

Ephesians 2:1-10

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[0 : 00] Paul introduces the book very quick in two verses, and then verses 3 through 14 is a run-on sentence in his excitement as he starts speaking about the calling of God's people. How God called them before the foundations of the world were laid.

And he's so excited about that, he's reminding them of the riches they have in Christ. And then in the first chapter, he ends in verse 15 through 23 with a second run-on sentence, which really is a prayer for the saints.

They may understand that, the wealth which not only they have in Christ, but what they are to God himself. That we are God's inheritance. And really in that, he's exalting our position in Christ.

He's not exalting us, he's exalting what we have gained in Christ, who we are in Christ, and what we are in heaven because of the redemption we have in Christ. It all points back to Christ.

When we make the transition and we go into the second chapter, we encounter a third run-on sentence, which is verses 1 through 10, in which we will be reading this morning. And it seems as if Paul continues to say the same thing over and over again.

[1 : 05] And he has. And he is. And he's doing it intentionally. Because if you remember, the overall theme of the book of Ephesians is Ephesians chapter 4, verse 1. Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk worthy of the calling which you have in Christ Jesus.

So in order for us to get to the walk, we need to understand the calling. We will never walk worthy if we do not really understand who we are in Christ. We never walk worthy of our calling unless we have a good grasp of our calling.

The book of Ephesians is divided very neatly into two sections. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 deal with theology and the deep things of our salvation and what we have gained in Christ.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 deal with practice, how we should live because of who we are in Christ. And the reality is this. And you say, well, Pastor, you jumped into this with both feet. And I did because the reality is that we will never walk worthy of our calling with an improper understanding of our calling.

Only when we rightfully understand salvation can we rightfully live in light of our salvation. James says that faith without works is dead. But I would say that if our works are based on an inaccurate faith, then they're useless.

[2 : 22] And I'm not adding to Scripture. I'm just trying to clarify Scripture. It's not just any work. It's not just any walk. It is a walk worthy of our calling, which means that when we understand who we are in Christ, all that has been done for us, all that has been gifted to us, where we stand in the courts of heaven, the position we hold because of Jesus Christ, the adoption we have as children of God, then the walk becomes that much more important.

See, friends, listen to me. When salvation is based upon a decision we make or a prayer we prayed or anything we have done, then the walk will inevitably follow our efforts because we gained it, we earned it, we worked for it, we prayed for it, we did all those things.

Therefore, we get to dictate how we should live. But when salvation is fully and finally the free gift of God based upon His wondrous grace and mercy, which we will see this morning, when salvation is based wholly upon the work of God in spite of who we are, and it is given to us, and He calls us to Himself, then that is the calling which we have been given, and that is the level of our dedication, our walk.

The standard has been raised from man's decision to God's activity. And the walk that is worthy of man's decision, or the walk that is worthy of God's declaration and decision, are two different things.

See, how we lift up our salvation determines how we will live out our walk. We come across a number of things in Scripture.

[3 : 54] We've been preaching through the Old Testament ever since I got here seven years ago, seven plus years ago. And in the Old Testament, we see a number of things. Some of them are unique things. Some of them are interesting things. Some of them are things which, I've told you just openly and honestly as your pastor, I love those accounts, like the man who went into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion.

Or, you know, just wondrous things that just display the feats of man because of their dedication. And all those things are awesome and cool to talk about. But then, in our interpretation and preaching through Scripture, we come upon big rock issues.

Issues where we need to stop and we need to settle the matter and say, this is what the Word of God declares, therefore my life must be adjusted. The fact that a man went into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion may never change your life.

But the verses which we will read this morning should always change your life because these are big rock issues. You can interpret the man going into a pit however you want to interpret it. We do not have freedom of interpretation in the passage which we will read this morning because this is one of those matters in which we will make or break fellowship over because it is a big rock issue.

It is that important. And Paul lays these big rock issues out for us so that we know where we stand so that we should know how we should walk. Right? So if you're physically able to desire to do so, would you stand with me as we read the Word of God this morning in Ephesians chapter 2 starting in verse 1 and we will read down to verse 10.

