing good. The Lord said, "I looked down and I saw none that were good," because we all took part in that fall. There is none good, no, not one, but yet our fallen nature, that nature in Adam keeps wanting to say, "No, Lord, I'm good. Look what I've done."

But Jesus said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you." If he's ordained it like in our passage today, "I've ordained that you should walk in them," if he said it, he will perform it, he will do it. That's sovereignty, his sovereignty, his sovereign power. Jesus says to his disciples, "I've ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit." Is that of themselves? Absolutely not. "I've ordained it. I have written it. It will be performed in time because of what I've done. I will be the one who brings it forward. You haven't chosen me, I've chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain." Why does our fruit remain? Because Christ is in us, the hope of glory. The fruit of the child of God will not run out. I am always, I read it again this morning, the Lord brought me to that passage in Matthew 25, I believe it is, where they came to Jesus and Jesus said he set them on the left hand and on the right hand and the ones on the right hand, his people, he said to them, he said, "When I was hungered, you gave me food. When I was this, you gave me that," and they all sat there and they said, "Lord, when did we see you that way?" That's his work. It's not the children of God going around saying, "Look at me. Look what I've performed."

We are brought to see what the Lord has done in our life and that's what the Lord told them, "When this took place, I was there. I did it. This is what my people," and then those that were outside of Christ said, "Lord, we never saw that. We never did anything. We never saw that you were hungry." That's right, you never saw that your brother was in need. No, you didn't because Christ isn't in you. Christ is in his people and he's powerful and he's ever-working. He's ever-reigning to bring forth the glory of himself in his children. We are his workmanship. To him be all glory.

Now, what we have in 10 is that connecting word, "for." How are we connected? What is Paul talking about? Well, we back right up and we begin right in chapter 2 where Paul said, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins," and the first thing we see that we are his workmanship, that the good works that are done by the Lord is quickening. Quickening. We must be given life. That is not for us to make life of our own. When I was a young man or young boy, that's what I was taught, I had to procure life for myself by my obedience, the good works that I did. That's how the Lord gave me life, the more work I did for him, the more I chose him, the more he loved me. But then I started getting older and I started getting into a crowd of people and different people and I wasn't performing anything for him anymore and guess what? If I was elected in him before the foundation of the world, he loved me then too. He loved me then too and it didn't depend on me and what I did for him, and it still doesn't today because I'm his workmanship.

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." He and only he gives life. In Colossians 2:13, Paul says, "And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh." Your flesh will never be quickened. Your flesh will never have life. Your flesh is death. It has all the workings of sin in it. It has all the presence of the wicked one in it. But Paul said, "You being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." The Lord reveals that to his child, that it is by his forgiveness. He shows you that's the

first thing. Yes, all this sin that you are, this is what you are in the fall, but he has quickened you to life. He has given you life by his blood. He has given you life because that blood has covered all the multitude of your sins and now you've been set free by him. We'll talk more about that in a minute but he is the life-giver.

Turn with me to the first place we'll go this morning, to 1 John 5. We're just going to look at a couple of verses here in 1 John 5 starting in verse 11. John writes, "this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life." This is the record, God has given to the people of God eternal life.

"He that hath the Son hath life." He who has the Son has life because the Son is life, the Son is the quickening spirit, the Son is life.

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." I don't know how much clearer you can get there. In Christ is life, outside of Christ is death and there is no gray area. There is no mixture of works and grace. There is no mixture of what we do and what he does. If you're in Christ, you have life, life eternal. If you're outside of Christ, it doesn't matter what you do. Judas showed us that by his repentance. Esau showed us that by his repentance. All the things that you believe you can work out of yourself are for naught. You will perish.

Verse 20 says, "And we know that the Son of God is come." This is by union. How do we know it? The Lord reveals it into the soul of his people. We know that the Son of God is come. He's come into my soul. He has performed all things for me. He is life to me.

"And hath given us an understanding," that is hidden from the world. The Scriptures tell us it's hidden. The only way to understand this is by spiritual revelation, by God the Spirit, by the Spirit of Christ, the Triune Lord revealing himself in your life. That's how. That's the understanding that he gives.

