

October 120, 2019

"...so that you may know him better..."

"...you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live...all of us lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved..."



"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship created Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Ephesians 2:1-10

I am more and more convinced that few, if any of us, really understand the nature of God's gift of salvation through grace. For generations we have held to the belief that it is possible to do enough good works to offset our transgressions and sins. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Under God's law of sin and death we are, each and every one of us, condemned as lawbreakers. James, the brother of Jesus, writes, ***"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."*** (James 2:10) If you and I break just one commandment, just one, we are lawbreakers and under the law of sin and death we are condemned.

The Apostle Paul underlines this same idea again in this letter to the believers in Ephesus. ***"...you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live...all of us lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath..."*** As lawbreakers we are objects of God's wrath condemned by our own sin. No amount of good works will remove that condemnation from us because our good deeds do not erase our sins. Any sin that we commit becomes a part of our record, and it cannot be erased by anything we can do.

So, like most believers, when we tie good works to our salvation we embrace the idea of grace and then exchange it for our failed belief in salvation by good works. We cannot be saved by good works. Not ever. We are condemned as lawbreakers regardless of our own efforts to be righteous through our own goodness, and without God's grace we will die in that failed personal goodness.

Our salvation is the product of God's love and mercy for us. He, and he alone, created our salvation when he allowed his one and only Son to die in the horror of the cross. God, and God alone, provided the perfect innocent sacrifice to satisfy the requirement of his law of sin and death, once and for all, as the Hebrew author tells us. ***"...by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*** (Hebrews 10:10)

So God's great love and boundless mercy saves us. We are saved by his grace and nothing else. We cannot create our own salvation through our good works; not ever. So, why then should we

do good works? Certainly, as believers we are commanded to do good works. Where do those good works fit into God's salvation.

The Apostle, I think, makes it so clear for us in this passage from today's context. "***For we are God's workmanship created Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.***" As those who have been saved by God's grace we have been recreated to do good works; not so that we can be saved, but because we already have been saved. Our good works are the product of our salvation and not a means by which we may earn it.

So, any good that I do as a believer saved by the grace of God is in response to the salvation I already enjoy. If only we could understand that our salvation in the Jesus is always and only the gift of God and our own good works are the only reasonable response to that great and wonderful possession that is already ours.



gg81571339 GoGraph.com