



THE WORLD GOD IS MAKING | WHO ARE WE BECOMING? (6)

October 18, 2026

Ephesians 2:8-10

PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships
To participate in God's mission to the world

WORSHIP

PLEASE OPEN IN PRAYER

RESPONSIVE PRAYER — Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

Serve the LORD with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

Know that the LORD, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;

We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,

and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

For the LORD is good;

his steadfast love endures forever,

and his faithfulness to all generations.

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:8-10

READING

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

BIBLE STUDY

Commentary

We are continuing our sermon series through Ephesians called *The World God Is Making*, and this week we will finish the section we began last week. In verses 1-7, Paul described what we were apart from Christ (dead in trespasses and sins, following the course of this world, and by nature children of wrath) and what God has done in light of this dreadful state. He made us alive together with Christ, raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us (verse 7).

Verse 8 begins with “for” and explains how all this came about through the use of three foundational words of the Christian faith: salvation, grace, and faith. Salvation is more than forgiveness; it is deliverance from the death, slavery, and wrath of verses 1-3, and it

includes the whole of our new life with Christ. Grace is God's free and undeserved favor toward sinners. And faith is the instrumental means by which we receive it, or as our Shorter Catechism puts it, the grace by which we "receive and rest upon [Jesus] alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel" (WSC 86).

Paul balances that positive statement about our salvation with two negatives: it is "not your own doing," and it is "not a result of works." The first rules out salvation as something we achieve through effort, and the second rules it out as our reward for our deeds. This is applied to the whole of being saved by grace through faith as God's gift from start to finish. As the pastor John Stott once put it, "We must never think of salvation as a kind of transaction between God and us in which he contributes grace and we contribute faith." And since there is no room for human merit, there is no room for human boasting either. Stott again: "We shall not be able to strut round heaven like peacocks." Heaven will be filled with the deeds of Christ and the praises of God (Revelation 5:9-12).

The passage then closes with one more positive statement, that "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works" (verse 10). So far in this chapter, salvation has been described as resurrection from the dead, liberation from slavery, and rescue from condemnation, and in each case the work is God's. Now Paul calls it new creation (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17). This does not, however, make us passive, as if grace leaves us free to go on as we were (Romans 6:1-2). We are not saved by good works (verses 8-9), but we are created for them (verse 10). Good works are necessary, not as the ground of our salvation but as the "fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith" (Westminster Confession of Faith 16.2). And even these are God's gift, since he prepared them beforehand and works in us both to will and to work for his good pleasure (Philippians 2:12-13). And so the passage closes with a people who once walked in death and now walk in good works — which is precisely how God's grace is put on display (Ephesians 2:7), so that others may see our good works and give glory to our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

1. Looking at the Bible

- Verses 8-9 make one positive statement and two negative ones. What are they? What effect does this have on the argument Paul is making?
- Compare Ephesians 2:1-2 with verse 10. What are some similarities, and what are some differences?
 - *'And you were dead in the trespasses and sins² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.*

2. Looking at Jesus

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Not only does every passage point to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- Why does Paul work so hard to make it crystal clear that this salvation is by grace, not by our works or human effort?
- Paul says we are created "in Christ Jesus" for good works (v. 10). What does it mean to be created "in Christ Jesus," and what is the significance of it in this verse?

3. Looking at our Hearts

- When you hear the word “works” as it relates to salvation, what is your natural response?
- What hinders you from doing the good works God prepared for you to do?

4. Looking at our World

- God prepared good works beforehand for us to walk in (v. 10). What good works might already be in front of you this week?
- Who in your life would see those works, and what would you want them to conclude?

PRAYER • Share prayer requests with one another.