"That we may know him that is true." That is true. Is it truth in your soul this morning what's being said? Is it truth to you? Is there still part of you that riles up and rebels this morning and says, "No, I've got to have a part in it"? I don't sit here today in hopelessness of you because I know if the Lord has begun a good work in you, he will perform it. He'll rid you of that. He'll bring you to depend upon him and his work only and he'll do it through affliction and he'll do it through hardship and he'll do it through trials and he'll do it through chastening and all because he loves his own, and not one of them will be plucked out of his hand or perish. He will perform it.

"We may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true." There's that union. We are in him who is truth, "even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." Is that eternal life to you? Once again, I refer back to being a young man and I thought eternal life would be all the good things I enjoyed here. I wanted to play basketball in heaven. I wanted to play with my friends in heaven. I wanted to not go to school in heaven. I wanted all those things that I loved so much down here to be what heaven was until the Lord revealed his Son in me and now my soul and that seed of

Christ in me says, "No, I want more of him. I want heaven to be all of him. I want to enjoy the Triune Lord apart from sin and apart from this fallen world. I desire that union to be manifested where I will know him as he is and as I am." But that's all by him. The clutches, even my carnal clutches are too engrossed in this world to ever desire that.

But yes, back in our text, "you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." The quickening, the life-giver is the Lord. We are his workmanship. It is his life that he plants us into. We have life because of him.

Now we go through 2 through 5 here and bear with me as I read it. "Wherein in time past ye walked," past tense, "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air," we've got the world, we've got the wicked one mentioned, "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." There is a deliverance and that's what we're talking about here in this passage, deliverance of Christ by his love, by his grace and by his mercy because we are his workmanship. It is his deliverance. He has taken us from this death that we experienced, that's the thing, have you experienced a death to those things? We have the sentence of death in ourselves. What is that? Death to the old nature. Death to the way that we were. Have you ever experienced that?

Verse 3, "Among whom also we all had our conversation." Now I'm not talking about continuing to sin because we do that. We'll talk about that again in a minute. But do you have a time in your life that you never even thought about God? Maybe that time is now. Maybe you're struggling now because you say, "Well, I don't know if I've ever had that time." Brothers and sisters, you'll know it. You'll know it because the Lord will come so powerfully and reveal to you what he has taken you from. That's the hope of life. That is life.

You know, the last couple of weeks, we've been seeing if you've read the news, you've seen a lot of these "celebrities" starting to take their lives. They're hanging themselves and they're just at the end. What's the difference? What is the difference? The devil came to Jesus and tempted him with the same thing. What is the difference in the child of God's life? It's the life of Christ in his soul. And I look at these headlines sometimes and sometimes I just sit and cry inside and I think, "Wow, this is truly what life outside of Christ is." You could have the riches, you could have the names, but be so empty and just say, "Do you know what? It's better if I take my own life." Listen to the deceiver who says, "Yes, it's better for you to be that way," so that you'll serve him. So that you'll be in hell with him.

It is, it's very sobering. It's very sobering but it magnifies grace. It magnifies what we are in Christ, that no matter how hard it gets in this life, he's there. He lifts the child of God from that muck and that mire and down into that dungeon and brings them out as he hears the sighing of the prisoner and he brings them out, washes them in his blood, and brings them into communion to reveal the union.

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature," nature. Do you

understand that fallen nature? Do you remember that in your life? Do you remember a time where that was the whole crux of your life? You lived to fulfill the lust of your flesh even as others. But then we have the great lightning bolt of grace,

"But God." But God. Here's the deliverance, the deliverance from a past life, the deliverance from backsliding to that life now which we do. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us." Mercy. Love. "Even when we were dead in sins," which shows us, once again, this has nothing to do with the piece of pottery and everything to do with the Potter. When we were dead in sins, he formed us to a vessel unto honor, the honor of himself because he has formed us by bringing forth himself in our life.

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Not with anything, with Christ. That's how we were quickened into life, by Christ, with Christ. "(By grace are ye saved.)"

So in this section, Paul 2 through 5 wants to know, wants to tell us that we are his workmanship and we're delivered by Christ. We're delivered from the life that we had. That's why I said today is a day to proclaim the Gospel of Christ and to be brought to rest in that Gospel. What has the Lord done for me? What has he done for you? May he examine your soul now at this hour. Has he delivered you in himself by his love and his mercy and his grace?

