

Created to do Good Works

Ephesians 2:10

Online Sermon:

http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

Great Works of Art

The ability to take existing materials and either paint, sculpt or build something spectacular is something a rare few creative genius' have been able to accomplish. When one investigates Mona Lisa's "enigmatic expression that seems both alluring and aloof"¹ one can't help but marvel at Leonardo da Vinci's talent to use soft, heavily shaped modeling to bring almost to life happiness of the Italian Renaissance era. As one looks up and sees the magnificent 343 figures painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo one can't help but marvel at his shear talent to not only develop the platforms but also to paint so eloquently in such high places! And as one looks at the intricate detail of Christ the Redeemer statue done by Paul Landowski that is at the top of the Corcovado

¹ Taken from the following website:

<https://www.leonardodavinci.net/the-mona-lisa.jsp>

Mountain some 2300 feet high, weighing more than 635 tons, 98 feet long and 92 feet² wide one can't help but stand in awe



of such a brilliant engineering feat! We honor such great artistic endeavors by first naming the person whose creative minds produced them and then by the "vision" or object in which they created. While humanity has made some rather impressive works of art nothing compares to that which God has created!

Unlike the artists who had something such as paint or building materials to create their masterpieces³ we are told in Genesis that God created all that exists out of nothing but by His mere commands! While seeing Leonardo or Michelangelo paint would be a moment one would not easily forget imagine being able to see God create humanity with all our trillions of intricate cells out of the dust of the earth and then out of nothing but His command to be given a soul that is meant not only to communicate but love and be loved by Him!

² Taken from the following website:

<https://www.discoverwalks.com/blog/rio-de-janeiro/top-10-facts-about-christ-the-redeemer-in-rio-de-janeiro/>

³ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 149.

God's Masterpiece of Grace

And if the creation of the human body was not impressive enough in God's grace and through our faith we see and experience the miraculous, being born again! In Ephesians



2:10 Paul states believers are God's "workmanship,"⁴ the masterpieces of His grace!⁵ While humanity was created in God's image after the Fall the Bible describes us as being dead and entangled in sin and incapable of being righteous. No

matter how spectacular the human body might be or how hard one might try to get onto the narrow path by our own effort we simply cannot do so for one who is dead in sin cannot evolve beyond a "fermenting mass of hate, envy, malice, lust, and cruelty"⁶ in the presence of He who has no sin!

A renewed nature⁷ does not come from darkness of the dust of the earth but from the very finger of God Himself!⁸ While being "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalms 139),⁹ the first sketch by the Master's hand¹⁰ is truly miraculous, how much more miraculous it is to see the Potter mold the clay into one who walks, talks, and thinks!¹¹ with the mind of Christ Himself?

"Think of the patience that lent its arm, and its eye, and its heart, and its infinite mind, to the carrying on of the supreme work of producing the image of Christ in those who were born in sin! Think of the skill which makes heirs of God out of heirs of wrath!"¹² It is from the Potter that we the fallen and unrighteous are molded into a masterpiece of His grace by "His loving and powerful hands"¹³ ... we are of infinite value to Him!¹⁴ To have the Master give one a new birth,¹⁵ and write His laws upon one's heart and seal one's eternal destiny with His very own Spirit is a work that cannot be fully understood or rightly appreciated by us mere mortals but in humility and a spirit of thanksgiving gladly received and appreciated!

⁴ Alan Carr, "[The Workmanship of Grace \(Ephesians 2:10\).](#)" in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2642.

⁵ Alan Carr, "[The Workmanship of Grace \(Ephesians 2:10\).](#)" in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2642.

⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 146.

⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 146.

⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 146.

⁹ Tony Evans, "[A New You for a New Year.](#)" in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Eph 2:10.

¹⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 147.

¹¹ Tony Evans, "[A New You for a New Year.](#)" in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Eph 2:10.

¹² C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 147.

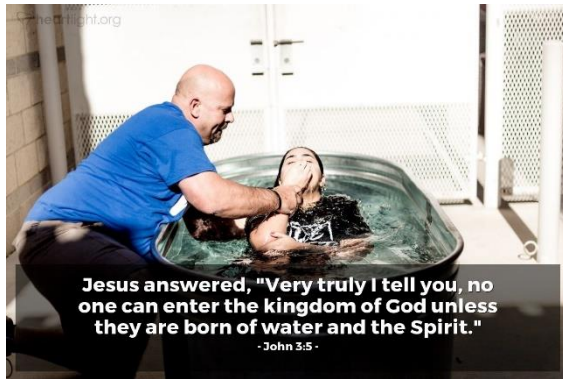
¹³ Alan Carr, "[The Workmanship of Grace \(Ephesians 2:10\).](#)" in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2642.

