

Saved to Serve by Transforming Grace (Ephesians 2:10)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on April 17, 2011

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Ephesians 2:8-9 may be the Bible's clearest statement of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Maybe the clearest illustration of its truth is in Luke 23, as Jesus is dying for sinners. On this Palm Sunday it's fitting we begin today's study with the cross that Jesus went to on Friday of this very week, in the year 30 or 33 AD.

Luke 23:32 *Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him.*³³ *When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.* [Matt. 27:44 says the criminals were robbers and both initially insulted Jesus]³⁴ ***But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."*** [that prayer is answered for one of "them" that very afternoon!]

...³⁹ *One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at him ...*⁴⁰ *But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"*⁴¹ *"And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."*⁴² *And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"*⁴³ *And [Jesus] said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."*

Both criminals on both sides of Jesus were receiving justice, both getting what they deserved for their crimes and sins, both dying on a cross because of their sins, the law's penalty for their crimes. Both criminals were initially mocking Jesus for awhile, Matthew records. But at some point the grace of Jesus begins to work in one of the criminals' hearts in an Ephesians 2 sort of way. It seems to me the turning point is when Jesus prays "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ...*" God the Father begins to do that!

Jesus said in John 6:44 "*No one can come to me unless the Father draws Him*" and He added "*It is the Spirit who gives life*" (v. 63). And so the Father is drawing this sinner to Christ, HS is giving life and opening his eyes, and stopping his mouth, while he is mocking Jesus like the rest "*save yourself if you're the Messiah*" – this thief realizes *he knows not what he is doing*. He sees he needs the Father to forgive *him* through His Son. As he sees how Jesus responds to their insults, by grace he sees this Jesus next to him *is* the Messiah.

While this criminal was mocking Christ as an enemy, while he was acting and speaking ungodly, while he was helplessly nailed to the beams unable to do any good works at all, God saves a sinner. Listen to these familiar words in Romans 5 in light of this event:

⁶ *For while we were still helpless ... Christ died for the ungodly.*

⁸ *... while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

¹⁰ *... while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son ...*

There may be no clearer picture of Romans 5 or Ephesians 2 than in Luke 23. To be saved by grace through faith, not of us, not of works, all a gift, is to realize we were just as helpless and ungodly and sinful and were enemies in need of reconciliation by Christ as Mediator.

The man on the cross couldn't make the first step to Jesus. His feet were nailed to the cross! He couldn't lift his hand to grab the hand of Jesus. His hands were nailed to his cross! He couldn't move or do any works at all ... all he could do was look to Christ in faith, and Christ promised him he would be in paradise/heaven that day!

What does it look like when God's grace draws us to saving faith?

- the sinner fears God (v. 40) in recognition of condemnation and the just sentence of the law on us who are law-breakers
- In v. 41 he realizes we as sinners deserve to die for our sins
- In v. 41b he sees Christ is perfect and has done nothing wrong
- In v. 42 he sees Christ as his only hope and pleads with Him for grace: "*Remember me when you come in your kingdom!*"
- He believes Jesus has a coming kingdom and is coming again
- He believes Jesus is the King – consider what faith that took to believe a dying bloody weak-looking man, stripped of dignity, struggling to breathe and stay alive, this is the King who gives life? They taunted "Some Savior, huh, you can't save yourself"
- Even His disciples who'd heard Jesus teach on this for 3 years still couldn't fathom Messiah-King being crucified and dying?
- The message of the cross is foolishness to the perishing, but the regenerated heart sings of cherishing the old rugged cross
- What a trophy of grace hanging on the cross next to Jesus!

That day Jesus enters Paradise (heaven) and there is someone with Him, as Jesus had promised hours earlier. If any angels had asked Jesus about the sinner next to him and what he's doing coming into heaven, Jesus could say, "He's *with me*. He's on my account." What can a saved sinner say? A quartet named Acappella sings it this way:

On the judgment day ... there is only one thing I can say:
I'm a wretch, I'm a worm, I'm a no good sinner, but He said *I'll save you anyway*
... He said I'd live in Paradise and he's taken care of the cost.
Hallelujah! I'm saved (saved) like the criminal on the cross.

Ephesians 2:8–10 ⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;* ⁹ *not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.* ¹⁰ *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*

Grace flies in the face of the old American mantra: "We make money the old-fashioned way. We earn it." Or the modern way is an entitlement mentality rather than earning – "the government owes me this or the world owes me that, I'm entitled..." The only thing we're entitled to or deserve is God's wrath! We are the ones who owe a debt to God we cannot pay. We can't earn heaven and trying to pay our way only sinks us deeper in the hole, earning a place in hell. I can only make it the old rugged cross way, by the old, old story. We have to be saved by grace all the way or we won't be saved at all.

