

## A Living Demonstration

### Ephesians 2:7-10

Turn with me this morning to the book of **Ephesians 2:7-10**. We have been looking at the idea that God is making us new. In fact, God loves us too much for us to remain the same and in his love he reached down, changed history, changed our condition, identifies us now with Jesus Christ, putting us into a second chance at life yet with his power to live differently than we once did.

We all know that we need the ability to live differently because the way we were living our life didn't get us very far. In fact, last week I had a statement at the beginning of our notes that I would like for us to read again this morning to drive this point home.

**When Jesus died God saw my death to my sinful human nature, when Jesus rose again God saw me as a new creation, always in process, always becoming new, always being stretched, and so everyday I am not the same person I was the day before.**

I get new found strength in having God's power work in me and through me making sure that my life is being lived in a way that he can mold me and make me into a person of integrity, of honor and nobility. This process however is not something that we need to worry about. **No matter whether or not we are ready for it, God's process is going to come in the form that God knows will best mold our character.** God really does know how to cut right to the chase and expose to us our weakest links doesn't he?

So instead of worrying about it, we saw last week that we are to rest. We are to be patient with God's slowness and let him take his time to do in us that which will last for eternity. In fact, I believe that there are two things that you can take with you into eternity – people, and your character.

*May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God. **Philippians 1:11***

Each and everyday we wake up, God has us in a process of becoming more and more like his son Jesus Christ. The very heart, the servant-attitude, the wisdom, the patience, the long-suffering, the kindness, the compassion, the gentleness, all of these things God wants to see in us. That's why Paul writes later on in **Ephesians 4:15**:

*<sup>15</sup> Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.*

How many of us can agree that we all need some character adjustment? Everyday is marked by events that will determine who we will become tomorrow. We are in process

and it is all made possible by the work of Jesus Christ. We now pick up Paul's words in **Ephesians 2:7**:

*<sup>7</sup> So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus*

### **1. God wants to point to our lives as examples of what he can do. (Verse 7)**

He can take anyone and turn their lives upside down. He has done it in people whom many have given up on, he has done it in those who have even tried to turn against him, he has taken the weak and made them strong, he has taken the hopeless and given them hope. He wants to take our lives and point out to everyone what he is capable of doing. **God is motivated by two things – grace and kindness.**

Remember a couple of weeks ago when I had stated that grace deals with our guilt while mercy deals with our misery. God doesn't come to us and try to play a guilt trip on us so that we will change – no, we simply live in guilt because we know better. But God wants to relieve our guilt and give us another way out.

Instead he reaches out to us, always available, always loving, always willing to receive whoever wants help, and he does so in his kindness. **Romans 2:4** tells us:

*Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?*

No one is changed for the good by imposed adherence to a list of rules. They are only changed when they have tasted kindness and room to come to their own conclusions. God wants us to be so overwhelmed by his kindness that it changes us. And in connection with that, **God wants the results of his kindness and grace in our lives to be examples to others of his favor and kindness available to them as well.**

**The greatest advertising campaign for the modern day church is suppose to be you.** People are suppose to see your life and say, "Wow, they have sure changed, they are so loving, so giving, so kind compared to what they once were that that has to be an act of God." Out of the life changing power of Jesus Christ we experience good works which are the result of allowing God to work through us.

The scripture tells us that it is our good works that will result in others glorifying our father in heaven. Should we say it is God's working in us producing good works through us that causes people to respond to Him. So the question to us this morning is "What kind of example are we in allowing God to demonstrate his favor and kindness?" Are we allowing him to use us or are we simply remaining stubborn and not let our lives accomplish anything? Paul goes on in **verse 8-9** and points out that God's kindness and favor is undeserved:

<sup>8</sup> *God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.* <sup>9</sup> *Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.*

## **2. God's kindness and favor is undeserved and worthy of declaring. (Verse 8-9)**

Notice in verse 8 that it states that "God saved you" past tense. It shows us that this is all available to you right now. Despite your condition without God, your fallen humanness, your inability to help or save yourself, and the right that God has to condemn you, instead he gives to those who will simply believe that chance to be examples to the world that God truly can make a difference. **Romans 3:24:**

