

How God Saves Sinners

Ephesians 2:8-10

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I'm going to back up and we're going to read ten verses to look at the last three. I want you to see it all in its marvelous context. Beginning in verse 1, Paul says, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation," or manner of living, "in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened," or regenerated or given new life, "us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

I hardly think that we can fathom or comprehend the beauty and the marvelous truths that are found in these verses. I certainly, as a Bible teacher, cannot exhaust the depth and the riches that are here. One of the reasons why these verses are so well-known and memorized...and I do really, really encourage you as a believer to put Scriptures to memory. Every Christian should memorize verses. Every Christian should hide God's Word in their heart so that they might not sin against Him. Put them on sticky notes, stick them on the mirror, put them on the steering wheel in your car (don't look at it while you're trying to drive on the freeway but maybe at stop signs you read it), but just do something to get God's Word hidden in your heart. Use a translation that is easiest for you to memorize.

I've read the King James Bible my whole life since I was young and heard it preached, so I have stuck with that, but I do think that it is one of the most quotable because of the rhyme, meter, and the way it's written. Even the old English, believe it or not, in many cases actually lends itself to memorization and quotability. I think a lot of the modern English translations are lacking in ability to be able to quote, so I'm really kind of a die-hard King James guy when it comes to memorizing and quoting Scripture. Anyway, that's just a little two cents I threw in there. That's not in my notes. I wasn't planning on sharing that with you.

One of the reasons why these verses are so near and dear to our hearts is because they very simply and succinctly tell us how God saves sinners. We might think of salvation as being kind of a simple subject—we're sinners, Jesus is the Savior, and we accept Him in our heart and go to Heaven. That's salvation. But really it's deeper than that, and there's a need for Christians to think deeply and understand the doctrine of salvation, how it all works, and why. That's what

Paul's epistles do. It actually breaks it all down for us. That's why I said you actually have the book of Romans in three verses here in the book of Ephesians. It's a message of how God saves sinners.

Let me summarize that message for you. How does God save sinners? By grace, through faith, in Christ. Again, this may sound super basic and super simple, and you hear Pastor John repeat it all the time, but each one of those statements is a whole kind of theological truth in and of itself. Some like to package it like this: Grace alone, faith alone, in Christ alone. Now, that's pretty easy for you to memorize, too. I believe that "alone" added to that is very important because it's not grace plus works, it's not faith plus doing religious deeds, it's not Christ plus other Ascended Masters, it's Christ alone. How does God save sinners? By grace, through faith, in Christ alone.

Here's a little review leading up to our text. In verses 1-3, we saw the depth of our sin. First, we saw how in our natural state we were dead in sin, verse 1, and we "...were dead in trespasses and sins." Secondly, we were disobedient, verse 2. We were living "...according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," we were under Satan's influence. In verse 3, we were depraved, living according to, "...the lusts of our flesh." This is before we were born of the Spirit, before we were regenerated and given new life. Thirdly, we were doomed, "...and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Verse 1, dead; verse 2, disobedient; verse 3, depraved; and verse 3 as well, we were doomed.

Notice immediately, with this dark background, we now see the greatness of God's love, the height of God's love. Paul takes us down to the depth of our sin and then lifts us up to the heights of God's love. By the way, verses 1-3, we have our sinful past; verses 4-6, we have God's grace in saving us in the present; and verse 7 takes us off into eternity future. Notice what God has done for us—three things. I love this. Verse 4, He loved us; verse 5, He quickened us, He gave us new life; verse 6, He raised us up; verse 7, He shows us "...the exceeding riches of his grace." I believe in verse 7 that he's actually describing that in eternity future we are going to be in Heaven and God is going to unfold the glories and the majesty and the splendor of His grace.

When we get to Heaven, we're not going to just say, "Oh, yeah, this is cool. Now what do we do?" and get bored, sit around, and play our harps on a cloud watching the angels fly around. We're actually going to be listening to the grace of God unfolded throughout all eternity understanding the vastness of God's grace and His mercy. That "ages to come," I believe is eternity future, and He will show us "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us," and it's all "through Christ Jesus."

Paul talks about the depth of our sin, the height of God's love, now tonight, verses 8-10, we see the width of God's grace and work—the height, the depth, and the width of God's grace and work. Let's read those verses again, "For by grace are ye saved through faith," and he is in many ways summarizing what he's covered in those first seven verses. It is "by grace are ye

saved.” Earlier, in verse 5, he introduced that theme, “(by grace ye are saved.)” Notice it’s not you hope to be saved or you might be saved or if you’re lucky, you’ll be saved. Salvation is a present possession—you are saved. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we,” that are saved by God’s grace, “are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” We’re not saved by good works, but we’re saved unto good works. How true that is. Paul elaborates on the grace of God. He has taken us from death to life, from bondage to freedom, from despair to hope. God has saved us.

