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NO MAN CAN WORK HIS WAY INTO THE KINGDOM

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 17
EPHESIANS 2:8-10

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EPHESIANS 2:8-10 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

We have already studied verse 8 in detail, but to set the stage for this study, let us look again at this amazing verse.

EPHESIANS 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

All the way through the first part of Ephesians we are reminded that God's plan is not a series of accidents lucking out in time. God is perfect; therefore, his plan is perfect. Only a perfect God could have designed a perfect plan. Now when humans come along and touch that plan then it is no longer perfect. Only God can take believers with an old sin nature who were losers and make winners out of them. His plan is operation grace.

"By grace" is in the instrumental case, and grace is the instrument as well as the principle on which God's plan of redemption rests. Grace is the principle by which God does his work and man becomes the beneficiary. God does the work and man receives salvation without doing anything about it. God did it 100%. He did it all. Man is a total winner because of grace, but before grace touched him he was a total loser. After salvation "Occupation with Christ" is the one thing that will keep us stabilized and it is the only adequate stabilizer.

Grace means that God does the work and we by His grace receive the blessings of life. Every day is a grace gift from the hand of God. This grace salvation is permanent and once we are saved it lasts forever.

EPHESIANS 2:9 "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

"Not of works" and works refers to human good. This is the negative side of grace. God's perfect plan can be soiled and sabotaged only by man's efforts and man's cooperation. God blesses us in spite of our human works. He never blesses us because of our human works.

TITUS 3:5 "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN GOOD

1. HUMAN GOOD IS DEAD TO GOD.

HEBREWS 6:1 "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,"
"Dead works" are works performed by man from the energy of the flesh. They arise out of man's old sin nature. Salvation is not of works. Raising your hand as a part of your salvation is dead works. Walking down an aisle as a part of salvation is dead works.

Being baptized as a part of your salvation is dead works. All of these things are things we do and what we do is not a part of our salvation. Crying and vowing and making resolutions is not a part of salvation for these things are dead works. People need to know that all these things they do have no part in salvation. It is indeed good for people to be generous and kind to others and considerate. All of these things are fine, but they are all "dead works" as far as salvation is concerned. All human works are dead to God.

2. HUMAN GOOD IS NEVER ACCEPTABLE TO GOD.

ISAIAH 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away," "Our righteousnesses" all added together can never save us. Our acts do not cut any ice with God. If one man can do one thing for salvation then the plan is no stronger than that one person.

3. HUMAN GOOD CANNOT SAVE MANKIND.

TITUS 3:5 "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

4. HUMAN GOOD AND MORALITY ARE DIFFERENT.

Morality, represented by the Ten Commandments, is from God. The purpose of morality is to protect all four divine institutions. Volition, Marriage, The Family, and The Nation all find their protection in morality. And morality is for the whole human race, believers and unbelievers. Morality is not Christianity. You can be perfect as far as morality is concerned, and yet be as lost as the worst sinner in the world. If it were not for morality the human race could not survive. But morality is not salvation or Christianity. The Rich Young Ruler was perfect morally, but he was unsaved and he went away from Jesus lost. He went away from Christ but he went away clinging to his morality. The purpose of morality is to prove that we are sinners. Morality is a norm or standard that causes a man to realize that he is in need of a Savior. When man takes his stand beside God's high moral standard, then he sees how far he falls short of God's perfect salvation.

Morality also provides stability in life. Certain types of false morality can lead into self-righteousness, but kept in proper perspective, morality provides stability in life. So let's never confuse morality with human good or human salvation. Human good is the sum total of all the good deeds that can come from the old sin nature. So human good is produced both by the moral and the immoral.

5. HUMAN GOOD HAS NO PLACE IN THE PLAN OF GOD.

Therefore, when the earth is destroyed in the end of time, all human good will be destroyed. The eternal civilization will be characterized only by divine good. When the universe is destroyed in the end of time and the new heaven and the new earth are created, all human good will be destroyed and only divine good will remain.