[5 : 20] The Word of God declares, And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Among them we too all formerly lived in the lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as the rest.

But God, being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved, and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast, for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for your word. God, I thank you just for the opportunity and the grand privilege it is to stand with the people of God and to read the word of God. Lord, we know as we have read it, now we want to have hearts and minds to understand it.

[6 : 46] Give us eyes to see and ears to hear and a life to live it out for your glory and yours alone, and we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. In its natural writing, the letter is not broken up into chapter and verse breaks, so if we were to go back and we were to read it from its beginning, as the early recipients would have read it, we would have seen that Paul introduces himself to the church and then begins to introduce the church to their salvation.

He reminds them that their salvation is based upon the plan and purposes of God before the foundations of the world were laid. He prays that they will understand what they are and who they are in the presence of God himself.

And then he comes here in this, just following one right after another, and he gets carried away again, reminding them of who they were and all that he's done. He tells us this morning of the resurrected believer.

Our title this morning would be the resurrected believer because as we see, and it echoes throughout church history and Bible scholars throughout the ages have declared the reality of it, man does not stand in a great need of an awakening.

Man stands in great need of resurrecting. Man does not just need to wake up to his sins. Man does not just need to wake up to where he is at. Man does not need just to wake up to the problem that is before him.

[8 : 08] Man is dead, and therefore needs to be raised to walk in a newness of life. And we see this in the passage before us of the resurrected believer. The only reason that we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior is because we have been resurrected.

Not just his resurrection, but the power of his resurrection in our lives. As we see in the passage, we have been raised with him. We'll get to that in just a moment.

Paul is reminding the believers of how glorious their salvation really is. And the glory of their salvation will dictate the practice of their walk.

We will read later on in this book that we are to walk worthy of our calling, that we are to walk holy as God has called us to be holy, that we ought to lay aside the sin which so easily entangles us, that we ought to put off the deeds of the flesh and to walk in the deeds of the spirit.

We will find later where wives ought to live in a certain manner with their husbands and husbands live in a certain manner with their wives and children are to obey their parents and slaves and servants should be glorious workers and laborers in the community.

[9 : 19] We will see that the believer is called to put on the full armor of God. But none of that matters if we don't understand the glory of our calling. Because we can never be the people we were intended to be in the society God has placed us in.

And we can never live accordingly if we never really stand on the grand foundation of our salvation. Salvation, how we are saved, is a big rock issue.

It is probably the biggest rock issue you will find in all of scripture. It follows completely behind the virgin birth of Christ, the sinless life of Christ, the literal death of Christ on the cross, and the literal bodily resurrection of Christ from the tomb.

These are big rock issues. I have read commentators that were grand on other things that could clearly define other passages of scripture. But if they ever cast a shadow of doubt upon a major rock issue as in the virgin birth of Christ, the death of Christ, the perfect life of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, I will take the whole commentator set out and I will get rid of it because I don't want it anymore.

because if they doubt on the big issues, I cannot trust them on the minor issues. Friend, listen to me. These are matters of fellowship because this is where we have to stake our flag and say this is where we stand.

[10 : 39] This is what salvation is all about. We see it here because when we rightfully understand this, it does not render us ineffective for the kingdom and the great commission. It does not render us ineffective in missional activity.

It does not render us ineffective in sharing the gospel. Really, when we truly understand this, it makes us more effective. It causes us to have a greater ambition to proclaim the glories of Christ because no longer are we trying to convince men of something.

We're just trying to introduce them to the Savior that's been calling them all along. No longer are we trying to persuade men according to the intellect. We're just introducing them to the one who has a grand plan from the very beginning.

See, these are motivating factors behind everything which the church ought to be doing. And I would say the reason we see so little walking worthy is because we understand so little of the genuineness and the reality of our salvation.

The first thing which we see in this passage is the obstacle of man's nature. You need to understand this about mankind. You need to understand this about yourself.

[11 : 48] You need to say, this is me. You don't need to say that is them because Paul introduces them to their problem and then halfway through, he unites himself with them and goes from speaking of you to speaking of we, right?

