



Sermon – January 6, 2019  
Chris Osborne

**Verses Covered**

*Ephesians 2:8 – 10*  
*2 Corinthians 2:13*

So I want you to open your Bibles. We're walking through the book of Ephesians. We've come to two. A couple years ago, my wife and I were at a Southern Baptist Convention. Had to go there early Saturday for some meetings. And so Sunday morning, instead of driving to find some church in town, I decided, they had a thing called COSBE, C-O-S-B-E, which was a conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists. There was all these full time evangelists that travelled around doing revivals. They were having a service there. So I thought I'd just go. So I get in there and I sit down in the back. And I notice there aren't many people in the room. I mean the convention's pretty large, but there aren't many people in the room. And the guy starts blistering pastors like me. He just starts ripping us. That we're not using them. Or we're not bringing them in our churches. And I started thinking back to two things. And he's right. It's been like 22 years since I brought one of those guys in. And I remembered why on this day. He was just ripping up saying that if we didn't use them, then we did not love Jesus. We did not believe the scripture and we weren't standing with Jesus. And I remembered why because I grew up with, now those of you that are not my age nearly, I'm checking out my nursing home because I don't want my kids picking it. So I'm working on that at this point. But I grew up in the days of sometimes two-week revivals. You'd have these guys come in and they would preach for two weeks and they'd dress funny. But their sermons were pretty much always the same. They'd go to different verses of scripture. But it was pretty much always some beating us up in the pew. I mean at some point you'd hear something like, "You know if you've ever been mad at your mother, you need to come forward today and love Jesus better." At some point somebody's been mad at their mother. So the only exception to that would have been Jesus. The other brothers were at some point hacked off at Mary. So you know, you're just coming down. And so it was this beating. So you kind of, so the paradigm sort of shifted in the church to the place where we are today. Where we kind of deal with the opposite. I don't remember exactly who the reference point was, but there's a comedian John Crist that I really like him, I love obviously satire and sarcasm and he's really gifted at that. So I like this guy. Pretty funny. But someone had questioned, I don't remember who it was, but someone had said, made a statement simply that same-sex marriage is not acceptable in the word of God. And that this guy went off on them saying, and I quote, "Well they're just a bunch of haters." Now we have had a tendency at times, right, to hate those that

don't live like we live. I get that. But we've kind of come to this place where we've misunderstood the idea of grace.

Now we're coming into a passage that's going to be a little bit difficult. It's going to explain two things. It's going to give you the definition of grace. Listen. It's going to give you to purpose of grace which is not what most of us think it is. So we're going to pay attention to the text. And we left off with him saying that in eternity He's going to take us and use us to show off His heart. That's what he said in the last text. The universe shows off His glory; His power, His sovereignty. We, though, he says, are going to show off His heart. The fact that He loves this planet even though it doesn't love Him back. So He's going to take us in eternity and show off the result of His love and His heart in us. Now here he goes. Again, don't listen to me, but pay attention to the text. Now listen. Ephesians 2:8, 9, and 19. These are the Baptist verses. That's what I grew up on. Here it is. Now listen.

<sup>8</sup>For by grace your saved through faith;

Now He makes three statements to you here. He says, you're saved by grace. Now let's be clear what that is. OK. Grace is what, my dad was building one time a tennis court in North Alabama. And he was building it by himself and he got up and he started out that morning. And he looked up and his neighbor, Kenneth, was walking up the street with a wheel barrow and some tools. Now dad had never built anything for this guy. Never helped him paint his house. He'd never done anything with this guy. And he didn't ask him to come help him with the tennis court. Kenneth just decided he would. Now understand that is the definition of grace. That's what it is. It's a favor I didn't ask for and I don't deserve. And we saw that in the garden, right. Adam and Eve blow it. God comes in, says, "Where are you?" Adam said, "Well, hid because we were afraid when You were coming." And He said, "Did you eat the tree that I told you not to eat from?" And Adam, I love Adam, his response was, "Well, the woman You gave me." In other words, really God it's kind of Your fault. So he blames his wife and God. It's the last conversation from him. He turns to Eve and says, "What happened here?" She said, "Well the serpent tricked me." She blames Satan. Neither one of them took any blame. But when He addresses Satan, He gives the, Genesis 3:15, He gives the first statement about the Messiah. So you've got two people that He runs out of the garden that do not ask Him for favor and do not deserve favor. And yet He gives them grace right there. He says, "I've got this." Not today, but it's coming. A clear reference, what He said to Satan, to the cross of Jesus Christ. So understand, grace, you don't deserve it and you didn't ask for it, but God still gives it. Now that's grace. Listen to what he says.