We don't get to heaven by our works (baptism, doing good, etc.). That man on the cross is Exhibit A: he could do nothing but trust in Christ right before he died and he was saved the hour he first believed, by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone, not a result of works, no human boasting; all glory to King Jesus.

And as strongly as we affirm that truth, we need to also affirm that if that saved criminal didn't die that day and was allowed to come down from the cross, he could not have come down unchanged. He would not live the same life he had before Christ. The doctrine of regeneration, by very definition, is that God changes us, generates new life at our new birth, a new heart, new desires, new nature. A believer has a new attention to spiritual things, new affections, a new direction to his life, not sinless perfection, but a new direction.

The language of v. 10 is as radical and fundamental as creation language. Paul says "*created in Christ Jesus for good works ...*"

2 Cor 5:17 "*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; the old things passed away; behold, **new things have come.***" That is a verse every Christian should memorize as well as Eph 2:8-9. 2 Cor 5 also says "*the love of Christ controls us*" (v. 14) and that He died for us *so that we would no longer live for ourselves* (v. 15)

As important as Eph 2:8-9 is, v. 10 is equally crucial. We're not saved by *our* works (v. 9), but we are God's workmanship (v. 10). There *are* works in salvation – God's works in us and through us. If we're saved, God is at work in us, moving us to good works, not to earn His grace, but as an expression of His grace inside of us. If Almighty God is at work in us by grace, we can't stay unchanged. Paul Washer gives the example of someone claiming to be hit by truck but no evidence in looking at you, your walk, talk, etc. God is much bigger and if He has truly hit us with His grace, it will make a difference!

We studied last week *God's amazing grace* in Eph 2. In v. 10, our study for this week is *God's amazing work* in us and through us. "*For we are His workmanship*" – the "His" is placed first in Greek for emphasis. It's His doing, His work, we are His. Psalm 100 says "*It is He who has made us and not we ourselves. We are His ...*"

Ps 143:5 uses this same word in the original language translating it "*the work of His hands*" (personal emphasis/involvement by God). Believers are the special handiwork of God, His fingerprints on us. Just as a painter leaves His mark or initials, God's mark is on us.

The Puritan commentator John Trapp said God's matchless skill is on display in building this 'glorious fabric of the new man.'¹ This Greek word in v. 10 was used of any work of art. God is the Artist and our life is the canvas backdrop. This work started out dark in v. 1 but it only made God's palette of multi-colored grace beautiful. In v. 1, we have one of the lowest descriptions of man anywhere in the Bible; we are corpses spiritually (connotations of corruption, decay, offensive, etc.). But now that God has given us life in v. 5-6 when we get to v. 10, this may be the highest description of man in the Bible. Believers are God's skillful work of art, or masterpiece! In classical Greek, this word was used for a craftsman making a crown. This is the term for what God creates us to be in/for Christ!

This term is used for what a potter skillfully crafts and fashions. If you think of the intricate designs of pottery and precious vessels that man designs, then multiply that when you think of God as the master designer and potter, this is what grace does to us in v. 10! And when you think of the materials God has to work with, us, it makes it even more amazing. The raw materials are rebel sinners God takes, breaks, remakes, and shapes to make us like Christ!

There is a real visible aspect of the word “workmanship” in v. 10. It’s only other use in the NT is for God’s handiwork in creation:

Rom 1:20 “*For since the **creation** of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, **have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made ...**”*

The idea is the creation of the physical world makes visible the invisible power and nature of God, in a way that is so clearly seen and understood through what God has made. That same word is here in Eph 2:10 for our spiritual re-creation as believers. It also should be clearly seen, God’s power and nature in our new nature from Him, so others can see and recognize His work in what He’s making of us who once were spiritually dead with hearts of stone.

The Greeks used this word for statues, sculptures, chiseled from stone. Michelangelo was once asked what he was doing as he chipped away at a big rock. He said, “I’m liberating an angel from this stone.” We’re ‘in the hands of the great Maker, the ultimate sculptor who created the universe out of nothing, and he has never yet thrown away a rock on which he has begun a masterwork. His tools are ... His Word, preaching ... [and] often he uses difficulties and difficult people ... to sculpt our character. Other times it is a great saint with which God carves his impression upon us.’²

This rich word “workmanship” was used not only of sculptures and statues and skillful works of art or architecture, it was also used for songs, and even poems (Plato). The Greek word is *poiema* which we get our English word poem from. God is the Divine Poet, and we are His poetical composition for others to see His master work.