Paul says, it's my problem as well. And the obstacle here is man's nature. It's who we are by nature. The word of God says, and you were dead in your trespasses and sins.

Some translations, New King James. King James says, and God raised you, God raised up you who were dead. In the original language, it's just one cliffhanging sentence there.

One statement. Paul just introduces it this way, and you were dead. And he never comes back to the reality, but until he repeats it again, down in verse five, where he says, oh, and by the way, and you were dead.

And then he speaks of the resurrection. But the first thing he introduces is the reality of our nature. He says, you were dead. And he just leaves it there, and he takes some time and he digresses into what it looked like when we were dead.

[12 : 48] How we were behaving, how we were acting, what led us to that problem to begin with. How did we get there, right? The cause of death, we would say. He gives us a spiritual autopsy. Man lives in a state of constant death.

And we know this because God declared in the Garden of Eden that the moment you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will surely die, right? That's an emphatic statement. God says, God did not say you might die.

He did not say you could die. He said, you will surely die. And the moment Adam and Eve took of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they died spiritually, though they were alive physically.

Because when you read that, you say, well, they didn't die. Paul highlights it for us here. He says, oh no, they were dead. They were just walking around like zombies because they were dead men walking. I remember a sermon I preached a long time ago.

I wish I could remember where the passage was from. I just remember the title. And the title was Dead Men Walking. And that's exactly what's going on here. Paul says, and you were dead in your trespasses and sins.

[13 : 46] You need to settle that. You need to understand the reality of the weight of that. It's not that we were bad people. It's not that we just made poor choices. It's not that we just did things wrong.

It's we were dead. Or apart from Christ, you are dead. And that's a final and full statement. The wages of sin is death. And man without the Savior lives in a state of sin.

And therefore, the wages of that sin is death. And though he or she may be physically alive, they are spiritually dead. And you need to understand that when you're sharing Christ with someone, you're sharing Christ with a dead individual.

And you're trying to offer, what hope can you give to a dead man? Well, the only hope you can give to a dead man is not to attend a church service and not to do this because a dead man has nothing that would stimulate him, right?

You cannot bring them here and hope that they feel better. You need to introduce them to the Savior, right? The one who has defeated death, hell, and the grave. You need to introduce them to the glorious, resurrected Savior who has overcome that reality because you cannot just introduce them to other dead people.

[14 : 51] Paul says, you were dead in your trespasses and sins. Well, how did we get there? Look at what it says. In which you formerly walked. By the way, that formerly walked is a wording that implies to live as a consistent manner of your life.

Now, we need to go ahead and settle this because every now and then you will understand, well, if I'm forgiven and I'm redeemed and I've been born again, then why do these things happen? Well, these things happening, you still have that sin nature inside of you.

It's being renewed. We'll understand that in just a little bit. We're getting into some deep theology here. But just because you sin and you fall back into that, unless it is a consistent manner of your life.

I'm not making an excuse for sin here, so I need you to stay with me in this because Satan will tell you when you mess up, when you stumble, but when you fall, see, I told you you weren't a believer. See, I told you you didn't know Jesus is your Savior. See, there's no way you're redeemed and don't let the enemy of your souls convince you of something that is simply not true.

Okay, don't do that. What you do is you work out your own salvation with fear and trembling and you ask yourself, is sin the consistent nature of my life?

[15 : 55] And if it is, then you're a dead man walking. You don't know the Savior. You cannot consistently sin and get away with it, so to say, and be okay with it because the one thing that created our spiritual death is that we were walking according to the course of this world.

Now, don't be surprised when sinners act like sinners and don't be surprised when they find a grand opportunity to do it because in case you have missed the headlines, you don't really need to even watch the headlines. I don't ever watch news.

I don't ever read newspaper. I just need to look around outside the window of my car as I'm driving down the road or I need to pay attention to what's going on in the world. The course of this world is sin.

That is, the natural desires of the world system around us is opposed to the holiness of God. One reason we were dead in our trespasses and sins is because that's what you do in this world.

