

Sermon Notes: *Grace Works* (Ephesians 2:10)

Intro: By grace God saved us through the Spirit enabled gift of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. Our salvation is not a result of our works so that no one may boast. We are *God's* workmanship. *God's* new creation by his ingrafting us into Christ which he has done solely because of his grace and mercy. But what is God's goal in showing us grace? Not simply that we might live but also that we might bear fruit (Jn. 15:1ff). That we might honor, reverence, and love him with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. And doing so, enjoy him forever. Three encouragements to holiness in this verse:

#1: Holiness by God's gracious design. To bear the lovely fruit of holy deeds and a holy walk, we must begin where Paul does. We must assert by faith who we are now by God's gracious design. God's workmanship! God's new creation in Christ! We have this identity not by our works but by God's grace and power. Understanding who we are by God's ingrafting us into Christ, living out our new identity in Christ is the root of true holiness. Christian, who are you? "Workmanship" was used frequently in Paul's Greek OT to signify creation as the work of God's hands (Ps. 92:4). Sing for joy. God created you first in Adam. He is recreating you now in Jesus Christ. How much more strongly could Paul emphasize God's sovereign grace in saving you? He has compared salvation to resurrection from the dead, liberation from slavery, rescue from condemnation. Each emphasizes God's sovereign initiative and power: the dead cannot bring themselves to life, the captives cannot liberate themselves, the condemned cannot rescue themselves. Now Paul asserts that salvation is a re-creation and new creation.

Understanding who you are by God's sovereign gracious design is the root of holiness. *Gospel holiness* is learning to be in thought and action what God has already made you through faith union with Christ. "Know thy self." A new creation by your co-resurrection with Christ (vs.5).

God raised Jesus from the dead three days after he made atonement for sins by his sacrificial death. His resurrection is proof that his sacrifice for sin was accepted (Rom. 4:25). Rest in Christ's blood as the payment for your sins. But also be assured that you are reconciled to God and the power which raised Jesus from the dead has raised you to new life. A new creation by your co-ascension with Christ (vs. 6; "raised him up"). Not only did God raise Jesus from the dead but forty days after that he withdrew him into the highest heaven (Acts 1:9; Ps. 110).

There he appears in God's presence for us. His five wounds received on the cross pour out effectual prayers for us. God blessed Christ's saving work for us with a crown of glory and his highest favor. But united to my crucified and ascended Savior, God favors me just as highly! A new creation by your co-reign with Christ (vs. 6). "seated us with him." Christ reigns with all authority. By his power, he defends us and keeps us safe. But we reign with him. God will eventually overrule all the powers which oppose us. We will share in Christ's coming reign. You are deeply planted in the fertile soil of all Christ's saving graces (1:3). This is who you are by God's gracious design. When you are discouraged by your temptations and sins. Besieged by doubts. Affirm by faith who you are "in Christ"!

#2: Holiness according to God's sovereign directives. "for good works." "For" signifies purpose. We are not saved by our works but by God's grace—by God given life and faith. But we are saved for good works. Here is a good way to assess the state of your heart. Would you prefer a salvation that delivered you from the penalty of sin but not from its power? What "good works" must we cultivate as the fruit of new life in Christ? WCF 16:1: "Good works are only such as God has commanded in his holy Word, and not such as, without the warrant of

Scripture, are devised by men out of blind zeal or any pretense of good intention.” Good works are *not* what we might conjure up by our religious zeal or imagination! What superstitions, idolatries, and evils have religiously minded people, even of exacting conscience, created in the name of God! Chs. 4-6 will say more, but here we should make two points: God’s law must direct us. God’s moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments is the family code of the children of God (Ps. 19:8) and proves the reality of our love for our Savior (Jn 14:15). God’s gifts must direct us. (4:7ff.). God has given each gifts, graces, and opportunities for serving not only in the church but in the world. Kuyper: “There is not one square of the world of which Christ does not say ‘It is mine!’” Be God’s person where he puts you. Obey not to be saved but because you are saved by grace through faith.

#3: Holiness because of God’s prior determination. “walk” implies a new lifestyle. Do you despair of attaining a holy walk? Don’t! Be reconciled to God by faith in Christ’s blood! Then walk according to your new identity in Christ (above), according to God’s directives as God’s child. Finally remember your holiness is your destiny which “God prepared beforehand” according to his prior determination. Foreordained by the Father (1:4) Secured by the Son (1:7) the Father’s purpose was secured by the Son’s death Applied by the Spirit Phil. 1:6; 2:13. God’s purpose will not fail!