Peter in 1 Peter 2:24 said, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins," I know it doesn't feel that way at times, sin bears us down but we are positionally dead to them because of Christ, because Christ is reigning in our soul and sin will have no more dominion over us.

"Being dead to sin should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." By the work of Christ on the cross, he has put away sin forever as far as the east is to the west and our Father will never see them. He will see the righteousness of his Son and he will proclaim that he is satisfied because of his Son. Not by works which you and I have done. By grace we are saved. For by grace ye are saved. Deliverance from sin. Deliverance from bondage.

What about Hebrews 2:14-15 which I quote very often? "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself," all of him, he made himself in the likeness of sinful flesh to do what? "Likewise took part of the same; that through death," he came to die to set us free and to "destroy him that had the power of death," the wicked one. He's the one that has the power of death in our mind. He's the one that comes with the power of death. That's why I said, the tragedy of this world and people taking their lives, why? Because the one who has the power of death has the power in their life because they're not in Christ and to some of you it may be cold and cruel and harsh but to most of us, it is grace magnified. To him be all glory for his sovereign election of grace and, Lord, may we be numbered in those. May you reveal thy sovereign election of grace

at this hour that we be in that number, not by works which we have done but by your grace.

Verse 15 says, "And deliver them who through fear of death." Deliverance. That's what 2 through 5, that's what we are his workmanship. He has delivered us through the fear of death "were all their lifetime subject to bondage." And boy, do we have it. Go to the doctor right now and get a report that you don't like, the fear of death is going to seize on you. That's our fallen nature. We can't trust him. We can't trust the Lord that he's worked it out for our good. We can't trust the Lord that he brought it into our life. We're too busy in fear, the fear of death, but he set us free. He set us free by himself, what he's done. That's what we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus, that's what that means. That's what Paul is telling us. He's building up to the crescendo in verse 10 to say that.

You see, this is what the Lord has done. This is what his workmanship is, freedom, deliverance, all of him. This is his workmanship and this is what he does in the souls of his children. Ask the Lord to examine you now, "Is this present in me? Has the Lord set me free?" And if he hasn't, may he bring you to cry out to him to set you free.

Micah 7:18 says, "Who is a God like unto thee," it's a question, "that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." Our Lord delights in mercy. He's a Lord of enduring mercy. His mercy endures forever. He delights to show mercy to his children and I think about those times that as a dad, how unmerciful I am at times to my children and the Lord quickens that to me at times how great a Father he is, that he's never unmerciful to me. Never. And I'm living proof of that because I'm still standing here and I haven't been consumed because of his mercy. The sins that I know that I've done against him are numerable and wicked and horrific but he's put them away. He's put them away in his Son. His Son has taken those sins and he died for those sins and he nailed them on the tree and he took them away as far as the east is from the west and he did that for me, to set me free. If you be in him, he did that for you no matter how bad you believe a sinner you are. And I hope you do believe that.

Go with me now over to Titus 3 if you will. I think I've been quoting this the whole time not really realizing it. Let's go to Titus 3 and let's read this portion starting in verse 3, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived." I'm sitting here thinking, every time I read one of these words I'm thinking of a time, times that that's happened so much in my life. "Serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared." Here's the difference. All of those sins that were just named, yes, is our nature prone to those? Yes. Will our nature do that? Yes. But God. But what is his plan to overrule that sin?

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." There's that word again, "mercy." His salvation is because of mercy, not anything we've

done. We don't work any righteousness. Isaiah said, "All my righteousness is as filthy rags." I hope you say the same thing.

He saved us "by the washing of regeneration." That is the quickening, that he made us alive. That is the conversion, that he showed us we were once walking this way, we're walking this way now because of his life in us. That's regeneration, being born again, and without that, you'll never see the kingdom of God. That's what John 3 tells us, you'll never enter into the kingdom of God. All of his children are born again and you say, "Oh, and then he leaves me?" No. No.

"By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Because every day of our life we need the Holy Ghost to show us what Christ has done. He takes the works of Christ and shows us what Christ has done in our soul because we are his workmanship and he will receive all glory for all glory is due his name for what he has done. Isn't that blessed? I hope it's blessed to you. I hope you say, "Yes." The Lord brings forth that praise. The Lord's work is perfect. The Lord is active in the life of his children. He is.

