



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Psalms Sermon Series

Supports Session 12: God's Greatness

Sermon Title: "Created for Good Works" (Ephesians 2:1-10)

### Connection to Session 12

In Psalm 139, David highlighted God's special care in creating him in his mother's womb. God knew all of David's days before he lived. In Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul wrote about the believer's salvation in terms that mirror creation. Through Christ, God has recreated us as His workmanship, and prepared ahead of time work for us to do.

### Introduction/Opening

One television show features master blacksmiths from all over the country who are invited to compete in making new metal tools and blades from different kinds of metal. Often, the materials they are provided with are old files, iron, cable, and other metal objects. The goal of the show is to take what is old and useless and make something new and useful. God created each of us and knows everything about us (Ps. 139). However, God's original creation was marred and distorted through sin, especially our ability to represent God correctly in the world. Through the work of Christ and his salvation, God took us and our old nature and crafted something new and wonderful, repurposing us for good works that He has planned for us.

### Outline

- 1. Though We Were Distant from God, We Were Not Out of God's Reach (Eph. 2:1-5)**
  - a. Paul explained to the believers in Ephesus that prior to their salvation, they were "dead" in their trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). Dead things do not produce life. Being dead also has a relational sense. When the prodigal son returned home from his wandering, his father said, "This son of mine was dead and is alive again" (Luke 15:24). When we were living in sin without the knowledge of God, we were cut off from a relationship with the One who created us, and therefore, without the life He offers.
  - b. During World War II, one enemy of the Allies was Germany. As enemies, the Allies fought the German military throughout the war—hostility defined the relationship. Before salvation, we were the enemies of God, following our own desires, and we were objects of His judgment (Eph. 2:3). We were God's enemies, and yet through Christ He reconciled us to Himself (Rom. 5:10).
  - c. Paul wrote "even though" we were dead in our sins, God saved us (Eph. 2:5). God's power and willingness to save means that no one is out of reach for God, even if they are dead in their sin.

- d. Though we were opposed to God, He demonstrated His mercy toward us, granting us new life in Christ (v. 4). In Christ, we have received great mercy. As those who are in Christ, we should also mirror the mercy and grace of God to others.
- e. Grace and mercy run throughout the grand narrative of Scripture. In 2 Samuel 4, David seeks out any of Saul's living relatives. In any normal scenario, one might expect David to attempt to eradicate Saul's lineage. Mephibosheth was one remaining relative of Saul. David called him to his court and welcomed him at his table, showing him great mercy on account of his promise to Jonathan. Similarly, we are like Mephibosheth; we are shown mercy and grace on behalf of another, namely Jesus Christ.

## **2. Through Salvation, We Experience God's Kindness (Eph. 2:6-9)**

- a. God not only gave us new life in Christ; he also "raised us up with him" and seated us with Jesus (v. 6). God not only gave us the grace of redemption but also gave us the grace of reigning in life with Christ. Notice the reason for this: so that He could "display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (v. 7).
- b. Kindness is often unexpected in our culture. When someone shows us kindness, they often go out of their way to do us some good. Whether someone pays for our meal unexpectedly, or offers unexpected help in a time of need, kindness, especially to an enemy, is an act of grace (v. 8). We cannot earn God's grace; it is freely given, so that we cannot boast in ourselves, only in God (v. 9; see also 2 Cor 10:17).

## **3. In Christ, We Carry Out the Good Works God Planned for Us (Eph. 2:10).**

- a. Because God created us, He knows everything about us. God ordered and planned all of our days before one of them came to be (Ps. 139:16). There is great comfort in knowing that God knows us so intimately.
- b. In the same way, God created us "in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do" (Eph. 2:10). The same care God took at our creation, He took in making us His workmanship through Christ. When a woodworker delicately carves beautiful designs into his furniture, he intends for it to be both beautiful and useful—whether it is a kitchen table or a wooden spoon. In the same way, God created us in Christ to be useful to His kingdom and for His glory.

## **Conclusion**

No one is too far from the reach of God's saving hand. He can take the most vile sinner and turn him into a useful tool for His glory. By His grace, we get to enjoy His kindness and grace for all of eternity. For now, though, we have good works ahead of us to do so that others can experience the same grace we enjoy.

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