

Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, and the background is a bright blue sky with some clouds. The text is overlaid in a large, bold, black font.

Get out of the Graveyard

Scripture text: Ephesians 2

Ephesians 2:1–10

Having described our spiritual possessions in Christ, Paul turns to a complementary truth: **our spiritual position in Christ.**

First he explains what God has done for all sinners in general; then he explains what God did for the Gentiles in particular.

The sinner who trusts Christ has been raised and seated on the throne (Eph. 2:1–10), and believing Jews and Gentiles have been reconciled and set into the temple (Eph. 2:11–22).

1. Sin's Work against Us (Eph. 2:1–3)

Note his characteristics:

- A. He is dead (v. 1).**
- B. He is disobedient (vv. 2–3a).**
- C. He is depraved (v. 3b).**
- D. He is doomed (v. 3c).**

2. God's Work for Us (Eph. 2:4–9)

- A. He loved us***
- B. He quickened us***
- C. He exalted us***
- D. He keeps us***

Discipline

Duty

Desire

Devotion

3. God's Work in Us (Eph. 2:10a)

“For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus.” The Greek word translated “workmanship” is poiema, from which we derive our English word “poem.”

It means **“that which is made, a manufactured product.”** In other words, our conversion is not the end; **it is the beginning.** We are a part of God's “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17), and God continues to work in us to make us what He wants us to be. **His purpose is to make us more like Christ** (Rom. 8:29).

But how does God work in us? Through His Holy Spirit, “both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). Christ finished His work of redemption on the cross, but He arose from the dead and returned to heaven. **There He carries on His unfinished work of perfecting His church (Eph. 4:7–16; Heb. 13:20–21).**

Christ is equipping us for our walk and our work here on earth. To do this, He uses three special tools: the Word of God (1 Thes. 2:13), prayer (Eph. 3:20–21), and suffering (1 Peter 4:11–14).

As we read God's Word, understand it, meditate on it, and feed on it, the **Word goes to work in our lives to cleanse us and nourish us.** As we pray, **God's Spirit works in us to release power.** And as we suffer, **the Spirit of God ministers to us.** Suffering **drives us back to the Word and prayer, and the cycle is repeated.**

Too many Christians think that conversion is the only important experience, and that nothing follows. **But this is wrong. We can use the resurrection of Lazarus as an example.** After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He said, **"Loose him, and let him go"** (John 11:44). In other words, **"This man is now alive. Get him out of the graveclothes!"**

Paul has this concept in mind in **Ephesians 4:22–24** when he writes, “*to **put off your old self**, which belongs to your former manner of life and is **corrupt through deceitful desires**, and to **be renewed in the spirit of your minds**, and to **put on the new self**, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*”

Colossians 3:1 has the same message: *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above.*”

The same resurrection power that saved you and took you out of the graveyard of sin can daily help you live for Christ and glorify Him. At great expense to Himself, God worked for us on the cross. And today, on the basis of that price paid at Calvary, **He is working in us to conform us to Christ.** God cannot work in us unless He has first worked for us, and **we have trusted His Son.** Also, He cannot work through us unless He works in us. **This is why it is important for you to spend time daily in the Word and prayer, and to yield to Christ during times of suffering.** For it is through the Word, prayer, and suffering that God works in you.

The Bible shows many examples of this principle. **God spent 40 years working in Moses before He could work through him.**

At the beginning of his ministry, Moses was impetuous and depended on his own strength. He killed an Egyptian and had to flee Egypt, hardly a successful way to start a ministry. But during those 40 years as a humble shepherd in the desert, Moses experienced God's working in his life, a working that prepared him for forty more years of magnificent service.

There are other examples. **Joseph suffered for thirteen years before God put him on the throne of Egypt, second to Pharaoh.**

David was anointed king when he was a youth, but he did not gain the throne until he had suffered many years as an exile.

Even the Apostle Paul spent three years in Arabia after his conversion, **no doubt experiencing God's deeper work to prepare him for his ministry.** God has to work in us before He can work through us; and this leads to the fourth work in our passage.