That's how you live. That's why this world will be renewed as of by fire, Peter says. That's why Paul says in Romans chapter 8, all of creation groans until the day of man's redemption because the natural order of the world system around us is death.

[17 : 10] It just makes sense. When you look around, man left to himself and you see what's going on in society, don't be surprised when the law system or the court system or the governmental systems around the world seem to make judgments that are contrary to the things of God.

They're just doing that which is natural to them. That's how it's supposed to be. You say, oh, no, no, no, no. We're supposed to have governmental leaders who change the laws and we need people up there and we should.

We should vote intelligently, but we're not supposed to have governmental leaders that lead the nation to holiness. We're to have churches that call men and women to the Savior and then their lives should be holy.

Right? Because the natural order of this world is sin and the natural order of this world is death because the one who has the keys to this world is in the domain of darkness.

If you remember that, one of the things when Jesus is tempted in the wilderness for 40 days, Satan shows him all the kingdoms of the world. Remember that? He shows him every kingdom and he says, I will give you the keys of these because the keys have been given to me.

[18:17] I always pay attention in scripture not only to what someone says but what they don't say. Jesus doesn't look at Satan and say, they don't belong to you. Jesus says, I don't want them. Therefore, Jesus is implying that the keys of the kingdom of the world therefore are given to Christ because man gave those keys to Christ because in the garden man was told to rule the world.

We forfeited our rule when we took the fruit of the tree and I say we because we were there and we gave it to Satan who now rules the kingdom of this world. Jesus didn't want to take it because he knew that when he went to the cross he came out of the tomb that a day would come and where he would put his feet upon that which Satan owns.

Right? The world would be his footstool. He didn't need temporary keys because he would have an eternal kingdom and the rod of iron would never depart from him. So one thing that leads us to this natural state of death is the world in which we are born.

You put an individual in the world in which they are born. You let them live out their life according to their order and they're going to live death. I read a book recently speaking of a cannibalistic tribe in the heart of India.

The government didn't want anything to do with them. No missionaries wanted to go there. This was in the 1800s. Nobody wanted to go there because they still they were headhunters. You know they still were part of that and even in the early 1800s and the mid 1800s they were still doing headhunting and everybody born into that culture were headhunters.

[19:37] That's just what they did. That's who they were naturally. One missionary decided to take the risk. Everybody said Britain was reigning in that area at that time. They said we're not taking anybody there we're not allowing anybody to go there because it's too dangerous we're not going there.

One missionary decided he was going to take the risk and he was going to make his way to this interior tribe and he was going to find these headhunters and he was going to give them the gospel because he knew that naturally they would just continue in the order in which they were in.

So he kind of made a deal with the government of India I don't really know how and he kind of worked out his plans and he found someone that would lead him into this headhunting tribe and he got there and he gave them a Bible.

Now they wanted to kill him but he said no I don't want you to do that and he was there and God's grace and mercy was there and he gave them just one copy of scripture and he gave them a Bible and he left it there and he said I'm going to go get more I'll come back.

Well the British government found out that he had done that and they didn't let him go back he never got a chance to go back but there was one Bible that was left one family that was left and that one family it was actually just a New Testament and they devoured that New Testament and all of a sudden something contrary to their nature was introduced into their society and they began to see things might be a little bit different than what they had always seen.

[20 : 44] Long story short the family in which the scripture was left they wanted their son to learn how to read so that they could really understand this so they sent him to college they sent him to school sent him to college he got out of there came back and he read this to him that man he's still alive today by the way so this was progressed a number of years later right so he was in the early mid to early 1900s still alive today started doing Bible distribution he went back and started one of the first non-governmental sponsored colleges in India which raises and trains up pastors and teachers and that head hunting tribe now has been the center of Bible distribution around the world why?

because something contrary to their nature was introduced into it by nature they were one thing when something else when they were introduced to a savior they became something totally different friends listen to me we are dead in our sin because that's what we were born into the world system which we were born into while it may not be head hunting is still not God exalting right it is by nature walking according to the sin so we can blame it on the world right this is what we so okay well let's blame it on the world the second thing we see is according to the prince of the power of the air and the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience so the one thing that we had going against us in our nature was not only the world in which we were born but the enemy that opposes us so I've told you this before we're still in the first one by the way the obstacle of man's nature because you have to get this one right or you don't understand the rest of them this is a great obstacle that has to be overcome first obstacle you were born into a system that opposes God second obstacle you were immediately introduced to an enemy that wanted to keep you from God and he was not only an enemy he was your ruler

