



Sermon – 06/25/2017

Ephesians 2:8 - 10

Genesis 6:8 – 9

Genesis 7:1

Psalms 139:13 & 16

Ephesians 4:14 & 15

Philippians 1:6

Good morning. You'll be pleased to know that Chris will be back in the pulpit next Sunday morning. That is if we can get him to leave the beautiful mountains of Colorado and come to our flat lands here in Texas.

Our text this morning is Ephesians 2 verses 8, 9, and 10. Three short but incredibly profound verses describing the Biblical truths of two of our most important spiritual foundations of the Christian faith and our walk with Jesus Christ. Turn with me now as we read from Ephesians. Ephesians 2:8 – 10. And as we read these verses I want you to think about these two foundational truths of our spiritual walk. The first one is how we're saved. And the second one is what we are to become and what we are to do once we have been saved. And our main focus this morning will be on that second Biblical truth beginning in verse 8:

⁹For by grace you have been saved through faith.

And listen to this next statement.

And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

And then here's our verse for the day.

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

There are two ships from history that we all are quite familiar with the story. One is the Titanic and the other is the ark of Noah; Noah's Ark. One was built by man. One was built by God. One was the workmanship of professional engineers and the other was completed and built by

the amateur Noah. That he was under the direction and dimensions of Almighty God. One was promoted as the ship that even God couldn't sink. And the other was made of gopher wood and tar and was ridiculed by those who did not know God's plan. One carried some of the most wealthy people and families in all of the world. And the other carried one family and a bunch of dirty stinking animals with their food and not much else. Each of those two ships made one voyage; one voyage only. And one sailed just five days and sank to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean with more than fifteen hundred lives lost. One sailed for 150 days and saved all of mankind. One depended upon the best technology and communications systems of its day. The other depended upon God's direction and God's guidance. There have been hundreds of much larger ships built since the Titanic. But God built only one ship; one state of the art, one of a kind ship. He didn't need to make another one because he made it right the first time. One cost \$70,000 in 1912 for a first class ticket. One cost living a righteous life in the eyes of God. And that's what God saw in Noah and it's what God wants to see in us.

Turn with me, if you would, to Genesis 6; Genesis 6, verses 8 and 9. And then 7:1. God had just made the comment that man was so evil that he wished he'd never made him. And he was going to destroy him and take him from the face of the earth. But then look at verse 8.

⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. ⁹These are the generations of Noah.

And he later lists Noah's family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation.

And then listen to the key.

Noah walked with God.

And then 7:1.

¹Then the Lord said to Noah, after he had built the ark (the ship), "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation.

That's what verse 10 is about. And the Titanic sank in the early morning hours of April the 15th 1912. It took two hours and forty minutes for that ship to sink. I can't understand why the movie took 3 hours and 14 minutes. I didn't think it was ever going to get finished. Well one ship was man's workmanship and one was God's workmanship. And there's a decision for us because Ephesians 2:10 is all about who's workmanship we have the freewill choice to make. Who are we going to trust to build our lives; man over here or God over here. One will transport us to a destination with Him doing what he planned for us along the way. But the other will sink us into an eternity of death to go down like the Titanic. But like Noah there's something very important here that we saw that we read in verse 1 of chapter 7. Because you see our family, our household, is in this boat with us and we must see that God's workmanship in their lives becomes a priority because it's a priority in our lives and we are the captain of that ship. We are steering it under God's direction. Our focus clearly is on verse 10 this morning. But we cannot understand or even live out verse 10 until first we accept the source, the truth, the purpose, and

the free gift of our salvation that we just read about in verses 8 & 9. You see salvation starts that process of God's workmanship in our lives. People don't become God's workmanship unless they accept his salvation. And the purpose of salvation as we read here was designed to provide us with God's grace and eternal life and it is not our own doing. It's the gift that God gave us so that man could not boast or to think that he could work to earn it and work to live it by his own hand. And when we accept Jesus Christ his purpose becomes our purpose in life.