The musician Michael Card put these ideas to poetry and song:

Life is a song We must sing with our days
A poem with meaning More than words can say
A painting with colors No rainbow can tell
A lyric that rhymes Either heaven or hell
We are living letters That doubt desecrates
We're the notes of the song Of the chorus of faith
God shapes every second Of our little lives
And minds every minute ... the Poem of life
... Your canvas of colors ... the joy and the strife
Of the rhythm and rhyme Of the poem of your life ...

He writes: ‘The Bible tells us that we are God’s masterpieces, (Gk. “poiema”) not only creatures, but His creations, His poems ... We are living epistles [or God’s letters]. (2 Cor.3:3f) ... it is God who is speaking into and out of and through [our lives] ... each day, the symphony of the years and the masterpiece of a lifetime.’³

2 Cor 3:3 “... *you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.*”

An anonymous poem says it this way:

You are writing God’s letter, A chapter each day,
By the works that you do And the words that you say.
Men read what you write, Whether faithful or true:
Just what is the Gospel According to you?

¹⁰ *we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works*

Jesus described these good works in our life as a light to shine to a dark world, a gospel platform, to the glory of God’s working in us.

Matt 5:14 “*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;* ¹⁵ *nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.* ¹⁶ “*Let your light shine before men in such a way **that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father** ...*

These good works are to be visible reflections of the nature of our Father, the Father of Light, to glorify Him by drawing attention to God’s power to transform lives by the gospel, and then by telling people that same gospel power can transform their dark lives, too.

Soli Deo Gloria—to God alone be glory in v. 10 for my good works

Sola Gratia – grace alone is the source of salvation in v. 8

Sola Fide – faith alone is the means or channel of salvation in v. 8

Solo Christo – Christ alone saves (our union “with Him” in v. 6-7)

Sola Scriptura – Based on Scripture Alone, salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and for God’s glory alone

But we’re not left alone (HS changing us). Faith isn’t alone, devoid of fruit, works, or changed life. God alone regenerated, re-created us in Christ, v. 10, but we have an ongoing responsibility: **4:23** “... *be renewed* [present tense, ongoing] *in the spirit of your mind,* ²⁴ *and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*”

Jonathan Edwards wrote: “All true grace in the heart tends to holy practice in the life” (*Charity and its Fruits*).⁴ Just as God created trees to bear good fruit, God created us in Christ for good works. Just as a lifeless tree can’t produce fruit, or as the body without the spirit is dead, James says so-called “faith” without works is dead. Those who are alive and connected to the vine (Christ) bear fruit, and we also have a responsibility to cultivate and bear more fruit. All believers will have some, but all can also grow and bear more.

Eph 2:8-10 teaches we’re not saved *by* works but we are saved *for* works. Put another way, men aren’t saved *by works* but saved men *will work*. How can Jesus be my “Lord” (which means Master) if I don’t work for Him? To call Him “Master” would be empty words. Christ didn’t save me to sit; He saved me to serve (2:10). We’re not saved by grace *plus* works, but grace *produces* works. Grace excludes boasting (v. 9), but includes busyness in good works (10).

The relationship of salvation and works has been compared to the relationship of lightning and thunder. Works don't cause salvation anymore than the sound of rumbling thunder creates lightning. Thunder follows lightning as its effect or evidence in nature, as surely as salvation will leave its mark on one with a new nature. If the flash of saving grace lights up one's life, good works follow.

Martin Luther, history's greatest defender of "faith alone," said "It's not against works that we contend, it's against *trust in works* that we contend."⁵ His contemporary Reformer John Calvin said it this way: "It is faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies can never be alone."⁶

A modern study Bible sums up the historic teaching well: 'We are saved apart from good works, but saved unto good works. Good works are the aim of our salvation and the evidence of our faith (Jas 2:17–18). Works never produce salvation, but salvation always produces good works. A man is not justified by works, but a justified man works. Works are the consequences, not the causes of salvation. They are the fruit, not the root of salvation. One must be a Christian before he can live as a Christian.'⁷