"By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." No other way. All gifts given from the Father through the Son. He is our Joseph who opened the storehouses. There is nowhere else for the child of God to go and you will not receive any gift anywhere else. The world doesn't have it. Your self doesn't have it. Your loved ones don't have it. Your brethren don't have the gift to give to you. They can't give you the love of Christ. I pray to God they can show you the love of Christ through Christ and they can show and bring forth what the Lord has done in their life. To him be all glory. But they can't give it to you.

"Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace." Do you see that word again, "grace"? We're justified by his grace. We're justified by his blood. We're justified by him, justified by Christ, by his grace.

"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." That life is in his Son, we've already established. That's what we have, an inheritance. Our inheritance is Christ, the Triune Lord in heaven. That's what our inheritance is and in this life we are revealed bits and pieces, crumbs that fall from his table, but dear ones, it's enough. It's enough to sustain life. It's enough to put down the flesh. It's enough to reveal the eternity of the Son of God in the soul. It's enough. He's enough.

Turn with me now a little bit back over to Romans 5:6-10. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." Well, he's good, I would die for him. This is speaking in military terms, how they fought for their general, how they fought, "We'll lay down our life for him. He's a good man. He's leading us." Sometimes that happens.

"But God," here we go again, here's what grace is, "But God commendeth," he showed, "his love toward us," he brought forth that great love, he magnified his love by doing this, "in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Takes us right out of it again, doesn't it? He didn't look down and say, "Oh, you're such a good person. I'm going to die for you. Oh, you're going to do these great works? I'm going to die for you. Oh, you did these great works? Oh, you did these things? Then I'll give you salvation." Oh no. Oh no, no, no, no, no. Does that not magnify the grace of his workmanship?

"He commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood." We've had justified by his grace, we're justified by his blood, it should tell you something, we're justified by Christ. He is the Just and Justifier of all of those who are in him.

"We shall be saved from wrath through him." And there is a wrath to come, dear ones. From the moment that breath leaves you, that last breath, there will be wrath for those outside of Christ but those justified by Christ's grace and by his blood, there will be no wrath but love.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Not you. Not your family. We're saved by his life. That's true life. That's Christ in us, the hope of glory.

John said it this way in 1 John 4:9-10, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." He stood in our place. He incurred the wrath that you and I will never incur. Think about all the sins you've committed this last week. Think of all the sins you'll commit this week. "Well, I can't. I don't know what they are." Well, brothers, sisters, we're going to do them because we're all fallen creatures. All have sinned and come short to the glory of God but he came and absorbed the wrath of the Father for those sins that we be reconciled to the Father. He did that. That's his life. We live by his life, for we are his workmanship.

Verse 6 back in our text, we're back in our text now. Ephesians 2. So now we went through 2 through 5 which was the deliverance in Christ by his love and his mercy and his grace, and now we have resurrection life looking at us here in verse 6, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit," do you see those words? He has made us "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." He has made us lie down. He has made us because in our nature, we're not going to do it. In him we are, because of him.

"And hath raised us," that's resurrection life, that's raised and reigning in Christ. That's what Jesus said when he said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live." That's what we've heard all today. You were dead but now you live. You live because Christ reigns in you, because Christ is life. Yes, are you going to feel dead? Yes. That's that old nature tugging on you. That's the old nature raising its head. That's that warfare that we go through every day. But praise be to God,

he has won the war. It's his faith that has overcome the world. It's his faith that he gives us to persevere until that one day we don't need faith anymore as we'll see him as he is.

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Why has he done that? Because we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. We are raised and reigning in him. Paul said in Romans 6:5, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." And that's the beauty every child of God has. We will be resurrected one day in this great body that he prepares to meet our soul to be with him in eternity, praising him all of our days for what he has done, for what he and the Father, what we have in great glorious union that will never... It is such a mystery still to me how that will ever take place because all I can think of is my carnal mind, all I can think of is how much I've sinned, and all I can think of is how much I don't believe. But one day that won't be true. I'll be eradicated from this sinful body. I'll be taken into his bosom to see him and his glory will fill the heavens so much that I won't see anything else but him. That is a glorious day. Resurrection life here is experiencing a glimpse of that. Raised and reigning in him.