Jesus says you're either a son of God or you're a son of Satan no man is independent lives on his own you're either a slave of God or you're a slave of Satan and the enemy that opposes you longs to keep you in suppression Paul refers to him as the prince of the power of this air and he says that he is the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience that is the world doesn't want you to know God because it's contrary to its system the enemy opposes you to keep you from God because he's of darkness number three look at what it says in verse three among them we too all formerly live now it would be easy this way to say well I was dead because it was their fault the world I lived in didn't want anything to do with God the enemy that opposes didn't want me to have anything to do with God Paul says pump the brakes here a little bit we can't always blame shift right we can't always say it's their fault it's their fault it's their fault because now Paul is going to look internally he's going to look at who we are inwardly he says we too all formerly lived all means all right every one of us formerly lived in the lust of our flesh indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind here's the obstacle you were born into a world that opposes God you were introduced to an enemy that longed to keep you from God and the very lust of your flesh and the desires of your mind were contrary to the things of God that's a pretty big obstacle those things are against you as mankind the world wants nothing to do with God the enemy tries to keep us from God and our own lust and internal mental desires lead us from the things of God and look at what he says that by nature we are children of wrath the wording there means we are men and women who deserve eternal judgment and condemnation do you want to know who we are and I say we what great obstacle we face by nature we are children of wrath and we are dead that's who we are

Paul says all of my righteousness is like filthy rags see we have a tendency to gloss it over a little bit well I'm not that bad I'm better than some hey listen a dead man is a dead man someone that's been dead a number of days looks different someone who just died today but dead's dead right just because sin is being lived out differently in another individual's life does not mean that one person is better than another dead is dead and we are dead in our trespasses and sins and everything against us everything naturally to us is keeping us there that's who we are you say well I mean I tried to be a good person right but we're dead apart from Christ we are dead and that's what makes salvation so glorious because not only do we see the obstacle of man's nature number two look at the omnipotence of God's mercy omnipotence means all power right to be over above and to have power over all things look at the omnipotence of God's mercy

I love this Paul goes on a side and a side here and begins to speak about how we were dead he says and you were dead in your trespasses and sins I'm just going to read it for you right first three verses and you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked according to the course of the world according to the prince of the power of the air of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience among them we too all formerly lived in the lust of our flesh indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath even as the rest look at this but God isn't that good I don't know if you caught it as well as you should that's who we are but God because see when you keep the but God out of the equation there is no hope for man man has a grand problem and the grand problem is that we are dead but the great power of God is introduced to the problem of man it doesn't say but someone else but another man but another individual but someone good some king it says but God because there is no hope in any other man man cannot pay for his own sins let alone the sins of another we see that in the book of Proverbs but we are reminded here with the problem of man comes the power of

[26 : 43] God but God being rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us wonderful right but God being rich in mercy how glorious is the mercy of God I'm about to show you because Paul makes it very clear to us how wondrous how powerful is the mercy of God the word here is chested right everything that is for our good that's what the word mercy translated in our English is the Hebrew word or the Greek word chested or in the Hebrew chested loving kindness in the Old Testament how powerful is this mercy of God how wondrous is it look at what it says but God it says in verse 5 he reminds us of our condition even when we were dead in our transgressions we're what we're dead understand that right we are dead in our transgressions but God look at what it says made us alive together with Christ that's how wonderful his mercy is the power of God's mercy is it overcomes our problem but God made us alive now I'm going to go ahead and tell you this we say it on the front end okay because you're going to start splitting hairs you're going to say well we're splitting hairs here but these hairs are important to split because you have to ask yourself what comes first man's decision to faith the man or the work of