What's next? Well it's like we then it becomes a matter of obedience. And I'm sure that many times Noah wanted to stop building that ark as people would pass by and laugh and ridicule and think, "What is he building out there and why?" But they didn't know God. But something about Noah is very important for you and for me. He remained obedient to the work that God was doing in his heart and life to save not only his life but that of his family as well. There's a lot of confusion today about good works and many people reverse the order of salvation and works and miss salvation completely. It's sad but it's so very true today. And it's the deception of the enemy to make man believe that he can attain salvation by being good, by carrying our good works, and living a good life. And that is the mark of a lot of other religions. And unfortunately many churches, even today, is simply not Biblical. It's not according to God's word and it will sink like the Titanic did. Well a church is clearly not a social club, an athletic club, or a works program. It's the body of Jesus Christ doing the work of saving people for Him and working together to change the hearts of people. Let's dissect this verse.

First of all it says for we are his workmanship. Verb tense in scripture is very very important. And here it's present tense. It's ongoing for we are his workmanship. We are his ongoing making. His continuous action and that will never end until we leave this earth. You will always be under the workmanship and the construction of Jesus Christ. This word workmanship; what does that mean? Well it comes from the work, the Greek word, *poiima*, meaning a poem. A poem is a work of art, a work of beauty. And that's what it means here because it denotes a work of art, a masterpiece, as he uses it here. The handiwork of God, not man. The handiwork of God, not man. You see we are God's personal work of art. We're not here as an assembly line product. No, we are here because we're custom designed and made one of a kind by Almighty God himself. A poem should have a rhyme, a reason, a purpose, a meaning, and a message and it ends with a period. Now I'm not sure that I would agree on Shakespeare, but poems are supposed to be that way. And our lives are like a poem. And that poem is still being written in every one of you and every one of us in this room. And will be until we put the period at the end of it. So the question is what do people see when they read the poem of our lives and what God's workmanship is doing.

Have you ever heard of the dash? If you look at headstones you often will see the name of the individual and underneath it will be the birthdate and then there's a dash and then the date that that person passed away. That is a dash that is meaningful to us. We don't choose the length of the dash in our lives. Because we don't choose when we're born. We don't choose when we die. But what we do choose is how we will live that dash. Do we live it under the workmanship of Jesus Christ? That's the bottom line. Well the next phrase says, "created in Christ Jesus", for what; good works. For His good works; not ours. And this workmanship created in Christ Jesus is a real reminder to us that our strength in our life do not come through our works, but through the Christ who creates in us. And it's hard to believe that not only does God give us the free gift

of salvation, but that he wants to use us in his ministry to do his work while we're on earth. You see his workmanship is to prepare us and to equip us to become a part of his ministry by doing his works. And we are not to just be a consumer who comes here on a Sunday morning and leaves and goes home. We are to be a participant and a contributor in the body of Christ and God has gifted every one of us for something he wants to do through us. If you don't have a place, our ministers can give you a place and you pray about what he would have you to do.

Well look at the next one. It says which God prepared beforehand. Well the work that we're to do was prepared along with how he custom made us to do his work. For you see he had the blue print of what he wanted us to be and what he wanted us to do before he ever brought us to this earth. Turn with me to Psalm 139. A great passage of scripture that we've looked at many times before because it tells us how we are wonderfully made. Psalm 139 starting in verse 13.

¹³For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

And then look at 16:

¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed substance; and in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

That's how much God loves us. That's how much he planned our life. That's how much he planned in advance the workmanship, after he saved us, that he wanted to do in our lives. And this is really very important to us. Because you see the Christian life has no retirement age and I talk to a lot of people and they say, "I can hardly wait until retirement so I can do nothing." Well I'm busier now that I've retired than when I worked. But the Christian has no retirement age. Not at all. And we are told in scripture that we are not to grow old in Christ but we are to grow up in Christ. Look at Ephesians 4:14 & 15. Ephesians 4:14 & 15.

¹⁴so that we may no longer be, what, children, youth, we haven't grown up yet, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵Rather, and here it is, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

I ran across a cute little quote this past week in preparation. I wrote it down because it's for all of you legacy adults this morning. And it says this: you don't stop having fun when you grow old, you grow old when you stop having fun. Are you still having fun in the workmanship of Jesus Christ in your life? I have to ask myself that because John Maurer is my legacy adult minister now. That is important for us; to know that God's always going to work. And then look at that last phrase in verse 10:

That we should walk in them.