The question that we want to ask first tonight is how does God save us? I’m going to ask two basic questions: How does God save us; and, the second is going to be, why does God save us? Well, let me tell you how God saves us by telling you first from the text how God does not save us or anyone for that matter. Notice verse 9, “Not of works, lest any man,” or person, “should boast.” Notice the statement in verse 8, “...and that not of yourselves.” Did you know no one can save themselves? It’s like trying to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. Try is sometime. It’s not going to work. No one can save themselves. To begin with, we just learned that we “were dead in trespasses and sins.” What can a dead man do to save himself? If you came on a corpse and said, “Save yourself!” What would happen? Nothing. It wouldn’t respond. There’s nothing that we can do to save ourselves.

Now, this is going to be a little repetitive tonight, but I want to drive home this point that Christianity—teaching we are saved by grace through faith in Christ—is unique from all other religions. No other religious system teaches grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. No other religious system teaches we are saved by grace alone. They combine grace with works is as close as they get, but it’s not grace alone. It is very important that you understand that only the Bible, only Christianity, teaches that the only way for us to be saved is by grace, not by our own good deeds. Only Christianity says, “Done.” Other religions say, “Do.”

Remember when Jesus died on the cross and uttered those words, “It is finished,” tetelestai, done, paid in full. “Finished!” he cried. Jesus paid it all, all to Him we owe, sin had left a crimson stain, and He washed it white as snow. It’s not my good deeds plus His death on the cross; it’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. We studied that so thoroughly in the book of Galatians. It’s not water baptism, communion, or confirmation. It’s basically the grace of God. We were dead, we were enslaved, and we were children of the devil. We were doomed, yet God came to rescue us by His marvelous grace. Then, Pauls tells us, verse 9, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

I love what John Stott said. He said, “We will not be able to strut around Heaven like peacocks, Heaven will be filled with the exploits of Christ and the praises of God.” There’s no bragging going on in Heaven, “You should’ve seen how many doors I knocked on! You should’ve seen how many I led to Christ, and you should’ve seen what a godly man I was.” I don’t think so. We’re going to be in Heaven worshipping He who saved us by His marvelous grace! “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”

Secondly, here's the positive. The negative, we're not saved by works—our religious deeds. Don't ever let anyone tell you that you can work hard enough to get saved or earn or merit your salvation. He says, "For by grace," literally you have been saved, a present possession. How are we saved? Not by works, but by grace. This is one of the grandest themes of the Bible, the grace of God. The Bible is the only book that teaches that we're saved by grace alone without works. Grace plus works is not salvation, it is grace alone.

We need to understand what grace is. Grace is unmerited, undeserved favor. It's the love of God going out toward the utterly undeserving. Grace is God doing for us what we do not deserve, what we have not earned, what we have not merited, but we have not done any work for. We're saved by God's unmerited, unearned, undeserved favor, and that's so important for you to understand.

This is counter to our culture. Christianity is countercultural. The culture is controlled by the lusts of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—the glamour and tinsel of the world. God's Kingdom is the opposite of the world. In the world it's put yourself first, do what you want, do what feels good. In God's Kingdom it's die to yourself, humble yourself. It's the opposite. Read the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the poor in spirit...blessed are the meek...blessed are they that mourn." Where do you find that in the world? How To Be Happy, See Yourself As A Sinner Destitute On Your Way To Hell, Repent Of Your Sins And Trust Jesus Christ, there are not too many books like that. God's Kingdom is a countercultural Kingdom from the world that's filled with pride and self-righteousness.

Pascal said, "Grace is indeed required to turn a man into a saint; and he who doubts this does not know what either a man or a saint is." Again, I won't tarry on it because we studied it in Galatians, but you cannot mingle or bring together grace and works. With all due respect for those who maybe you're still connected to, involved with, or come out of the Roman Catholic Church, Roman Catholicism has this wrong. They emphasize the grace of God but only as you do penance, works, baptism, confession, communion, and all the works. They are doing what the Bible says can't be done, that is, combining grace and works.

The Bible teaches that when we're justified, that it's an act of God where He declares the believing sinner righteous based on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and it happens instantaneously by trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that it's a process. They confuse justification and sanctification, and a lot of Christians do the same thing. They don't realize that my standing in justification, my position, is complete. I can't get any more righteous. I rest in that, that it's secure. They always think they have to do things, work, and try to be good in order to be justified before God, but justification is an instantaneous, complete work that I don't believe can be reversed.

