

We Are God's Handiwork

Opener: What's something you tried to do by yourself only to realize there was no way you could do it?

Scripture: As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:1-10

Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." John 3:3

"If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you." John 15:19

Discussion Questions

1. After describing Jesus and His authority, Paul turns his attention to what believers were like before they met Christ—dead in their sins and following the ways of the world. What does he mean by that? What's an example of someone who follows the ways of the world? Ephesians 2:1-2; John 3:3
2. In vs. 2 Paul said we also follow "the ruler of the kingdom of the air." Who's the ruler of the kingdom of the air and how does he work in unbelievers? How does that combine with "gratifying the cravings of our flesh" to make us deserve God's wrath? Ephesians 2:2-3
3. After describing in vivid detail how hopeless our situation was, Paul reveals that God rescued us. Why did He rescue us and what changed as a result? What is grace? Ephesians 2:4-6
4. What was God's purpose for bringing us into His kingdom according to vs. 7? How are we seated in the heavenly places now with Christ? John 15:19
5. Ephesians 2:8-9 may be the most concise description of salvation in the entire Bible. How do grace and faith work together? How do works fit into salvation? Why is it hard for us to accept God's grace as a free gift, thinking instead that we need to earn God's favor?
6. After saying we don't need to do good works to be saved, vs. 10 says we are created to do good works. Explain how good works fit into our relationship with the Lord. What are some of the good works for which God created us?
7. How did you come to know Jesus as your savior? Can you share your story? How do you tell others about Jesus and what a difference He's made in your life?

Wrap Up: Here's how one man described what happened when he finally understood what Jesus did for him: "I was doubled over from the magnitude of it all. I don't know how to describe it other than to say that God revealed Himself to me. In that moment, everything became clear: God was real, Jesus was real, the Bible was real, the resurrection was real, heaven was real, hell was real—it was all real. Everything that I had dismissed as a fairy tale was all true. Like Paul, it was as if the scales fell from my eyes and I was able to see. Every Christian term I had heard to describe this indescribable reality was appropriate: "saved," "born again," "regenerated," and "given eternal life"!" Adapted from *A Change of Affection*, by Becket Cook.