<sup>8</sup>by grace you are saved

Now we've looked at that, right. Being saved means I'm no longer dead. Dead doesn't mean I'm ceasing to exist. Death means I'm broken in four areas: I've lost Him, I've lost the ability to relate to other people, I'm broken, and the world I live in is shot. So he says this grace comes into your life and it offers you salvation. When this grace works in your life, then what happens is God, then, reconnects you to Him. Gives you the ability to forgive and love other people. Takes away your shame, your guilt, if you wrestle with guilt, it's because you're blaming the enemy again, not Him. He's already dealt with that. And the world, even though it's still bad, you conquer because the Holy Spirit prays for you when you don't, when you're not ready to, and gets you through this

life. So He has saved us through, how does that happen? Through what? Faith. Now Holy Spirit comes to me and He speaks to me and He says, “Chris,” and this is John 16, he says, “You’re guilty of sin. It’s your bad. Number two, My Son was righteous and if you’ll let His righteousness, as a matter of fact, if you’ll trade, if you give Me your sin, let Me take it off and forgive you and wipe it out, and I’ll give you my Son’s righteousness. And if you’ll do that, you’ll escape the judgement that’s coming to the world. Now so there’s the three statement, right. I don’t deserve what He offers me. I didn’t ask for it. But what He offers reconnects me in every way and that reconnection is done by, listen, what I believe. And then he makes this kind of redundant statement. Listen to what he says.

<sup>8</sup>For by grace you’re saved through faith; this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

He says, “Listen, you’re not the one that did that. This grace doesn’t come from you. The salvation doesn’t come from you.” Listen, nor does your faith come from you. Bible says in Romans 10:17, hearing, faith comes by hearing, and hearing not through the word, that’s a mistranslation, it’s hearing through the word about Christ. Now listen to me carefully. There are interesting verses in the Bible that say, says a couple times, today if you hear His voice, don’t harden your heart. So in other words, you can hear what I’m saying today. You can hear what I just read and not be able to believe it. You can’t have saving faith until the Holy Spirit takes what I just said and pushes it into your soul. That’s why Jesus told Peter, “Peter, blessed are you. Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.” I love apologetics and all that, that’s great. But let me tell you something. Nobody’s saved, you don’t have saving faith until the Holy Spirit brings that to you. That’s why a demon, Bible says demons believe and tremble, but they’re not saved. They know the facts are true, but they are never given saving faith by the Holy Spirit. They are never offered redemption and there are moments when you will be. But not every day.

I didn’t have that moment until I was 17 years old. I grew up in church. If you’d asked me, do you believe in Jesus? Oh yeah. Do you believe He saved you? Yeah. Do you his blood made the payment? Yeah. Are you an Atheist? No. Agnostic? No. Deist? No. I would have answered every one of those questions. But at age 17 was the first time the Holy Spirit spoke to me and all of a sudden, now here’s the key, listen, because here’s what the Holy Spirit really does. He individualizes the generality of the gospel. I knew everything was true, but at age 17 I knew it was true about me. So understand, everything you have comes from Him which is why he said He shows us off in eternity. Because we don’t do anything. And then he takes it one step further. Look at verse 9.

<sup>9</sup>Not of works, so that nobody can boast.