Another study Bible clarifies: 'We do not work *in order to be saved*, but *because we are saved*. This is the aspect of the truth that is emphasized in James 2 ... When James says that "faith without works is dead," he does not mean we are saved by faith plus works, but by the kind of faith that results in a life of **good works**. Works prove the reality of our faith. Paul heartily agrees: **we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works**.⁸

Philippians 2:12¹² *So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;*¹³ *for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

Paul doesn't say "work *for* your salvation" but he does say "work *out* your salvation" – in other words, it needs to work itself out in practical expression, with humble reverence ("fear and trembling") and humble service knowing that even in your works, v. 13 says "*it is God who is at work in you to will and work His good pleasure*"

Anything bad or sinful I do, is all me, my will, my responsibility. Anything good I do or choose, 100% of the credit/glory is to God.

John MacArthur, in his aptly titled book *Faith Works*, explains: 'works play no role in *gaining* salvation. But good works have everything to do with *living out* salvation. No good works can *earn* salvation, but many good works *result* from genuine salvation. Good works are not necessary to *become* a disciple, but good works are the necessary *marks* of all true disciples ... "faith works." It would also be appropriate to call them "grace works." They are the corroborating evidence of true salvation ... The phrase [in Eph 2:10] "*we are His workmanship*" is the key to this whole passage ... Our lives are like a divinely written sonnet, a literary masterpiece. From eternity past, God designed us to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). All of us are still imperfect, unfinished works of art being carefully crafted by the divine Master. He is not finished with us yet, and His work will not cease until He has made us into the perfect likeness of His Son (1 John 3:2).

The energy He uses to accomplish His work is grace. Sometimes the process is slow and arduous; sometimes it is immediately triumphant. Either way, [Paul also says] “*I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 1:6).⁹

Col 1:10 “*that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work ...*”

1 Thessalonians 1:3 “*constantly bearing in mind your work of faith ...*”

Faith and works are associated in Scripture, they’re not antithetical. In Greek Grammar, this is classified as a genitive of production, which means it should be translated “work produced by faith.”¹⁰ The type of faith Paul speaks of produces works and love (v. 3b). This is also how Romans begins, right out the gate, that letter of salvation and grace says in Romans 1:5 “*we have received grace ... to bring about the obedience of faith*” (or produced by faith).¹¹

Turn forward to Titus. We could look at all of Paul’s letters and the whole NT through this lens: works as indispensable and inevitable result and purpose of saving grace and faith. Titus 2:11: ¹¹ *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age*

That’s what saving grace does. Christ in v. 14 “*gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.*”

Christ didn’t just die so we could live in heaven. He set slaves free in redemption, breaks the power of cancelled sin, sets the prisoners free, so they can be what their new Master created them to be. He purifies a people as His bride and makes us zealous, or passionate for good deeds, good works. Christ saved us to be passionate for good works

Christ redeemed us so we would be passionate about good works! Works are not the enemy of grace, friends, they’re the evidence of grace. Some Christians don’t focus on works in fear it diminishes grace, but we actually diminish grace if not passionate for works! Yes, salvation is a work of Christ alone on the cross, but Christ’s purpose is a grace-produced passion for good works, not motivated by guilt but by gratitude, not to earn favor but to exalt our Savior! Do you understand, beloved, you’re “*created in Christ Jesus for good works,*” (Eph 2:10) and to be passionate about good works?!

The last part of Eph 2:10 uses language to say good works are our life now: “*that we should walk in them*” (Bible language for LIFE). This is our life. Ephesians 2:8-10 is Christianity 101. We’re saved not merely to sit in church, we’re saved to serve the church. In our bulletin each week we list out opportunities, not because we need to fill empty space, but because we have needs. Len shared some last Sunday re: yesterday’s work day here (see deacons for more). The pictures of Elders/Deacons/Ladies are by the entry way, talk with any of them, call the office, seek to serve.

Don’t think of just programs, or just a particular narrow way you want to serve, think of practically serving without being asked in private and personal ways, too (“one another” verses). Don’t think your “gift” or interest is the only way to serve, think of needs.

Become aware of needs (ex: prayer list or emails), follow-up with someone after they shared a request, pray for them and let them know, write a card to someone, invite someone you don't know over, etc. As you get to know one another, ways to minister start happening.

