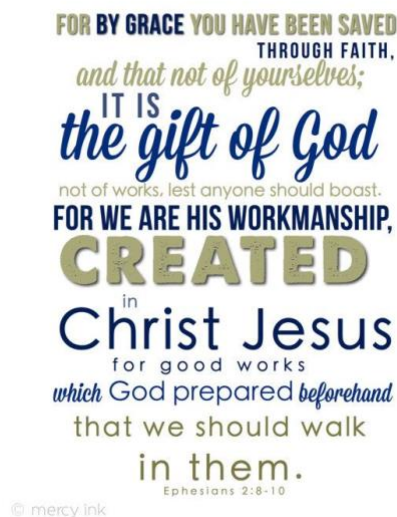




Ephesians 2:8-10 – Works Cannot Save

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not 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. (NASB).

This passage exists because there are other passages that seem to suggest that we are saved because of what we do. But that is not a truth. It is a misunderstanding of scripture and an ignorance of the totality of scripture. When we talk about salvation, we always look for the fruit of salvation - which is a changed life. It can all become very confusing. We see someone doing right and we feel like they deserve to be saved. Whereas when we see others do wrong we can't

imagine how they could be saved and go to heaven. It gets particularly confusing when we see passages such as Matthew 25.

The Big Confusion – Confusing salvation with the fruit of salvation

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' ⁴⁴ "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' ⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' ⁴⁶ "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." (Matthew 25:41-46, NIV).

We might think we could earn something by our works when we read this, but that is not what is going on. We must read this with the balance of all of God's word. We could misinterpret many scriptures unless we had solid passages like Ephesians 2:8-10 that tell us that IT DOESN'T DEPEND ON US. IT IS NOT OF OUR OWN DOING.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9, ESV).

8 τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ πίστεως · καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, θεοῦ τὸ
By grace you have been saved by faith/belief and not by you, of God
δῶρον · 9 οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἵνα μὴ τις καυχῇται.
the gift. Not from works so no one will boast

10 αὐτοῦ γὰρ ἐσμεν **ποίημα**, κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς οἱ
His for we are workmanship created in Christ Jesus for works good which
προητοίμασεν ὁ θεὸς ἵνα ἐν αὐτοῖς περιπατήσωμεν.

prepared God so in them we would walk.

GRACE - τῇ γὰρ χάριτί (FOR BY GRACE)

It is by grace that we are saved. Grace is a Greek word *xáris* (meaning kindness or favor). It is by the kindness and favor of God that we are even offered salvation. Strong's Concordance explains that it also carries the meaning of "leaning towards to share a benefit." I told the congregation on Wednesday night, that when I was a new lawyer in Grimes County, during my first case, Judge Keeling who didn't even know who I was, called me up to the bench, and when I got up in front of him he leaned forward and he said to me in a low voice, "I see by your card that you are from Whitehall. My wife's people are all from Whitehall." From then on whenever I came into his courtroom, he treated me with a favor and grace that was unexplainable. Other lawyers complained to me that he would explode on them with no real predictability, but every time I went into that courtroom, I received that judge's grace. That's how it is with God's grace given to each of us.

SALVATION - ἐστε σεσωσμένοι **Cognate: 4991** *sōtēria* (from [4982](#) /*sōzō*, "to save, rescue") – *salvation*, i.e. God's rescue which delivers believers out of destruction *and into* His safety. [See 4982](#) (*sōzō*). Salvation means we are SAVED or RESCUED. What does it mean if someone charges into a burning house to save you? It means they have rescued you from death. They have kept you from being killed.

When by grace we are saved it means that we have been rescued by God from our sin and our self. It's not something we could do on our own. It is for our salvation that God came to earth as Jesus who was in the form of a man. Scripture tells us that Jesus came for that purpose.

Remember when the angel told Joseph the following?]
“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:20b-21, NKJV).

And then when Jesus was born, the Gospel of Luke tells us, *“¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”* (Luke 2:10-11, NKJV).

THROUGH FAITH - διὰ πίστεως (*diá písteus*) – entrusting God with your soul

The idea here is not just to believe that God exists, but to ENTRUST YOURSELF TO HIM. This is a great step. It is the operative thing by which God's free gift of salvation is gifted to us. This is the trigger that sets off the gun so to speak. It is the turn of the key that starts the car. It is the seed taking root and sprouting into a living plant. It is the match that starts the fire in your heart and soul of receiving and basking in God's perfect love. It is the entrusting of oneself in Him that triggers salvation being bestowed on us. And it is a marvelous, free gift.

GIFT OF GOD - δῶρον – a free gift

The Greek word *dóron* means a gift, a present, specifically a sacrifice (Strong's 1435). We all know what a gift is. It is something that you did nothing to receive. If I give Sandy a gift that is conditioned upon her doing something, then it's no gift at all. It's an exchange or a bargain.