Verse 7 tells us, "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace." Now listen, we're his workmanship, well, what's in his workmanship? Exceeding riches. Not just riches, exceeding riches. It means you and I today can't think of how glorious they'd be. We can't. This mind can't do it. They are exceeding everything we could ever think of. As great and as glorious as we can bring it up in our mind, it's infinitely times better than that because our sin nature is going to mar that.

"That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Do you see that running through all this? Paul never leaves Christ. He never leaves Christ exalted over the creature. He never leaves it to man. He never looks and goes, "Let's take a break from Christ now and let's go to man and let's talk about how glorious man is." You don't see it. I hope you don't. May the Lord bring forth his praise. May the Lord bring forth his glory.

Just hold your finger there and flip a page over, at least it is in mine, to Ephesians 1. Look at 6 and 7, "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." We're accepted in Christ and Christ alone. "In whom," there it is again, this is the exceeding riches, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." His grace and the riches of his grace are so abundant, so much more than I could ever explain up here. He must witness that to you, that we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, and that those riches of what he has done will be brought forth to show us the exceeding riches of what Christ has done.

2 Corinthians 8:9 says, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor." That means he left heaven and he came down here to submit himself to everything down here that we are submitted to and he did that for you and I if we be in him. He did that to leave heaven where all of the riches of the glory of the Lord is and he came down here and did that. "For your sakes he became poor that ye through his poverty might be rich." Do you see? He did it for his bride.

Greater love has no man that a man lay down his life for his friends. That's what he did. He did it all for us, the bride of Christ that's in Christ.

Then we have, go back to our text, 8 and 9. Paul reiterates this point. It's so important to know. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Grace is the gift of God. Faith is the gift of God. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He begins it in the soul by a gift, he sees the faith all the way through and he ends that faith in himself. Remember what we said at the beginning? Until the Lord Jesus Christ is manifested, that's what faith does, leads us to Christ. That's the glory of what he's done for his people.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." And you know we do. You know we do and every time we do of our obedience or what we have to do or whatever, we spit in the face of grace. I hate to say it that way but it's the honest truth. We look at what he's done and we say, "Lord, that's not good enough. We've got something else we can do too."

Almost made it through today without quoting you my favorite verse for us in Galatians 2:20-21. Paul said it this way, "I am crucified with Christ," I am crucified with Christ, "nevertheless I live," I live because of the life of Christ and that's what he says, "yet not I," don't look at me, Paul the apostle, don't look at me that was on the road to Damascus, don't look at me, don't look at what I am now preaching the Gospel, "yet not I," I didn't do any of this, "but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh," that I'm standing before you preaching, the life that live now in the flesh, "I live by the faith of the Son of God," I live by his faith, I live by his life, I live by his grace, I live by the faith of the Son of God "who loved me, and gave himself for me." That's where life is, Paul said. That's where life is. Life is in another which is in me. That's Christ in me, the hope of glory. Verse 21, "I do not frustrate the grace of God." Why? How do we frustrate the grace of God? "I did this. Oh, I did it. Oh, you know my obedience, I was good for God. This is what I need to do." That frustrates the grace of God. It's not the grace of God. That mixture will never be the grace of God. Paul said, "I don't do it because of him, because it's Christ in me. It has nothing to do with me, it's got everything to do with him." He won't share the throne with man. It's not man's throne. That crown is his to wear and he will wear it reigning in your life. He will and he'll knock any of those false crowns right off your head because he chastens whom he loves. "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain," and he's not dead in vain. His resurrection life tells us otherwise.

2 Timothy 1:9, the last portion of Scripture I'll read today, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." That tells you when it was. It tells you the power of grace. It tells you it's according to his will.

Then we come to our text, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." God has

ordained them. God has brought them about. God has purposed them and everything he has purposed, he will bring about because he is the sovereign Lord.

I'll leave you with two thoughts. The first one from Paul in Philippians, at least I think that's what this says, 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." And I'll leave you with the words of Daniel 4:35, "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" And that includes you and me, brothers and sisters. May he subdue our flesh this hour to show us. Our text one more time, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." To him be all glory.

Dear heavenly Father, may you add thy power and thy clarity for your name's sake. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.