Now listen to me because I, I still hear this. I had a guy in Midland that came to me one week. He sat in my office and he said, “Listen, I’m, I want to join your church.” I said, “Sure. Let me, tell me about who you are in Christ.” He walked through the correct answers. And then he looked at me and he said, “I don’t really want to walk the aisle.” And I understand that. Sometimes we don’t want to do that. He said, this is his statement, he said, “I don’t want anybody to think that I’m really a bad guy.” I said, “Well the Bible doesn’t say you’re a bad guy. It says you are an evil guy.” So I don’t know where you’re going with this, but you really don’t get it here. And I mean I still run into people who say, “You know, I know about the blood of Jesus, but I’m really a pretty

good guy too.” Let me tell you something. Now listen to me carefully. If you’re depending on anything other than the grace of Jesus Christ executed in His blood by your trust in that from the Holy Spirit, if you’re depending on anything else in your life, you are not a Christian. That’s what he says. So that nobody can boast. If you can get to heaven and say, “Well God, thank You for Jesus, but you know this helped me here too.” If today, there’s a single gram of boasting in your heart, you are not saved. Now that’s what he says. That is the text. So here it is. OK. Here’s grace. I didn’t ask for it. I don’t deserve it. It reconnects me to the Father. Through what the Holy Spirit tells me about the blood on the cross. I believe that. There’s a reconnection. All of this is from Him. I don’t do anything to earn this. OK. Now there’s the definition of grace.

Now before you leave me, I’m going to make an unbaptist statement here. So before you leave me walk with me and listen carefully. Now there’s the definition. Verse 10 is the purpose of grace. Listen to this.

<sup>10</sup>For we are His

Most of your translations are going to say workmanship. There’s an interesting little Greek word. It’s *poiēma*. We are His poem. What’s a poem? It’s when a guy writes something that he believes and it’s generally an extension of who he is. So he says we are an extension in the world of who God really is. We should be a people who reflect what He thinks, what He believes, how He wants us to act, what He thinks we ought to do. His character and His belief should be worked out in us. We are that workmanship. Now listen.

created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Now listen. We’re His workmanship. The purpose of God’s grace is to recreate who He is in your life. What word is missing in this text? What is amazingly, all this stuff about grace, what’s not here? You know what word is not in here? The word forgiveness. There’s nothing in here about you being forgiven. Not a word. Why? Now listen to me carefully. You hear me all the way out. Forgiveness, listen, is not the end of the cross. Forgiveness is a means, I’m sorry, it is the means to the end of the cross. The end of the cross is that God makes me into His poem. That I look like Him. That I reflect Him. That I’m in His image. I’m His poem. He is not mine. There’s nothing about forgiveness because that’s not the issue. Forgiveness is the means to the end and the end is that I’m reconstructed. But if you stop with forgiveness as the end of the cross, you will miss everything that He wants to do in your life. And He becomes your poem. There’s a weird verse in the book of Jeremiah. It says, and it’s still true, it’s written what, 3,000 years ago. It’s still true. Here’s what it says. The only nation in the history of the world that ever changed its god was Israel. Can you imagine Islam changing out Allah? They would never do that. The Egyptians had several, but Rah was their main god. They didn’t change him out. Philistines had Dagon. They didn’t change him out. No country has ever changed his god except one; Israel. That’s ironic. Ostensibly what we believe is they’re the only ones that know the right God: Jehovah. So why would you change Jehovah out for Baal? Because we don’t like the character Jehovah wants us to live in. So we create a god who becomes a, now listen, in our image, becomes our poem. We create a god that lets us do what we want to. If I hate people, then I’ll create a god, an idol, that will let me and absolutely bless me for hating people. If you went into Corinth in the first