¹⁴ Alan Carr, "[The Workmanship of Grace \(Ephesians 2:10\).](#)" in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2643.

¹⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, "[The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 149.

God's Workmanship in Jesus

Apostle Paul not only states we are God's workmanship, but the source of our new birth comes solely from Jesus Christ!¹⁶ In the previous two verses Paul says, "for it is by grace you have been saved not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast" (2:8-9)! One may think one can by one's own effort become moral,



righteous, and holy in God's sight¹⁷ but the truth is that "people do not contribute to the rebirth any more than they did to their natural birth."¹⁸ Only God can justify a person and only

through the power of the Holy Spirit is one born again!¹⁹ It is by the grace of God that a person passes from death to life. In the book of Ephesians Paul says God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (1:4) and it is by faith in His atoning sacrifice that a person's sins are washed away (1:7) and instead of heading to hell (2:1-4) receive unmerited grace, salvation (2:5) and an eternal place at our Father's table in

paradise (2:6-7).²⁰ Becoming born again is not a "kind of transaction between God and us in which He contributes the grace and we contribute the faith"²¹ but the willful submission of the clay to deny oneself, take up one's cross and follow the Master (Luke 9:23)²² who forever redeems, molds and transforms one back into the image of God in which one was created! Believers are called to follow Jesus by joining Him and offering their lives as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45) by doing good deeds that point to the glory of God the Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Doing good works fits well within the doctrine of justification by grace through faith because good works are the fruit of one's salvation and not the cause of becoming saved in the first place.

²³ We have been given every spiritual blessing in Christ not just "for a beautiful destiny that God has prepared" for us but to do good works in His name and for His glory.

¹⁶ Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 179.

¹⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 73.

¹⁸ Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 106.

¹⁹ James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 72.

²⁰ Alan Carr, "The Workmanship of Grace (Ephesians 2:10)," in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2641.

²¹ John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 83.

²² James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 72.

²³ James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 72.

Being Equipped to do Good Works

Since we are God’s handiwork created in Christ Jesus, we have been prepared and are expected to do the works His Son did while here on earth. The moment we are saved the Holy Spirit gives us the spiritual gifts necessary to accomplish the divine purpose He has assigned to us (1 Corinthians 12). And yet due to our “insensitivity to God’s plan, our laziness,”²⁴ over occupation of self-interests²⁵ or a general feeling of being “unfit”²⁶ many believers spend a lifetime being part of the Vine but not faithfully producing any fruit!²⁷

Charles Spurgeon states, “the Lord has not ordained any man to eternal life with the proviso that he may continue in sin. Nay, but He has ordained him that he shall become a new creature in Christ Jesus, and then shall forsake his evil ways, and walk in good works until that walk shall end in perfection before the eternal throne.”²⁸

Even though the sculpture of your life is “rough and incomplete”²⁹ rejoice that the “hand that has been laid upon the

canvas”³⁰ is sovereign over all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16) and as such offers limitless grace, forgiveness, and power to do anything asked in His name!



God is not asking the dust of the earth to do the impossible but merely to have faith that “out of us black hearted sinners He can make saints.”³¹ God alone can remove our hearts of stone and give us ones of flesh so that we can do “all things through Christ who

strengthens us” (Philippians 4:13). While reading the Bible, worshipping, and praying are necessary for spiritual growth³² so too is our service for the Lord! Every day we are to ask, “Lord what have You planned for me today for whatever tasks they are I will rejoice knowing You alone are responsible for the outcome of my faithful service³³ which is assured because You have placed Your hands upon me to produce a harvest in Your season!”

²⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive & Readable Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 501.

²⁵ Tony Evans, “[“A New You for a New Year.”](#)” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Eph 2:10.

²⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, “[“The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.”](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 154.

²⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, “[“The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.”](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 154.

²⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, “[“The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.”](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 153.

²⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[“The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.”](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 147–148.

³⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, “[“The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.”](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 148.

³¹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[“The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.”](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 150.

³² James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive & Readable Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 501.

³³ C. H. Spurgeon, “[“The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.”](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 149.

The Works God wants His Masterpieces to Do

So, what kind of works does God want those born again into His family to do? Listen to how the Athenian philosopher Aristides explained to emperor Hadrian how you could identify a person as a Christian just a hundred or so years after the ascension of Jesus.