Sanctification is a life process of growing more holy in righteousness in our walk with God. Romans 11:6 (write it down) says, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." I want you to quote that to me after church tonight. Basically, he's saying, "It's either

works or grace, you can't have both. If it's works, it's not grace; if it's grace, it's not works. You can't blend the two together." It's so important. God's grace, as John Newton wrote in that marvelous hymn "Amazing Grace," is absolutely amazing. Romans 5:20, "...But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." We're saved by God's marvelous grace.

Here's the third way God saves us, "...through faith...Not of works," but by grace, that summarizes our salvation, and comes to us through the avenue of faith. I like to think of faith is the hand that reaches out empty and accepts the gift of God's salvation. You might say, "But John, I thought we were not saved by works. Is not faith a work?" I won't tarry on this, but let me make it very, very clear: Faith is not a work. Faith is not earning, deserving, or meriting salvation. Sometimes even Evangelical Christians get this wrong and get the idea that you have to have a lot of faith, "If you really want to be super-saved, not just kind of semi-saved, but like super-saved," you look in the mirror and psyche yourself up in the morning, "I'm going to believe. I believe in Jesus. I believe in Jesus." It's not the amount of your faith, it's the object of your faith. A little faith in Jesus Christ will take your soul to Heaven. You don't have to have a lot of faith, you just have to have the right object of your faith. Even if your faith is faltering or failing, if you are trusting Jesus Christ to take you to Heaven, He will be faithful to do what He has promised.

Let me tell you what faith is not. It's not a work (write that down). It's not a merit for salvation. It's not a feeling. It's not subjective. It's not like trying to psyche the emotions up, "I believe, I believe, I believe," nor is it a positive mental attitude. Some people think faith is a positive mental attitude—thinking positively and eliminating negative thoughts or confessions out of your mouth—nor is it believing in spite of evidence. This is what the world thinks Christians do when they become Christians and come to church, they kind of check their brains out at the door and it's all feelings and emotions.

Are emotions good? Yeah, they're great, but they need to be subject to God's objective truth. If it's all emotions and we don't have objective truth to believe, and reasons for our faith, then we're going to falter and fall. This is why...and I'm saying a lot of things tonight I had no intention saying and planning, I'm just kind of in one of those moods, but this is why in many churches that are all emotion and less doctrinal truth from God's Word, there's a high ratio of backsliding and falling away from Christ. You might not like that. You may disagree with me, but I've been around it my whole life—I grew up in it as a boy, a highly emotional energized Christianity—and I saw people backslide like there was no tomorrow because there was no foundation in God's Word.

It's not about emotions. It's not about feeling. Praise God for the joy of the Lord. Praise God for the sense of His presence and all those things, but what about when it's not there? What about when you wake up and you don't feel good and you're bummed out? It's like, "Where is God?" You rest on His Word. You rest in His promises. Someone said, "You never doubt in the dark what God spoke in the light." I love that! When you're in a dark place, and you don't sense God's presence, you open up the light of His Word and you stand on His truth.

Faith is not a feeling. I remember as a young Christian growing up in that environment because I didn't feel saved anymore, "What happened to the joy of the Lord? God has forsaken me! I must have done something wrong! I knew I shouldn't have yelled at that guy on the freeway the other day," and have the emotions. The emotions are gone, and then you learn to walk by faith, "The just shall live by faith," not feelings, "...by faith." Feelings are the caboose that follow when we live by faith and trust in God's Word. That is what faith is not.

What is biblical faith? Let's break this down. It involves the mind or the intellect knowing. It's an informed mind. It's knowing that I am poor in spirit, that I am a sinner. You're not going to be saved until you're first convinced, "I need to be saved. I need salvation." If life is kind of good, but someone says, "Hey, you ought to try Jesus. It's really cool. He'll help you out." "Yeah, that sounds pretty good. I'll try that. I tried Buddha last week, I'll try Jesus this week. That sounds pretty cool." You just throw Jesus in the mix, but it just doesn't seem to work for you. How many times have you met people, "I tried Jesus. It didn't work." "It didn't work? What do you mean, 'It didn't work.'" The Savior of the world who died and rose from the dead and sits on the throne in Heaven can't save you? It's because you don't understand you're a sinner and He's the Savior. You don't just add Jesus to your life, you repent of your sins and trust Jesus. It involves the mind being educated by God's Word. The Bible says, "...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." This is literally a sermon preached about Christ or the sermon of the grace of God.

Secondly, it involves the heart. Here's true biblical faith, which is the believing. It's the feeling of putting your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. The Beatitude says, "Blessed are they that mourn," it starts with "...poor in spirit," mourning over your sin, the heart. I must mourn for my sin. I must have sorrow for my sin.