God because that's what dictates how you're saved and you're okay you can stay with me we've got our big boys and girls pants on this morning we can go through some deep stuff right here right because we're going to ask ourselves was I saved because I made a decision or was I saved because God called me to himself was it my work or was it his effort well number one we need to understand that the dead person has no right to do anything a dead person has no faith the dead person has no belief a dead person makes no decision a dead person makes no prayer dead person does nothing and we were dead so before we could ever believe we were made alive we were called to life we were raised in Christ you say well how was I made alive!

because raised well Warren Wiersbe makes the clear point in his commentary that every time Christ raised an individual in scripture every time he said it through his word he said a word remember Jairus' daughter little girl arise Lazarus come forth right he says a word he declares a word it is the word of God which raises the individual now you need to understand this this is what's!

give you power in your personal testimony your story is a great story how God worked in your life how he called you to himself is an amazing story and it bears repeating but friend listen to me your story is not going to awaken a dead man or raise a dead man the word of God is what raises the dead man it's when Jesus declared a word that people came to life and this is why it says faith comes through hearing and hearing through the word right because we have to be raised from the dead by the word being declared to us this is why the word of God is so important the word of God unfortunately in so many churches has become an afterthought it has become something we tack on at the end we got to make our way through it and you guys I know you endure a lot of preaching you endure a length of time of preaching and I remember reading I was going through a class one time and I was reading this student made a declaration one of his professors was talking about back in the good old days of church and

I'm always careful to say that back in the early days of church history when the preaching used to last an hour to an hour and a half of preaching and it was just really every week an hour and a half sometimes two hours of preaching they weren't having dinner on the grounds afterwards that was just what was happening and one of the students raised his hand and said well professor what about the worship and the professor looked at the student and said son there was a day when the preaching the can awaken the dead man and put him in a whole new position you sin because you were born into a world that sins naturally you sin because you live in a world in which an enemy operates but when

[31 : 41] Christ calls us to himself when God raises us up in salvation listen to me the reason you no longer have to sin is not because you live somewhere different physically it's because you are somewhere different spiritually your spirit is seated with Christ in the heavenlies you've been raised with Christ internally you are in a different position you may be in the world but you're not of the world therefore he who operates in the world no longer has power over you because while you are in it you're not of it you are a heavenly being operating in the earthly realm is the way we like to say it and we understand that when Christ raised us up he called us to himself physically literally and he set us beside him we have a new position therefore we have been exalted to a place where sin no longer reigns we have been exalted to a place where the enemy no longer operates we have been put into a different realm therefore in order to sin we have that's the power of the mercy of

God because he raised us that we may believe in Christ by faith it says you have been saved by grace you have been saved and why did he do that you want know why he did that it's so amazing that his mercy is so powerful his grace is so astounded but look don't miss verse seven so that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus let's put it in layman's terms the greatest display of the power of God's mercy is our salvation we are living testimonies to how great God's mercy is this is why Paul could say I'm the chief of sinners you want to know how good God is you want know how how far God can save you want to know how wondrous his mercy is look at me friend listen to me he saved us to put us on display it says in the heavenly places for all times we will stand around the throne declaring his worthiness declaring his praises and we will stand as testimonies not only to one another but all to the cherubim and the seraphim and all those angelic beings they see the flaming darts coming from his throne they see the glorious expanse that is before him they know that they have to do what he says but they don't know how good his mercy is right they know how strong his power is they know about his authority they know about his dictated will that if they don't do his will they're cast out because

Jesus said I saw Satan mercy is when they see us standing there because by the way they've been watching us this whole time and they're going to say he could save that one he could save that one I think I'm going to have an angel walk up to me one day and go I didn't know how good God was until he saved you and I'm going to say amen because I know me right we if we're going to stand for all of eternity as living testimonies to how good God's mercy is then why would we live in such a manner here why would we walk in such a manner here that people doubt the mercy of God because they look at the testimony of our life because see the purpose