What? The works that God has for us and this is where we live out his purpose in our lives. And it says that we walk in them. We're not saved by them at all. We walk in them. And a man who walks with God reaches his destination. You see we read back in Genesis 6 where it said Noah did what? Noah walked with God. So did Moses. So did Joshua. So did Abraham. So did

Nehemiah. But also so did Jesus Christ. All the way to the cross which was his destination for you and for me. So the question is for us as we look at this verse is how are we walking daily in what he's called us to do. The purpose of the Titanic was to transport people from one location to another. It was to transport people from South Hampton, England to New York City. And even with the professional architect, engineers, the builder, the captain, and all of the crew on board, they could not save her. There's a purpose for the ark. And the purpose of the ark was to transport people under God's guidance to save mankind. I'd rather be in the ark than the Titanic. And the ark made a successful trip because, you see, God was the architect, he was the engineer, he was the builder, he was the captain, and it was his workmanship through Noah that made the difference. And we are here today because Noah allowed God's workmanship to save mankind through him and his household and his family. What about your family? Is that going to be the purpose? And that brings me to another great point on this one verse. Because, you see, God's workmanship and our purpose in life should be one and the same. They should be one and the same. What's purpose mean? Purpose means the reason something exists. And our purpose, the reason we exist, is to live a life of purpose for Jesus Christ. It's what this verse is telling us. This past week I was thumbing through my iPhone and I've got a bunch of apps on it. And one application has more than 5,000 quotes and statements by famous people. And as I scrolled across it, one of them was from the Buddhist monk, Dharma Paldan. You know what it said? He said, "Man's purpose in life is to be happy." He could not be more wrong than making that statement because, you see, that's another lie of a false religion. And it's often associated, even today, with the so-called prosperity gospel that's being taught. There's a difference between being happy and having joy. Because, you see, joy comes from salvation. Joy comes from salvation. Well for four days the people on the Titanic were happy, joyous, happy. And the wealthy and worldly were having a gigantic party to celebrate one of man's so-called greatest achievements in the history of the world. But his one big happy party of 2,224 people hit an iceberg and sank to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean and took all those people with it. They were so confident in man's workmanship to build the Titanic that they only had 20 lifeboats, only about less than half of what was needed to save the people. They put their trust in man. And God's ultimate purpose for our lives is not comfort or to be happy, but to build the character development of Christ into our lives and allow him to complete his ministry, his mission, in our own lives. I want you to look at a verse of scripture in Philippians. Philippians 1, verse 6. It says:

[⁶I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.](#)

You see the workmanship becoming like Jesus Christ is an ongoing process and it takes time for God to complete his workmanship, his poem of our lives. I'll tell you what we ought to do. We should take a blank sheet of paper and give it to God and put our signed signature at the bottom of it and date it and let him fill in all of the details because he can do that a lot better than we can. There are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity. You know what spiritual maturity is? It's knowing what God is saying and obeying. It's that simple. And that's the kind of workmanship that he's talking about; he wants to do in our lives. As we live here on earth there's something we rarely think about. But what we are now doing as we travel and as we transport our lives from one place to another, we are making our reservations and purchasing our ticket to eternity. It's exactly what we're going. And we only have two choices. And the final destinations are totally

in opposite directions. For you see one is over here. Over here with man's craftsmanship, workmanship of the Titanic. But the other one is over here. It's the workmanship of God, the ark made by God. And when we do that we have a reserved, non-refundable, first-class ticket to spend eternity with him. One, the one over there, is going to sink and go down forever and to never be raised again. But the other one over here will transport us safely through all of the troubled waters and the icebergs that we face as we walk through this life. So there we are. How we're saved and what we are to become and to do when we are saved. I can't answer that for you, but I can answer it for me.

Pray with me.

Father I simply pray this morning that you will use these three verses to help us each and every day to realize that you did make us for a purpose, a reason to be here, a reason to exist, and we can't do it on our own. But we need to yield ourselves obediently to you so that you can not only save us, but that you can use us in your kingdom. It's in Jesus' name that we thank you. Amen.