You cannot have perfect environment and have human good also. In the Garden of Eden there was perfect environment and no human good, but when sin came and perfect environment was replaced, human good moved in. We call this "operation fig leaves." The very first thing the old sin nature did in the Garden of Eden was to perform an act of human good. The first act of Adam and Eve after the fall was not some act of sin but was an act of human good. When eventually, in the end of time, the universe is destroyed and God replaces it with a new heaven and a new earth, at that time all human good will vanish and be replaced with divine good.

2 PETER 3:10 "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Here we see that when the world, as we know it now, is burned up that all human works will be burned up with it.

6. HUMAN GOOD WILL BE JUDGED.

In Revelation 20:12-15 we see that the human good of all unbelievers will be destroyed.

In 1 Cor. 3:11-16 we see that the human good of all believers will be destroyed.

The next word in this passage is "lest" and it should be "that." This word introduces a result clause. The result is "that no man should boast." "That no man should boast" means that Christianity is the most relaxing thing you can imagine. You can just be yourself and stand on your own feet and you don't have to pretend to be something you are not. The word for boast is "kauchaomai" and it means to find something in your life that makes you look good. Boasting ties you up in knots. Boasting causes you to adopt a mental attitude that causes you to try to compensate for imagined or real infirmities or inferiorities. Many people are always in the attitude "psychological compensation" and it frustrates them all the time. The old sin nature within demands approbation and recognition.

EPHESIANS 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

"We are" is a present, active, indicative of "eimi" and means "We keep on being" his workmanship. The word for workmanship is "Poiema" and from this we get the word poem. It is from the verb "poieo." The last letters of "Poiema," the letters "ma" is a resultant suffix on this word so it means "we keep on being the result of his work." The word "work" is in the emphatic position so it should read "We keep on being his work, and only his work." That's grace. It is his work and not the work of anyone else. Forever and forever he will get the credit for it, and it is his work and only his. The word "created" is from "ktino" and means "To reduce from a state of discord." "Order out of chaos." We receive 34 things from God the very moment we are saved and this word create contains all 34 of these things. The word "create" also means "to call into being" and this illustrates the new birth, that we are called into his family.

It also means "to invest with a spiritual frame." We are "in Christ" and have his likeness, his being.

2 COR. 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
 So you receive salvation from God, not on the basis of who and what you are but on the basis of who and what God is. We are new creatures because of what he did for us. "In Christ Jesus" and this is positional truth. Positionally we are in him the moment we are saved, and when we are raised up in the resurrection we will be experientially like him. "Unto good works" and this is divine good. "Which God hath before ordained" and the word for ordained is "Protoimazo." "Pro" means millions of years ago in eternity past God designed a plan whereby sinful humans with old sin natures could produce divine good. "That" introduces a purpose clause. "That we should walk" and that's an aorist, active, subjunctive or "peripateo." The subjunctive is used to show you can do this or you cannot do it, according to your own free will.

THE DOCTRINE OF WALKING

1. Walking depicts the action of our Christian lives when we are in fellowship with God.
PSALM 1:1 "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."
2. Walking requires one step at a time. How many times we get in a hurry and we don't want to take one step at a time, but when we don't follow this procedure we fall flat on our faces. This is the picture of a believer living one day at a time.
3. Look at the mechanics of walking. One foot is on the ground and one foot is off the ground and this means you are off balance for a split second. But in this way you move straight ahead. Walking is a perfect picture of the progress of the Christian life. Walking requires balance, coordination. Believers are stabilized by walking forward through the learning of Bible Doctrine and the filling of the Holy Spirit.
4. There are three spheres of the believer's walk.
 - a. Faith rest.
2 CORINTHIANS 5:7 "(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)"
 - b. Walking in the Spirit.
GALATIANS 5:16 "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."
 - c. Learning doctrine. 2 John 3.
5. There are seven different ways walking is described as the filling of the Spirit.
 - a. Walking in the Spirit.
GALATIANS 5:16 "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."
 - b. Walking in love.
EPHESIANS 5:2 "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling saviour."

- c. Walking in the newness of life.
ROMANS 6:4 "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
- d. Walk worthy of thy vocation.
EPHESIANS 4:1 "Therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,"
- e. Walk worthy of the Lord.
COLOSSIANS 1:10 "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;"
- f. Walk honestly as in the day.
ROMANS 13:13 "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."
- g. Walk in good works.
EPHESIANS 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."