God redeems us for is to display how great he is see when God called Abram as a matter of fact the Chaldeans is the birthplace of idolatry he called a man out of the birthplace of idolatry to go to a land which he did not know he took his time with Abram he let Abram get old he let Abram's wife get advanced in years and then he gave him a child right he did some wonderful things in Abraham and Sarah life he raised from Abraham many descendants of the heaven and the sands of the sea shore not because Abraham was worthy I've read Abraham's story he's got some problems but by faith he believed right and it was reckoned to him as righteousness that it was counted to him as righteousness the reason God called Abram out of the land of the era Chaldeans is so that he could show the!

world how good he was everybody knew about the idols there was a display you could walk in there even if you went into Ephesus you could go see Diana there was a statue built over here you could see the ones the silversmiths that were making the idols you wanted to see the temple of Diana you could see it in Ephesus you could see how grand it was you want know how good God is you couldn't see him you needed to see God on display in the people of God and that is the glory of His mercy toward us so that people could stand up say he saved even me he saved even me John Newton the author of Amazing Grace the reason that hymn has reached and touched so far is because it was written from personal experience at the depth of his bow, being the master of a slave ship, being enslaved himself in a number of years, partaking in the slave trade of England for years and years and years, almost dead at sea twice.

[37 : 14] And on that second occurrence, crying out in mercy and seeing God raise him to walk in life. Out of that experience, he writes the song Amazing Grace. Why is it so powerful? Because it's a living testimony. He who was the master or captain of a slave ship became a proclaimer of the gospel message.

One of the great friends of those who followed after him that set England free from the atrocities of slavery because Newton walked beside these men that were in parliament and encouraged them to make laws to do something different. Why? Because he knew who he was, but he also knew who he was called to be.

He was a living testimony of God's mercy and grace. Here we see the omnipotence of God's mercy. Number three, the orientation of our praise. We see the obstacle of man's nature, the omnipotence of God's mercy, the orientation of our praise. That is what is worth boasting about. It says in verse eight, for by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Bible scholars spend a lot of time trying to dictate what the word that. See it right there halfway through that not of yourselves. What is that trying to speak of? And we have to go back to the original Greek and we see what tense it's in because what tense it's in dictates is what, what it's kind of, uh, what it's highlighting because the question is, is that highlighting faith or is that highlighting saved? Because is the faith of yourself or is the faith of God that not of yourselves?

What is it speaking of? Well, you just need to know, we don't have to really get into all of the Greek here, just need to understand that that is referencing salvation because they're in different tenses. It says salvation saved and that are in the same tense. Faith is in a different tense. So that has to refer back to that. And you say, what do you mean? Well, it means like this. Okay, let's read it this way. For by grace, you have been saved, which is not of yourself through faith.

[39 : 24] For grace, you have been saved. That is not of yourself through faith. It is the gift of God. What's the gift of God? Salvation. Your salvation is not of yourself. You say, well, I responded, right. But it's a gift of God.

According to his purposes, his plans, his callings, not as a result of works so that no one may boast. See, here's the orientation of our praise. When salvation becomes a decision I made, then I'm the object of my praise.

When salvation is because I walked down an aisle or because I prayed a prayer or because I signed a card or because I raised my hand, then I'm the object of my praise. But when salvation is the gift of God and it's not of me, then he's the object of my praise.

Jesus. Man longs to praise himself. We just do. It's who we are by nature. But the reality is the salvation is not of us.

It's of God. He's called us to himself. It's not a result of works. There's nothing we can do to earn it. There's nothing we can do. Hey, listen, friend, this is good news. Because if nothing you did earned it, nothing you do can lose it.

[40 : 38] It is a gift. See, the danger in that, if you worked for it, then you can work to lose it. But it's a gift.

It's not of you. It was given to you. He said, well, pastor, you don't know where I've been. Well, where you've taken that gift is between you and the one who gave it to you. But I know he gave you a gift.

And it's for his praise and his glory and his alone. It's not of yourself. Don't boast. Don't boast about the good you did and don't boast about the bad you've done. Right? Fall prostrate on your face and reorient your praise to he who gave the gift.

See, even in the good works or the bad works, our focus is always on ourself. But when we're focused on the gift that's been given to us, our praise and the object of all of our praise has to go to God. It's not of ourselves. It has nothing to do with us.

