



Growth Group Questions
May 12, 2024
“You Are God’s Handiwork”

Context:

Paul begins with a sobering look at the state of humanity in the first three verses as he describes our reality, apart from God. This is the condition of fallen humanity. It is all connected to our trespasses and sins.

The Greek word used for trespass means a false step where you either cross a known boundary or deviate from the right path. The word used for sin means missing the mark or falling short of a certain standard. Paul wants to make it clear that without Jesus we are doomed to be alienated from God.

Paul is saying that though we were created by God and created for God, we were living without God until Jesus showed up. Three things kept us from being able to live fully for God. We lived in a world where God was not recognized, a secular age. Secondly, the devil kept us in the darkness. And finally, our passions were misguided.

After Paul has taken us down to the reality of our lives before Jesus, he then tells us how everything has changed with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is by the grace of Jesus that we have been saved from ourselves and the inherent and inherited sin that defines each one of us.

Paul makes it clear that God did not bring this grace and mercy because of anything that was in us, but rather something that was in God. Humanity did not deserve or merit or earn what God did, but out of God’s mercy and grace and kindness he brought us salvation and a living hope.

As Paul concludes this line of thinking he reminds the church that we are God’s handiwork. The word for handiwork is only used twice in the New Testament and we derive our English word poem from this word. Poems are creative works of art. Paul is trying to convey the idea that humankind is a part of God’s tapestry and that not only are we created in God’s image, we are also then sent out to do “good works” in the name of Jesus.



Scripture:

Ephesians 2:1-10

² As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Romans 3:21-24

²¹ But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness is given through faith in^[a] Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:12-14

¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned. ¹³ To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone’s account where there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.

Romans 5:18-19

¹⁸ Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.



Psalm 8:3-8

³ When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?^[a]
⁵ You have made them^[b] a little lower than the angels^[c]
and crowned them^[d] with glory and honor.
⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their^[e] feet:
⁷ all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,
⁸ the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.

Romans 1:20

²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.



Questions:

1. What does it mean to be “dead in your transgressions and sins”? (Ephesians 2:1)
2. Romans 3:24 speaks of justification by grace. Explain your understanding of the meaning and significance of justification through faith.
3. In Romans 5:12-14, the Apostle Paul refers to Adam as a “pattern of the one to come.” Pastor Paul told us that the one to come was Jesus. Why did the Apostle Paul refer to Adam in this way?
4. In Psalm 8:4, King David asks: “What is mankind that you are mindful of them, humans that you care for them?” What do you think caused King David to ask this question of God?
5. What is the meaning of Ephesians 2:8-9? Restate this passage in your own words.
6. In Ephesians 2:10, what does it mean that “we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”?
7. What are the good works God prepared for us in advance to do?
8. What does Ephesians 2:1-10 tell us about God?
9. This sermon series, we have heard five different narratives that God speaks to us: You can be born again; You are called; You are seen; You are Worthy; You are God’s handiwork. Are there other narratives that you believe God speaks to us? What scriptures lead you to this belief?