Paul concludes Galatians after 5 chapters of refuting legalism with:

Gal 6:2 ***Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.*** [the Law can't save, but Christ saves us to fulfill His law]

...⁶ ***The one who is taught the word is to share all good things...***

...⁹ ***Let us not lose heart in doing good ...***

...¹⁰ ***... let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith*** [same word good from Eph 2:10]

Good works are to mark our life, especially towards the church. It was so normal for Christians to be doing good, that Paul has to write them to not lose heart or grow weary as they do, and not to neglect to minister to believers around them in their family of faith.

I want us to close out this message within the context of Eph 2:10, how the doctrines of grace in the verses before our text are applied later in the book by Paul. When Paul says in 2:10 we're saved "*for good works that God prepared beforehand that we should walk in,*" this *preparing/ordaining beforehand* should remind us of Eph 1:4:

⁴ *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy* [this grace had a purpose] ... ⁵ *He predestined us to adoption as sons...*

The Doctrines of Grace Applied

Sovereign Electing Grace (1:3-6) - God chose people He would save before the foundation of the world, lovingly predestining their adoption into His family in Christ and making them holy and blameless before Him (v. 4-5a). Their salvation is ultimately a result of God's will and choice (v. 5b), and this staggering truth should cause us to bless God (v. 3) and give Him all of the credit and glory and praise, for it's all of grace (v. 6)

Applications in Ephesians:

1. Walk in God's eternal purpose for you: holiness (1:4, 4:24)

"and put on the new man [4:24 ends with] ... holinesss..."

2. Walk in light as adopted children, bearing good fruit (5:8-9)

⁸ *for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light* ⁹ *(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness* [same root as good in 2:10]

Particular Redemption Grace (1:7) – God's children are actually redeemed and forgiven by the powerful blood of Christ and riches of God's grace (1:7 *In Him we [believers] have redemption through His blood ...*); it's an actual redemption rather than a merely potential one. Christ's sacrifice is not limited in its value, but the *intent* of redemption is particularly for God's children (5:2), truly redeeming and sanctifying the church His bride (5:25-27), rather than merely making salvation possible. Redemption is not universal; '*redeemed*' is limited to the truly saved in scripture.

Applications in Ephesians:

1. Walk in self-sacrifice for others as Christ did for you (5:2)
“walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us ...”
2. Walk in love (5:2) as Christ loved and died for the church (25)
“just as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself up for her”
3. Walk in forgiveness as imitators of your Father (4:32-5:1)
³² *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. ¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love ...*

Preserving Grace (1:13-14) – Those whom God saves by grace through faith are sealed and guaranteed an inheritance in Christ. They are responsible to continue in good works (2:10), and true saints (1:1) will persevere *because of God’s preserving, sealing grace* (1:13). All of salvation is of God, for His glory (v. 6, 12, 14)

Applications in Ephesians:

1. Walk in godly communication in light of God’s Spirit (4:29-30)
²⁹ *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed ...*
2. Walk in godly attitudes within by God’s Spirit (4:30-31)
³¹ *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*

Our Need for Grace (Eph. 2:1-3) – Our sinful nature (sometimes called radical corruption or radical / total depravity or spiritual inability) corrupts not just our actions (2:2), but our thoughts, desires, and will (2:3). We are all spiritually dead, lifeless, and unresponsive to spiritual things (2:1), in need of regeneration / resurrection (note parallel in 1:20-21 and 2:5-6). The world and Satan greatly influence us (2:2), but we are ultimately responsible because of our willful, hard-hearted, callous, blinding, stubborn sin (4:18). Scriptures teach man cannot do anything to save himself, please God, or change his depraved condition and nature apart from sovereign grace, and left to himself, he doesn’t truly want to [Jer. 13:23, 17:9; John 3:19-20, 5:40, Rom. 3:9-11, 8:7-8, 1 Cor. 2:14]

Applications in Ephesians:

1. Walk differently than you used to (2:2), in *good works* (2:10)
2. Walk differently than the way the world does (4:17)
¹⁷ *So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles [heathen] also walk ...*

Effectual Grace (2:4-9) – A work accomplished by God alone even *while* we were still spiritually dead (v. 4-5) and hopeless (v. 12b). This is God-given regenerating, resurrecting, life-giving grace (v. 5), by the same sovereign power that raised Christ from physical death (compare 2:5-6 to 1:20-21). God invincibly overcomes our sinful nature (2:1-3) and replaces it, granting grace, faith, and salvation as a gift (v. 8) not because of anything we had done or would do (v. 9a). God’s purpose is to humble man (v. 9b) and to magnify His amazing grace now and for all eternity (v. 7).