It's for his glory. It is the orientation of our praise. Last one. I'll be through, I promise. Because we have to get to verse 10.

[41 : 41] Why all of these things? Why do we need to know the obstacle of man's nature? Why do we need to know the omnipotence of God's mercy? Why do we need to know the orientation of our praise?

How our praise or who our praise should be directed to? It's because, fourth, we see the overflow of good works. The overflow. Verse 10 says, for we are his workmanship.

Oh, did you notice that? We are his workmanship. He saves us. He works on us. Yeah, that's a good place to say amen. He works on us, right? For a number of years, he's been working on me.

And he's working and he's working and he's working. We all have those projects we think we're always going to be working on. There's things I never think I'm going to be finished with. I'm just working on it all the time. I'm just constantly working on it. But I know what's been done to it.

I know what needs to be done with it. And I don't want to get rid of it because I know everything that's been done to it. I've been working on that thing for a long time. And I know what still needs to be done. That's the way God is with us, right? We're his workmanship. He's working and he's crafting and he's doing something in our lives.

[42 : 42] For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus. That is the way he works through us and for us and in us is in Christ. For good works.

So he's working on us not just so we look better. He's working on us just not so we behave better. He's doing a good work in us so that we may do good for him. Now, yesterday, I put brakes on my truck.

Brakes are squeaking. It's driving everybody that rode with me nuts but me. So I kind of got used to it, right? Turn the radio up and it's fine. So I replaced the brakes on my truck. I didn't put brakes on my truck so that my truck would set there.

Put brakes on my truck hoping it wouldn't set there. Hoping it would roll so that I could drive it down the road so that it would behave properly, right? So that it would do right. We work on things for an end going. And this is exactly what's going on here.

It says, we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. One purpose of your salvation is so that God can work on you, in you, and for you so that you can work for the king.

[43 : 52] He didn't just save you so that you could go to heaven. He saves us so that we can labor for the kingdom of heaven for good works.

And here's the good news is, is you don't have to go find it. He's already prepared them beforehand for you. You ever think that? I mean, that's amazing, right? That God had something that he needed done in the course of history, in all of creation.

There's something God wanted done. And you say, well, God could do whatever he wanted to, right? But he chooses to work through men. That's astounding to me, but he does. And God has something to be done. And he created you in Christ to do that thing.

Then why would there be drudgery in doing it? Why would we get so upset when it has to be done? Why would we spend so much effort not doing it? Right?

Because we were created in Christ for that, which he's declared beforehand. Paul says it this way later on. Therefore, I implore you to walk in a manner worthy of your calling.

[45 : 00] Because he called you for a purpose. His purpose. His works. And when we understand that calling, it overflows into the good work which he has prepared for us to do.

Friend, I don't know where you're at today, but I do know this. That apart from Christ, we're dead. That the word of God raises us. That we may have faith. That we may be saved.

Salvation is not of ourselves. It's of God. Not that we may boast. We haven't done anything. But the moment we understand it, we also understand this reality. The reason behind the salvation is that we may do good works.

Why? Because no one takes a candle, Jesus says, and lights it and puts it under a basket. He also declares, you are a city set on a hill.

Therefore, let your light so shine before men that they may see your, what did he say? Good works and glorify your Father who's in heaven. There'll be little glory of God if there's little good works of the saints.

[46 : 03] But with much good works, there'll be much glory. That's why. Because God is a jealous God. He wants to be noticed. But he's chosen to be noticed through the works which we accomplish for the sake of the kingdom.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. Thank you for your faithfulness and your goodness to us. Lord, we understand that when we come to the object and subject of salvation, Lord, it's so grand and great that we would never fully comprehend it.

But Lord, we just stand and we say, thank you, oh Lord. We praise you that salvation is not of man. We praise you that salvation is fully and finally of God. That the greatest display of your mercy and grace is our lives.

And Lord, when we stand in awe of that, may we worship and adore you and may we long to serve you and labor for you in the days ahead.

God, be honored, be glorified and exalted through all we do. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

[47:18] Thank you.

Thank you.