



Dear Mosaic Chapel Friends,

I've recently found myself internalizing God's Word in a new way. This wasn't prompted by a new study or method of exegesis, but simply my time with Jesus. When I was praying recently, I had a picture in my head of my feet standing in miry clay, like thick, swampy mud. One foot was in insecurity, and one foot was in arrogance. In the picture, God's desire for me wasn't to stand in one or the other, but to step out of both and onto the rock of Him, where my true identity lies. Finding our identity in Christ is ultimately a function of trusting in Him, believing that He made us and He knows best.

Not long after this, I read Ephesians 2:4-10. It spoke deeply to me, and brought to mind the picture I had of the miry clay and the rock. The devotional below is based in this passage. I hope that you find it as impactful as I have. *"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do," Ephesians 2:4-10.*

Your friend,

Pastor Molly

"You are God's Handiwork"

Church in a Box – Sunday, May 30, 2021

Read Ephesians 2:4-10. Consider these questions, either on your own or with friends and family:

According to this passage, what is the source of our life?

Why did God "lift us up?"

What characteristics of God does this passage highlight?

What is the purpose of good works?

According to this passage, where does our worth come from?

For extra study, read the commentary notes included on the back.

Using the included page or your own journal, write out Ephesians 2:4-10, in your handwriting, replacing the pronouns with first-person, singular pronouns. For example, rather than writing, "But because of His great love for us," write, "But because of His great love for me..." Younger kids can choose a verse or two, or draw a picture that represents what the passage says.

Once you've finished, go back and read the passage with the first-person, personal pronouns. Ask the Lord to speak to you through it, about your worth and value to Him.

Choose one phrase or passage and write it on the enclosed card. Place it somewhere you will see it often. There is a magnet included if you want to put it on your refrigerator.

ESV Reformation Study Bible

2:4 But God. Paul paints this bleak portrait of the human situation to throw into relief God's gracious and merciful response to it.

because of the great love. God loves His people of His own will. Paul excludes any consideration of merit, effort, or ability on the part of those who come to life (cf. Deut. 7:7, 8). The hopeless condition of sinners apart from Christ that Paul has described in vv. 1–3 is the basis for understanding his teaching on God's election in 1:4–6, and on His gift of life here in vv. 4–10. Note the summary in Rom. 8:29, 30.

2:5, 6 made us alive . . . raised us up . . . seated us. These are historical events in the life of Christ: His resurrection from the dead and enthronement at the right hand of God. But Paul also applies them to what has happened to believers. Paul teaches a union between Christ and those who come to trust Him (1:3; Col. 3:1–4), so that what is said of the Redeemer can also be said of the redeemed. What once happened to Jesus will one day happen to believers as well (2 Cor. 4:16): they will be resurrected to glory at His return (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15). For the present, there is a new mind (4:23, 24; Rom. 12:1, 2), a new identity as God's children (Rom. 8:14–17), and a new ability to live free from the control of Satan (Rom. 8:1–4; 2 Cor. 5:17).

Asbury Study Bible

However, in spite of their transgressions, God brought the dead to life (cf. Ro 6:3-4). Not only was righteousness imputed, but spiritual life was imparted. Surely this was an act of grace. (Notice Paul's emphasis on grace in this entire paragraph.) Moreover, in Christ's exaltation, believers were seated **in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus**. Whereas in 1:20-21 this exaltation to universal authority is bestowed upon Jesus, here Paul includes believers in the granting of authority even as he includes them in the Resurrection. If Christ's resurrection is theirs, then Christ's exaltation must also be theirs. The purpose: **that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace**. A king who buys a beggar a new coat demonstrates altruism; making him coruler shows grace. Christians have a rags-to-riches story: though born spiritually depraved, they now reside in a throne room. How magnificent God's grace is, as shown us in Christ Jesus! In the denouement of salvation history, Paul suggests, those who rule with Christ will uniformly testify: "I was once a sinner, but I came, pardon to receive from my Lord." And for emphasis, Paul repeats himself: "**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith**" (in Jesus as God's condition for your salvation). The power to believe is God-given, but one must use the God-given power (Clarke, 6:430) or it is of no effect.

If salvation were by works, by effort, or by obeying the law, there would be justification for human boasting, since some would be more obedient, more industrious, and more precise than others. Those born with an advantage could utilize, even flaunt, that advantage. The truth is, however, that human redemption is **not** brought about by **works**, so there is no room for boasting.

At the same time, all believers must realize that they are designed **in Christ Jesus to do good works**. Wesley emphasized that predestination relates to outcome: to be children of God, to rule with Christ, to attain to the measure of the fullness of Christ, to do good works (Wesley, *Notes*, 489, 492). Even before creation **God prepared in advance** for believers to follow after good works as an expression of their love of God and their appreciation for divine grace.

IVP New Testament Commentary Series, Ephesians

God is indeed sovereign in the matter of grace, It is inconceivable that salvation should in any way depend on the individual, since it is part of God's overall plan as explained in chapter 1 and further developed in the latter part of this chapter and in chapter 3. Therefore verse 10 is an appropriate conclusion to this section, beginning with the words *we are God's workmanship*. The word *workmanship* (*poiema*) was used in ancient Greek literature to refer to what a person made or did. Among other things it could refer to literary works, such as a poem. Christians used it in its more general sense and applied it to God's creation, as Paul did in Romans 1:20. Here, as the work that God produces, it stands in contrast to the mere human *works* in the previous verse that are unable to save us. Salvation cannot be our work, not only because it is God's work but because we are God's work, his new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).