This sovereign grace is sometimes deemed “irresistible” – a calling and drawing of sinners to faith effectually so that the one who once resisted now finds Christ *irresistible*, and the formerly depraved and unwilling sinner is now *willing to believe*, able to obey (v. 10).

1. Walk worthy of this calling (Eph 4:1), and humbly (4:2a)
 “walk worthy of the calling ... in all lowliness/humility...”
2. Walk in evangelism; God saves sinners as bad as us! (6:15, 19)
 6:15 *shoes of good news*: always ready to give the gospel
 6:19 praying for boldness to open your mouth with the gospel
3. Walk in the life of good works God has pre-planned (Eph 2:10)

D. L. Moody: “Every Bible should be bound in shoe leather.” In other words, biblical truth is to affect our everyday walk and life. Every doctrine in Ephesians hits where the rubber meets the road. All the glorious truths of salvation in the first 3 chapters have a practical application in the last 3 chapters of Ephesians. If these truths haven’t affected the way we walk and talk yet, don’t move on. Take time to meditate on these verses and truths, and pray like 1:18-19 for God to open the eyes of your heart to God’s calling and power, and to open your eyes to how to apply it.

Robert Rayburn wrote: ‘untold multitudes of lives have been turned upside down by this one discovery, that salvation is of the Lord, that we, and every Christian, are God’s workmanship, people in whom God has created something new and living out of what was old and dead. It makes God exceedingly great in a human mind and heart. It makes his love surpassingly wonderful, his plan and purpose amazing and marvelous. It makes Christ supremely beautiful and the Holy Spirit precious beyond words. It makes the divine power over the dead and stony hearts of sinful men and women incomprehensibly and breathtakingly glorious. When a person grasps the grace of God his or her whole life must change, will change. To realize that before the foundation of the world God loved me, that thousands of years ago, Christ Jesus gave himself for me, and that the Holy Spirit came to me and awakened me from the spiritual death in which I lived and would have lived forever, is to see one’s life in utterly different terms, to see one’s purpose now to give glory to God, to see one’s daily calling to live so as to honor and please the one who loved me and gave himself for me.’¹²

How can I know what good works He’s planned for my individual life? Don’t wait for a zap/voice from heaven. One writer suggests:

- (1) study the word of God to discern His will, and then do whatever He tells us to do [apply what you already know];
- (2) spend time in prayer each day;
- (3) seize opportunities of service as they arise;
- (4) cultivate the fellowship and counsel of other Christians.¹³

I would add another: Abide in Christ, cultivate love for Christ. Best place I know for that is in the gospels, especially in John 15:

⁴ ***“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. ”***⁵ ***“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing ...***

...¹⁶ ***“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit ... [Farmers don’t plant trees just to sit there but to bear fruit]***

⁸ ***“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit ...***

...¹¹ ***“These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.*** ¹² ***“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.***

And as we fulfill the first and greatest commandments, as we love the Lord and love one another, we fulfill the chief end of man: glorifying God and enjoying God. The Father receives glory and we receive the Son’s joy, full joy, as we love and serve one another

Psalm 100 commands ***“serve the Lord with gladness.”*** As we lose self in service while making much of Christ, our good deeds can be done in gladness, in transformed hearts that glorify and enjoy God. He has saved us to serve, and may He help us serve the Lord with gladness, with the joy of the Lord as our strength, to God’s glory.

¹ John Trapp, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Vol. 5, p. 591 (published 1656).

² Kent Hughes, *Ephesians*, p. 84.

³ www.michaelcard.com (song title “The Poem of Your Life”)

⁴ Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits*, Lecture 11 (1852 edition, Carter and Brothers), p. 318. Also available online at <http://www.biblebb.com/files/edwards/charity11.htm>

⁵ Martin Luther, cited by *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1999), 2.1.

⁶ John Calvin, cited by Roger Ellsworth, *Opening Up James* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2009), 91.

⁷ *KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 2410-11.

⁸ William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer’s Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 2:10.

⁹ John MacArthur, *The gospel according to the Apostles : The role of works in the life of faith*. Originally published: *Faith Works* (Dallas : Word Pub., Nashville, TN: Word Pub) 1993.

¹⁰ Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, p. 104-5, citing this text.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, cites Romans 1:5 as possible example.

¹² Robert Rayburn, “Sola Gratia,” sermon preached October 28, 2011, online at http://www.faithtacoma.org/sermons/Ephesians/Eph_2.1-10.Oct28.01.htm

¹³ *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, 2:10.