century, you could pay money and be sexually involved with all these priestesses because that was the goddess. They were actually in a temple and that was the goddess. So you could do whatever you wanted to with these girls because this god is allowed. And we create gods that reflect us. They are our poem. Now listen. Please listen. When I hear the phrase, "I know that this is not what God wants, but I know He'll forgive me." Then what you're doing is you're living your life in a way that He's now your poem instead of you being His. And that is a reverse of the purpose of grace. The purpose is grace is so we can transform you. So when you walk in this life, and you're not going to be perfect, but that the consistency of your lifestyle overrules your imperfection and people see that what you are represents who He is. You lost your rights when you came to Jesus. Your right is now His. And when I hear people just live in forgiveness, they don't get the purpose. Forgiveness wipes away my sin. Implants Jesus' righteousness, why? Why does God do that? So I can walk around and say, "Hey! I'm forgiven and I can do whatever I want because God will forgive me." That is the definition of grace that is going all around America today and it is a denial of Ephesians 2:10. It's 2:8 and 9. But it's not 2:10. No. The reason He forgives me and the reason He washes away my sin and He gives me His righteousness, now listen, is so that He can put Himself back in my life. That's how the Holy Spirit comes into my life. And the Bible says in Romans 8 the Holy Spirit does two things. He bears witness with me, that I'm His child, and He gives me the power to put to death the deeds of the body, and He gives me the power to do exactly what God tells me to do. The purpose of forgiveness is to reinstall the Holy Spirit into your life so the Holy Spirit can give you the ability to be recreated in the image of God. We're good at 2:8 and 9. But we've missed 10.

So when you leave today, you leave in three possible ways. I want you to listen to an unusual section of scripture in 1 Corinthians 3. Now listen to this, beginning in 13. He's talking about us when we die. Here's what he says.

<sup>13</sup>the labor of each one shall be made clear; for that day shall declare it.

What day? When I die and I stand before God. You say, "We're not judged." No. We're evaluated. We're not judged. We're not facing the great white throne judgement. But we are evaluated by what we did here. Now listen.

That day will declare it because in fire it shall be revealed. <sup>14</sup>And the work of each one, whatever it is, shall be proven out by fire.

Now listen to this.

If the work of one abides what he's built, he shall receive a reward.

Now what is that? I got nothing. But that's what it says. Now listen to this. Listen to this.

<sup>15</sup>But if the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, even as if it's through fire.

Let me tell you something. When you come into the grace of Jesus Christ and you step beyond forgiveness and you let forgiveness do in your life what it's supposed to do, which is implant the

Holy Spirit and you allow that Holy Spirit, you don't quench Him, you don't stop Him, and you allow Him to control you and allow you to do what God wants you to do, stay away from the enemy, be anointed in what you do. At the end of your life when you stand and you have allowed Him to create, you've allowed Him to make you God's poem so that when you die, you stand before Jesus Christ and all these things that you let Him do, you are rewarded for. But when you spend your life and you're caught up in the grace, but you're just locked into forgiveness, that's all that matters to you. And I'm embarrassed to say that that has been the mantra of Southern Baptist life. We've talked about God the Father. We've talked about God the Son. But we have rarely talked about God the Spirit because we have missed what He's trying to do. We're so caught up in forgiveness, we've misunderstood everything about the gospel. And if I'm caught up just in forgiveness, do I go to heaven? Absolutely. Am I rewarded for here? Absolutely not. I suffer loss. I get there. It's as if I get there smoking, but I get there. But I miss the ability to look at Jesus Christ and give Him back everything He's given me. So when you leave today there are three ways to leave. You can walk out these doors and you really think you're doing something to add to your salvation, you're not going to make it. You can leave here locked into forgiveness. I know I'm not supposed to do that, but God's going to forgive me and I'm OK. You can leave there, but you're going to heaven, but you're going to miss every bit of reward He has for you. Or you can leave here saying, "I'm going to let forgiveness create in me the ability to reflect who He is in my life. You decide which of the three it is.

Let's pray.

Father, again in spite of what everybody says, though Your word is has so much more clarity that we give it credit for, Father in my own life I don't want to miss what You have and what You are. And Father I think most of the people here are here on a Sunday morning because they don't want to miss it either. So Father, let us use forgiveness to be reconstructive, not use forgiveness to stay where we want to stay. Thank You for Your grace and what You want to do out of it. In Jesus name we praise You for that.