I think it's very interesting that the Greek word *dóron* means a gift or a specific sacrifice, and it is God's sacrifice of Himself (in the form of His only Son) that is the gift that He gives to all human beings. It is not by anything that we've done that we receive this free gift. It is a gift that is there for the taking. It is held in God's hands waiting to be received and taken by each of us. Paul reminds his young protégé Titus, *"⁵ [it is]not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit," (Titus 3:5, NKJV).*

When I was a boy at Camp Peniel, Dale Weagant (one of the directors of the camp) held out a silver 50 cent piece and offered it to the group of boys sitting around the campfire. He said, "Come and take it. It is a free gift. All you need to do is receive it." No one would go up and get it. However, I believed that "Chief Dale" was a man who meant what he said and said what he meant. Chief Dale was saying that it was free, and that it only needed to be received. I got up, walked to the front of the campfire and I took the Ben Franklin half dollar. Like God's grace, it was there for the taking.

NOT OF OUR WORKS – οὐκ ἐξ ἑργῶν (**not out of works**) it has nothing to do with our own efforts

Paul repeats again and again that "salvation is not of my own doing". I can't do enough to deserve God's mercy. If I really believe this, I won't fall prey to others who come along and try to convince me again and again that I need to be doing some work that will save me. People love to add on to what God says. Why? Because it makes us feel like we somehow have a hand in deserving God's wonderful grace. But it takes a certain amount of humility to understand that you don't have anything to do with it.

"It is a gift of God." What a beautiful statement. What is a gift? A gift is something bestowed or given to another person without it being earned or deserved. You don't receive a birthday gift because of some deed you have done. You've merely been around the sun one more time, for one more year. I have never given my children a gift and then asked them to pay for it. A gift, by definition, must be free. So, what does that mean for salvation?

Our salvation is "not a result of works, so no one can boast." When you get to heaven you will only be able to point to Jesus and say, "He did it!"

There are many things that people try to add on to the simple act of faith that scripture requires for salvation. We've all heard of these things and could probably add many others. The things that might be considered faithful steps in becoming more Christ-Like **WON'T HELP YOU GET SAVED**. That includes such things as:

Confirmation – Some think maybe they're saved because they've been through confirmation, but the only thing we are all confirmed as is are "sinners." Confirmation might be a good way to learn some Christian doctrine, but it contributes nothing to salvation.

Baptism by Water – being baptized (even by immersion!) doesn't save you from anything at all. It is an outward sign of an inward faith.

Holy Communion – does not save. It does not dispense grace on you or in you. Jesus said to do this in remembrance of Him.

Keeping the 10 Commandments – although this can help you to have a blessed life this doesn't save you.

Living by the Sermon on the Mount – doesn't save you. They are great principles to live by. They are something you choose to live out because you are saved. They are not something that you do to be saved.

Tithing – no amount of giving will save you from your sins.

Being a really good, generous person cannot save you.

WE CANNOT BE SAVED BY DOING ANYTHING. WE CANNOT BE SAVED BY NOT DOING BAD THINGS. We are saved by one thing and one thing only. We are saved by the blood of the Lamb, God's sacrifice of Jesus for our sins.

VERSE 10 – WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP

Go back to the bottom of page 1 of this sermon and you'll see where I've put in the word "poetry." (See Greek word notated in red). I did that because the Greek word there is *poema* from which we get our English word poem. The true Greek word means you are God's elevated work. You're more than just a product. You're more than just output. You are God's WORKMANSHIP. That is something that is crafted by the Master.

Many of us, in reality, are down on ourselves. We think that we're just a "poor old sinner saved by grace" (and we are), but once we've come to know Jesus, and once He is our Savior we are His MASTERPIECE. We get down on ourselves because we disappoint ourselves. We want to see more spiritual progress and we don't want to have to pay the price of suffering to get it. I have learned in my own life that suffering produces growth.

Paul chose this word *poiema* with great precision. He is saying that you and I are God's epic poetry. You are a great work and He isn't done with you yet. Part of His growing you into what you're supposed to be is by giving you a work to do while you're here on earth.

You know why most of us don't think we're doing God's works that He has prepared beforehand? It is because we are unable to see God in the mundane. He is there beside us when we're preparing a meal. He's there beside us when we're driving to work. He's there beside us when we're working our cows. He's there beside us when we're working on our neighbor's water well. He's there beside us when we're showing real estate to clients. He's there beside us when we're doing the laundry and cleaning our room. When you do those things not just with a prayer whispered from your lips but from your heart and mind you can be involved in intense worship. Remember when we studied the Hebrew word *avodah*. It means three things: work, worship, and service.

Get in tune with God and the things that you do that seem routine will become acts of worship. Your work will become your worship and your worship will become service. It is all wrapped

up together. You are God's great masterpiece. You are His magnificent workmanship. You are His *artesia* (*craftsmanship*). You are His magnificent, beautiful poem. While I was preparing the teaching for Wednesday night, I penned a little poem that expresses what is being said in this wonderful passage of Ephesians.

1) What can I do? What can I say?
For God to love me in such a way.
Is it what I did or what I have done?
To receive the gift of God's own Son.

Chorus

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!

2) The scriptures tell me it was all by grace
A gift by which God took my place
It wasn't a single thing that I've done
To be cleansed by the blood of God's own Son.

Chorus

3) It wasn't my works that saved me so
It's because I was saved that my works I will show
I just want to be His obedient child
My prayer and my actions will make God smile.

Chorus

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.
