

RCC in the Word

Week of February 11

Ephesians 2:8-10

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. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

When was the last time you boasted about yourself? We may be good about not verbalizing the boast, but we think at times about how well we feel when we perform well. Have we always been truthful on a resume? Do we enter debates to prove we know more than someone else? Do we often wade into conversations hoping to get our chance to speak so we can show off our knowledge? Do we look at others who are in the depths of their sin and think I would never do something like that?

This is part of the human condition, we desire to promote self and take credit for our successes and blame someone or something for our failures. We are born sons of Adam, children of the flesh and even as the redeemed in Christ we struggle against this body of death. Yet the beautiful truth that God through Paul is proclaiming is that it's not about us it's about Christ.

In Chapter 2 Paul has laid the groundwork for our spiritual condition before God – Eph 2:1-2 *“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked”*. A dead person cannot respond to anything nor create anything. The imagery is designed to show our helplessness before the Holy Omnipotent Creator of the Universe. Some believe we received God's grace (unmerited favor) in salvation because He saw that we would believe in Christ and that is the basis for our salvation. When I hear this, I see a basis for boasting in that statement, a reward for my faith. This does not line up with what scripture is telling us in this passage. Paul has declared us dead and in need of life and even inserts in verses 4-5 that we are saved by grace Eph 2:4-5 *“4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved”*

So here we are in verse 8-10 and Paul is making a statement which can seem confusing to a man's ears. So much so that Paul must declare that our salvation combines God's unmerited favor and our faith in Christ and proclaim that is not our doing, but it is a gift from God specifically so that no man can boast in himself for his salvation. Paul goes on to proclaim that we are a result of God's workmanship and the power of creation is on display to raise dead men to life in Christ so that we would walk in good works.

Scripture cuts the legs out from under mankind and is adamant about the monergistic work of God in saving His people. As Christians, we fall at the feet of our Savior and bring nothing but our sin and shame. We have nothing within us that merits God's grace and mercy...in fact just the opposite. We deserve to be punished for eternity for violating the law of the Holy One, we suffer the consequences of spiritual death as a result of the fall and of our own inherited sin nature. We desperately need a Savior to create life within us to respond to the good news of the gospel.

We are God's creation through and through, first in our birth into this world and the second birth which imparts life to a dead soul. Brethren the reality is we are His and He has created us and saved us for His own purposes from before the foundation of the world. Let us walk humbly with our God, boasting in Christ, pointing everyone to the God who saves sinners like us.

-Written by Calvin Patrick