They do not commit adultery or immorality; they do not bear false witness, or embezzle, nor do they covet what is not theirs. They honor father and mother, and do good to those who are their neighbors. Whenever they are judges, they judge uprightly. They do not worship idols made in the image of man. Whatever they do not wish that others should do to them, they in turn do not do; and they do not eat the food sacrificed to idols. Those who oppress them they exhort and make them their friends. They do good to their enemies. Their wives, O king, are pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest. Their men abstain from all unlawful sexual contact and from impurity, in the hope of recompense that is to come in another world. ... They love one another; the widow's needs are not ignored, and they rescue the orphan from the person who does him

³⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive & Readable Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 504–505.

violence. He who has gives to him who has not, ungrudgingly and without boasting. When the Christians find a stranger, they bring him to their homes and rejoice over him as a true brother. They do not call brothers those who are bound by blood ties alone, but those who are brethren after the Spirit and in God. When one of their poor passes away from the world, each provides for his burial according to his ability. If they hear of any of their number who are imprisoned or oppressed for the name of the Messiah, they all provide for his needs, and if it is possible to redeem him, they set him free. If they find poverty in their midst, and they do not have spare food, they fast two or three days in order that the needy might be supplied with the necessities.³⁴

Through Aristides description of the early church Christian, one sees a portrait of a believer as being a person whose external deeds matched the daily transformation and renewal of their minds into the faithful, obedient servant they were prepared in advance to be by their Master!

Since “good works are God’s design for His new creation and flow from His gracious salvation as its consequence or fruit,”³⁵ then why would the above description

³⁵ Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 180.

of a born-again believer be so foreign to our society?³⁶ I suppose one could argue that due to the “proliferation of government services such as social security, medicare, unemployment and other social programs”³⁷ the need for Christians to be like the early church and sell of one’s possessions to take care of the destitute (Acts 4:34-35)³⁸ is no longer necessary but this is far from the truth! These programs barely move one up to the poverty line and they rarely show God’s love in action.

Furthermore, don’t we who have passed from death to life and basked under the wings of our Father have a responsibility to show the lost of this world what the love of God is through service and good deeds³⁹ in the hopes that the Lord might open their eyes so that they might see even a glimpse of the spiritual blessings they too could have by grace and faith in Him?

We still have the poor, the widows, the fatherless, those in prison, and those with broken minds who have little or no hope! They desperately need Christ’s ambassadors to take the time to be holy by providing for their needs and sharing in their burdens! Spurgeon also suggests us to consider, “the proclamation of his gospel with faith in its power, the pleading

³⁶ James Montgomery Boice, [*Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive & Readable Theology*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 506.

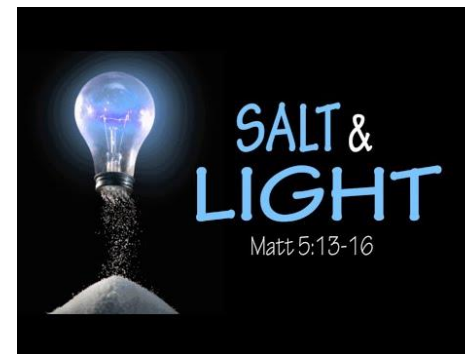
³⁷ James Montgomery Boice, [*Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive & Readable Theology*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 505.

³⁸ James Montgomery Boice, [*Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive & Readable Theology*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 503.

of the promise with expectation of its fulfilment, the sacrifice of personal gain for the service of truth, — works such as these are good, and pleasing to God; for without faith, it is impossible to please Him.”⁴⁰

Witnessing through Good Deeds

Let me finish with one final point about God preparing us in advance to do good deeds. When we are truly in union with Christ then our lives must shine His light so brightly that the Aristides of this world will see the evidence of good fruit in



our lives and see God the Father as not just our but their Master sculptor who deeply desires for them to be part of His family! Too often we become so preoccupied with our own “earthly” issues that we forget how important and profound it is to let our light shine

in the dreariest and darkness places of this world! And even though the Potter is still working on the clay of our lives, pulling off additional pieces of sin torn, pleasure seeking habits; this does not disqualify us from serving but instead

³⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 152.

⁴⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, “[The Singular Origin of a Christian Man.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 152.

intensifies our need to ask and receive additional forgiveness from the Lord so that one might with a pure heart testify to the world of the comfort we have received is available to them as well. Let us show the world the love of God by loving even our enemies. In our “meekness, kindness, uprightness, truth and purity”⁴¹ let us stand on the secured rock of our salvation and shout “God who created the stars, planets, sun, moon”⁴² and all things unseen loves you, and I am living proof that even the dust and a “worm” can receive God’s grace and be born again into His very family!

Since “no artist paints a painting to hide it in a closet, no sculptor fashions a sculpture to hide it away in an unseen place”⁴³ may every day of our lives we present ourselves to the world as God’s masterpiece not to get glory for ourselves but to invite others to bask in His glory!

⁴¹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[The Singular Origin of a Christian Man](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 31 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1885), 148.

⁴² Alan Carr, “[The Workmanship of Grace \(Ephesians 2:10\)](#),” in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2643.

⁴³ Alan Carr, “[The Workmanship of Grace \(Ephesians 2:10\)](#),” in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2642.