<sup>24</sup> *Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.*

We can't boast about how great we are can we? We can't walk around thinking that we are the greatest gift that God could have ever given himself. We are not bragging about. In fact, the word "**boast**" in the Greek means "**to pretend to be something you are not, or to proclaim self-sufficiency.**"

Our salvation has nothing to do with performance, it has nothing to do with earning ones favor, it has nothing to do with me. It has everything to do with God. **The only one who deserves to be boasted about is God himself.** Paul wrote in **Galatians 6:14:**

*As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died.*

Nothing is worth boasting about more than the salvation and work of Jesus Christ, nothing is worth boasting about more than the kindness of our God who despite who we were and are still lavishes his love upon us and makes things new. Nothing is worth boasting more about than his daily intervention to make life work for us and not against us. If there is anything worth boasting about it is Jesus Christ crucified and risen again and the sending of his Holy Spirit who is at work in me.

It is so easy to talk about ourselves isn't it? About our achievements, our activities, our talents, our experiences, and yet how often do we speak of God's great kindness? How often to we tell others what he is currently doing in our lives? How often do we sit down and listen to other speak of how good God has been to them? How often does our fellowship include words of praise and adoration for our father who is always working in us.

It is time for the church (and by the church I mean you and me, not a building or institution) to come back to the proclamation of God's kindness in every area of our life. So that everyone will know that the one thing we are most grateful for, the one thing that we are the proudest for, the one thing we are forever indebted to is the love of God and

his kindness. **People need to know that we are grateful and blessed and they need to hear us say it.** They may get sick of hearing about it. In fact, they will. On Jesus' entry into Jerusalem the Pharisees were being offended by the words of praise on his arrival. And cried out "Tell them to stop!" and Jesus replied in **Luke 19:40**:

*He replied, "If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!"*

In other words, there is no way that the greatness of God will be silenced. And if you or I are unwilling to speak of his greatness, then he will use someone else to do it. He will use someone else's life as a great demonstration of his power and people will see what God has accomplished through them and glorify God because of it. I want to be in that loop don't you? Therefore, every opportunity that is presented to me, I will tell others about my God. Paul goes on in **verse 10** and tells us:

*<sup>10</sup> For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

### **3. My new life in Christ is the beginning of a work of art (an outward expression).**

We are God's masterpiece. The word for "**masterpiece**" here is the Greek word "**poem**". We are God's poem. He is working in our lives to produce an outward expression of his wisdom, his power, his love, his life, his character, his peace and his joy. **He is creating a poem of perfectly crafted words, each word with meaning.**

A couple of months ago, myself and Richard had the opportunity to go to a Pastor's Conference where they talk about this idea that our life is a poem. In fact, in the book of Psalms you can see the process in which God had David to make him a man after his own heart. You can see the pain, the disappointments, the fear, the joy, the strength and the revelation. Our lives play out the same way.

But notice that God is creating us a new to do the good things he has planned for us long ago. All we simply need to do is to step into them. God has already prepared works for you to do. So our prayer each morning should be "**God, thank you for the good works you have already prepared for me today, for the fact that they are waiting for me to step into them and experience them.**"

So each day, I welcome with anticipation of what can happen next. God has something in store for me and I need to be ready to step out in faith as he leads. A poem by Michael Card puts it this way:

*Life is a song, we must sing with our days. A poem with meaning, more than words can say. A painting with colors, a rainbow can tell. A lyric that rhymes, either heaven or hell. We are living letters, the doubt desecrates. We're the notes o the song, of the chorus of faith. God shapes every second of our little lives. And minds every minute as the universe waits by. The pain and the longing, the joy and*

the moments of light. Are the rhythm and rhyme, the free verse of the poem of life. So look in the mirror and pray for the grace, to tear off the masks, find the art of your face. Open your ears, and hear the sweet song, of each moment that passes, and pray to prolong, your time in the ball, of the dance of your days. Your canvas of colors of moments ablaze. With all that is holy, with you and the strife, of the rhythm and rhyme of the poem of life, of the rhythm and rhyme of the poem of life.

This morning, you are a living demonstration of what God can do, you are a recipient of his great kindness, and you are work of art in progress. Let your life shine for all men, don't hide it, but let it be where everyone can see and hear and experience. Let's pray.