Thirdly, the will, which is the yielding. This is where salvation takes place. I know I am a sinner, I'm sorry for my sin, I turn from my sin, and then I surrender my will and I trust Christ, and Christ alone, to save me. I'm not trusting in my religious works but Christ, Christ alone. If there is no faith, there is no salvation.

This is how God saves sinners all through history—Old Testament, New Testament. There's not a salvation in the Old Testament by works and the salvation in the New Testament by grace. Remember when Abraham believed God and God imputed to him righteousness because he believed God. He hadn't received the law yet. He hadn't been circumcised yet but just believed God's Word and God gave him righteousness. Faith is not something that's progressive, it's actually the moment you believe in Jesus Christ and trust Him as your Savior, He gives to you His righteousness. Saving faith is not the mere intellectual reception of Christian doctrine or truth and believing that God is real, it's trusting in Him to save you from sin.

Write down James 2:19 where it says, "...the devils also believe, and tremble." This is why a lot of times you run into people who obviously by the way they're living are not Christians, but they'll say, "I believe in Jesus." Everyone says that, "I believe in that. Oh yeah! I believe in Jesus." That doesn't mean anything. Have you trusted Him? Belief is another word for faith,

but it doesn't mean—let me put it in clear terms—an intellectual assent to facts or information. Did you know that you can believe everything that's true about Christianity and go to hell? You can believe that there's a God, you can believe that Jesus died for your sins, you can believe that He rose from the dead, you can believe the Bible is the Word of God, but if you haven't trusted Him, you will die in your sins and go to hell. It's not enough to just go, "Oh, yeah, yeah. I believe, I believe, I believe." What does it mean to believe? What does it mean to put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ?

You know, other terms are used in the Bible. Let me give you some. The word "receive" is in John 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," and in Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." In Romans 10:9, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." In Revelation 22:17, we got that when we went through the book of Revelation, believing in Jesus means to come and to drink "...of the water of life freely." It means to come to Jesus. Sometimes we'll use that and say, "I came to Jesus in 1971," or "I came to Jesus in 1983. I believed in Him," or "I trusted Him." We all know John 3:16, right? "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That's the whole Bible in one verse! If you trust in Him, receive Him, come to Him, put your faith in Him, believe in Him, you will never perish but you will have everlasting life.

Here's Acts 16:31. It's going to be one of my night scenes of the Bible, by the way. It happened in Philippi in a prison at night. The Philippian jailer said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" If you ever have a cultist knock on your door, that's a great verse to turn to and ask the question. If they say, "Join our group. Get a haircut. Put our underwear on. Get a Christian haircut. Come to church. Get baptized. Join our group." No. Paul told the Philippian Jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." That's in the Bible. It's that simple, yet many people always want to add some kind of righteous works along that as well. It's a marvelous, marvelous verse. It's trusting in Jesus Christ.

It's kind of like the illustration I've used so many...and you probably getting tired of hearing them all, but it's kind of like marriage. You first get to know somebody. I highly recommend you don't marry somebody if you don't know them. You can't believe some of the things that I encounter. I have people come up to me, even here in our church on Sundays, "Hey, Pastor John, we want to know if you'll perform our marriage?" I'll say, "Well, when are you getting married?" "Right now, up in your office, if you'll do it." "How long have you known each other?" "We just met a couple days ago." No, no, no, no, no, no, no. That's not going to happen. I highly recommend you get to know somebody before you commit to them. Good idea, right?

Secondly, then you fall in love with them and grow to agape them, but it starts first with a knowledge of them, knowing them. I always tell young people, or if you're single, too, you can get to know a lot about a person by observation rather than dating or getting involved physically. Just observe them. Look at them, watch them. Get to know them in a crowd. Get to

know them at a distance because then if you see a red light, “Whew! Okay, we can turn around and go the other way,” and you don’t get involved. Sometimes we just get too involved—I’ll just stop right there. Then, we see all these red lights and we’re involved with them, so we don’t stop and go the other way. That’s very dangerous. Get to know them.

Then there’s love, and then what happens in the wedding ceremony? You walk down the aisle and the pastor says, “Will you take this person as your wife or your husband,” and then you say, “I do,” right? “Do you promise to love, cherish, and obey until death...” “I do.” That is a commitment. That’s the same with salvation. That’s trusting Jesus Christ saying, “Lord, I’m a sinner. I love You. You died for me. I want to commit my life to You,” and you dedicate your life to Him. It’s a commitment that you make. Jesus then said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” How are we saved? Not by works but by grace through faith, which is that trusting Him to save us. Putting all your weight upon Him.