4. God's Work through Us (Eph. 2:10b)

We are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”

We are not saved by good works, but **saved unto good works.**

The famous theologian John Calvin wrote, **“It is faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies can never be alone.”** We are not saved by faith plus good works, **but by a faith that works.** The basic Scripture on this theme is James 2, where the writer points out that **saving faith always results in a changed life.** It is not enough to say that we have faith; **we must demonstrate this faith by our works.**

The Bible speaks of many different kinds of works. There are “the works of the Law” which cannot save (Gal. 2:16; 3:11). There are also “the works of the flesh” which are listed in Galatians 5:19–21. Paul spoke of “works of darkness” (Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:11). The “dead works” in Hebrews 6:1 seem to be “works that lead to death,” since “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). The “works of righteousness” in Titus 3:5 refer to religious works, or other good deeds, that sinners try to practice as a means of salvation. Isaiah declared that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight” (Isa. 64:6). If our righteousnesses are filthy, **what must our sins look like!**

The “works” Paul writes about, in Ephesians 2:10, have two special characteristics. First, **they are “good” works, in contrast to “works of darkness” and “wicked works.”**

If you contrast Ephesians 2:10 with Ephesians 2:2 **you will see that the unbeliever has Satan working in him and therefore his works are not good. But the believer has God working in him, and therefore his works are good. His works are not good because he himself is good, but because he has a new nature from God, and because the Holy Spirit works in him and through him to produce these good works.**

It is too bad that many believers minimize the place of good works in the Christian life. Because we are not saved by good works, they have the idea that good works are evil; and this is a mistake. **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”** (Matt. 5:16). We do not perform good works to glorify ourselves, **but to glorify God**. Paul desired that Christ would be magnified in his body, even if it meant death (Phil. 1:20–21). We should “abound to every good work” (2 Cor. 9:8), and be “fruitful in every good work” (Col. 1:10). One result of a knowledge of the Bible is that the believer is “thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:17, nasb).

As believers, **we are to be “zealous of good works”** (Titus 2:14). Our good works are actually **“spiritual sacrifices” that we offer to God** (Heb. 13:16).

It is important to note that we do not manufacture these good works. **They are the results of the work of God in our hearts.** “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). The secret of Paul’s good works was “the grace of God” (1 Cor. 15:10). Our good works are evidence that we have been born again. “Not everyone that saith unto Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

Our good works are also testimonies to the lost (1 Peter 2:12). **They win us the right to be heard.**

A pastor friend told about a Christian lady who often visited a retirement home near her house. One day she noticed a lonely man sitting, staring at his dinner tray. In a kindly manner she asked, “Is something wrong?”

“Is something wrong!” replied the man in a heavy accent. “Yes, something is wrong! I am a Jew, and I cannot eat this food!”

“What would you like to have?” she asked.

“I would like a bowl of hot soup!”

She went home and prepared the soup and, after getting permission from the office, took it to the man.

In succeeding weeks, she often visited him and brought him the kind of food he enjoyed and

eventually she led him to faith in Christ. Yes, preparing soup can be a spiritual sacrifice, a good work to the glory of God.

But these works are not only good; they are also **“prepared.”** “Good works which God hath before ordained [prepared] that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

The only other time this word is used in the New Testament is in Romans 9:23: **“vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory.”** The unbeliever walks “according to the course of this world” (Eph. 2:2), **but the believer walks in the good works God has prepared for him.**

This is an amazing statement. **It means that God has a plan for our lives and that we should walk in His will and fulfill His plan.** Paul is not talking about “kismet”—an impersonal fate that controls your life no matter what you may do. **He is talking about the gracious plan of a loving Heavenly Father, who wills the very best for us.**

The will of God comes from the heart of God.

Psalm 33:11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations.

We discover God's exciting will for our lives as the Spirit reveals it to us from the Word (1 Cor. 2:9–13).

It would be helpful to close this lesson with a personal inventory.

Which of these four works are you experiencing? Is sin working against you because you have not yet trusted Christ? Then trust Him now! Have you experienced His work for you—in you—through you?

Are you wearing the “graveclothes” or the “grace-clothes”?

Are you enjoying the liberty you have in Christ, or are you still bound by the habits of the old life in the graveyard of sin?

As a Christian, you have been raised and seated on the throne.

Practice your position in Christ!

He has worked for you; **now let Him work in you and through you, that He might give you an exciting, creative life to the glory of God.**

One in Christ

THE GREAT PEACE MISSION

Ephesians 2:11–22

Peace in our time! Peace with honor!”

Some of us still remember those words of British Prime Minister, Sir Neville Chamberlain, when he returned from conferences in Germany in September 1938. He was sure that he had stopped Adolf Hitler. Yet one year later, Hitler invaded Poland, and on September 3, 1939, Great Britain declared war on Germany. Chamberlain’s great peace mission had failed.

It seems that most peace missions fail. I read somewhere that from 1500 b.c. to a.d. 850 there were 7,500 “eternal covenants” agreed on among various nations with the hope of bringing peace, but that **no covenant had lasted longer than two years.**

The only “eternal covenant” that has lasted—and that will last—is **the one made by the eternal God, sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ.** It is Christ’s peace mission that Paul explains in this section, and three **very important** words summarize this **great work: separation, reconciliation, and unification.**