The second question is, verse 10, why does God save us? So, we are saved by grace, “through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.” I forgot something I don’t want to miss. It wasn’t in my notes, but in verse 8, when he says, “...through faith; and that not of yourselves,” the statement, “that not of yourselves,” is not referring to the faith, it’s referring to salvation. Some misinterpret that and say that God gives you the gift of faith in order to believe and be saved, but the grammar in the Greek, and most good Greek scholars agree, even though some Calvinists, especially hyper-Calvinist, believe that you can’t get saved unless God regenerates you first, then gives you the ability to have faith and believe in Him, and then He saves you. That’s not what the Bible teaches, and I find no biblical basis for that in Scripture. I classify that as hyper-Calvinism. When Paul says, “...and that not of yourselves,” he’s not referring to the faith, he’s referring to the saved. Salvation is not of yourself. It’s another way of saying, “We’re not saved by our works. We’re not saved by our good deeds.”

Why does God save us? Verse 10, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Simply stated, God saves you by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ so that your life will testify of His marvelous grace so that you will be changed, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,” or creation and that the way you live will bring glory and honor to God. He doesn’t save you to make you rich. He doesn’t save you to make you healthy and wealthy. He saves you for His glory. That’s what salvation is all about. It starts with the grace of God and ends with the glory of God.

Notice, we’re not saved because of good works, but we’re saved “...unto good works,” or for. It’s actually teaching us what is consistent through the Bible that our good works are the fruit of salvation not the root or cause of salvation. Again, this is where the cultist, thinking of the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Mormons who come on your doorstep, get it turned around. They think you work for salvation when the Bible says you actually, “...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” that the works are the fruit of your salvation.

When James is talking about being saved by works, he's talking about salvation or being justified before men, who look on us and see us that our lives show we are saved. It's kind of like that song, If you're saved and you know it, then your life will surely show it. You're not saved because of your good works, you're saved to produce good works, which are the work of the Holy Spirit in you for the glory of God.

We all know, that have studied this passage, that that word "workmanship" is an interesting Greek word. It's the Greek word poiema. We get our word poem from it, and the word itself literally means something made. What it's conveying as something made is a work of art, actually—a painting, a piece of pottery, a craft. It's a thing made. You're God's workmanship. Some translate this, "You're His masterpiece." I love that. God makes you for the glory of God. He's poiema, He's making you. I think of God using Moses and Joseph and all the people that He saved, like Paul the Apostle, what a marvelous work He did! What a marvelous work He's done in your life—how He saved you by His grace, how He took your old heart of sin and stone out and He put a new heart in you, and the things you used to love, you now hate; and the things you used to hate, you now love. You're now a true child of God. You have a new life, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." You become His poiema—His work of art, His masterpiece, something that is made.

Pottery was very popular in the ancient world for obvious reasons. I love the picture of God the Potter and we're the clay. I've never been able to throw a pot on a wheel. I can draw. I can paint. I can do artistic things, but every time I try to touch the clay it just goes, "Wmm wmm wmm wmm!" I can't get it centered. I can't get it straight. It starts to waddle, waddle, waddle, waddle and it flies off and hits the wall. I had a class in high school where we had to throw pots, and I could never get a pot to look right. It would fly off, and I would just try it again and couldn't get it. I just kind of hit it against the wall, flattened it out, and put a couple grooves in it to make an ash tray. I took all these ash trays home to my mom, and she didn't even smoke. "Here, Mom, have another ash tray." I'm so glad that God is the Master Potter. Amen? That He's molding me and shaping me into the person He wants me to be, and you know that's a lifelong process? Don't get discouraged if there's still some lumps in your clay. Don't get discouraged if you haven't been properly put in the kiln and haven't been glazed and you're not painted just right. God's in the process. We're all under construction. God's working. He is creating, and it uses that word "create," that "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus," so it's not us, it's God, the Master Craftsman, who has created us; and He "...ordained that we should walk in them."

I believe that God has a master plan for our lives if we will yield to Him, if we will trust Him, if we will surrender to Him. You cannot go wrong by trusting in Jesus Christ and surrendering your life to Him. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths," He will make your paths straight.

We were dead and He's given us new life. We are now new creations, so God's work for me in salvation, God's work in me in sanctification, and then God's work through me in service—salvation, sanctification, and service. What a glorious truth that is! We are saved by grace

through faith apart from works. What a marvelous truth that is! We've been resurrected from the dead. We've been liberated from slavery. We've been rescued from condemnation. We have eternal life. God begins a work in us by His grace, and it ends when we get to heaven for His glory. Amen?