

**The Workmanship of God**  
Ephesians 2: 8-10  
Jeremy Cagle, March 1, 2020

Speaking of lesser known books of the Bible, this morning we're looking at a very well-known book of the Bible. We're looking at something that has been read and studied a lot. And it is the book of Ephesians. So if you would, please go ahead and open your Bibles with me to the book of Ephesians. And we're going to look in chapter two. We're going to look in Ephesians 2. And as you're turning there, Bible scholars have estimated that there are 31,000 verses in the Bible. I don't know if you've ever heard that before, and I but there are 31,000 verses of the Bible. And if you read it all the way through from cover to cover, it would take about 70 hours to do that, and a big pot of coffee. That's how long it would take to read the Bible all the way through about three days of just constant reading. Because the Bible is a big book, isn't it? If you've ever tried to read it before, it has a lot of information in it, but I think we would say that there are certain parts that jump out at you, right? There are certain parts when you read the scriptures that just stick with you. If you read it three days straight, I think you would probably remember some things like the story of David and Goliath, right? We all love that story in the Bible, you probably would remember the story of Jonah, you would remember some of Jesus' miracles, and I think it's safe to say, you would remember Ephesians 2.

Ephesians 2 is one of the most powerful passages in the Bible. It's one of the most unique portions of Scripture. And I just want to read it to you again, so you can hear it, so you can get a feel for it. We just read it a moment ago. But let's do that again. If you look, in Ephesians 2 it says this,

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and we're by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead and our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (for by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

I don't think I have to tell you, you can just read that passage and almost it preaches itself that it's almost a sermon just as you read it. But if you notice, it's a very sobering text. It's very serious because there's a great movement as you read this, there's a great change; and it's a change from death to life. It's a change from the very bottom of human existence to the very top because you can't get any worse than dead. Do I even have to say that? You can't get any lower than that, and you can't get any higher than being made alive. That is as good as it gets. And Paul says that's what you've experienced if you're a Christian, that's what you have seen in your life, you have seen a great change. And to add to that, Ephesians 2:8 tells you why this happened. It tells you why you were changed this way. And it says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith." In other words, the change happened by grace. You didn't earn it. You didn't work for it. You didn't make it happen in your own good behavior. God did it through grace. Just as a dead man could do nothing so you could do nothing to save yourself. Just as a dead man is powerless spiritually, physically. So you were the same way, So God saved you by His grace. I think it's safe to say there are few passages in Scripture that stick with you more than this one. Amen? There are few passages that would get your attention more than this.

And one thing I want to tell you this morning, one thing we're going to focus on today is that if God has changed you like this, you should be able to tell. if God has done all of this in your life from Ephesians 2:1 all the way down to verse 10, you should be able to notice. It would be impossible not to. Anytime someone recovers from the dead, you know. You can tell. A friend of mine once said "no fruit, no root." And what he meant is if you don't see any fruit on the tree, that's a problem. If you don't see things coming down off the branches, that's not good. And it's the same thing with this. You need to be able to tell the life that's in you. To say it another way someone told me last week after the service that they felt a certain energy among us. They felt a certain liveliness with the music and the worship and the preaching. And I told them that's because we're talking about life. That's because we're talking about being made alive in Christ. And you can't do that quietly. Amen? Growing up, they said, "You can't be standing on His promises when you're sitting on your premises." You got to stand up and announce it and act like you've been made alive. That's what this passage says. One thing about life is that it has energy with it and a believer is going to have that.

Just to get us thinking about this, just to introduce this to you, the story is told of a time of father and son were visiting a relative they'd never seen before, they were visiting a long lost uncle and the boy said, "Dad, how are we going to recognize him if we've never met him before? How are we going to know what he looks like?" And the dad said this, he says, "Because He will look like his father." Because he will look like his father. Friends, I think it's safe to say that a Christian does that, a believer does that, we look like our Father. We walk like Him, we talk like Him, we act like Him. And that's just a very simple principle of the Christian life.

You know, on a practical level, what do people say when you ask them is so and so a Christian? They say, “Yes, he is because he acts like it,” or “No, he's not because he doesn't act like it.” It's not rocket science. We say the proof is in the pudding, the writing's on the wall. And it's the same way with what we're talking about this morning. If God changes you, you are changed. If God saves you, then you will show it with your fruits. And I think it's sad to say that many people in the church have never experienced that before. Many professing Christians have no idea what you're talking about when you mention a change of this magnitude because they've never experienced it before. This is totally foreign to them. They read Ephesians 2 and they don't know what this is talking about.

In 2007, the Barna group released a survey of why non-Christians reject Christianity. They asked them why they didn't come to church and the overwhelming majority of them said it was because of the Christians they knew who went to church. Eighty-three percent of them said it was because the people they know who profess Christ and didn't change. We've all seen that before. We all could identify with that, you know, we call them “CEO Christians,” Christmas and Easter Only Christians because they show up at Christmas time and you don't see them again until Easter. They are fair-weather Christians because they fluctuate with the weather, you know, they come in and out of the church like the wind. And I want to remind you this morning as a way to prepare for this passage that this is not what God wants for you as a believer, this is not what God wants for the church. He wants you to be different as a result of what you read in here. He wants you to change.

You know, just a few passages on this to see how serious God is about this subject. You know, Luke 6:46, Jesus told a band of professing disciples, He said, “Why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?” In other words he said, “Why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and don't mean it?” I would rather you stop. I would rather you cut it out than do that. You know, some people say, “Well, at least they're coming to church.” Jesus never said that, never said that. They say, “Well, at least they're calling on His name.” He never said anything of that sort. He said, “Don't call me Lord, if you don't mean it.” He gets even more blunt and later on in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 3 talking to the Church in Laodicea He said,

I know your deeds, that you're neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were either cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

That's a startling statement. It's terrifying because it's the only time in Scripture that I'm aware of where Jesus said “You make me want to puke. You make me sick,” and He said it over this issue, over a lack of change. It's a terrifying thought but a day will come when lukewarm Christians, CEO Christians fair-weather Christians will be spit out of the presence of God. They won't be thrown out they will be spit out over this.

In Malachi 1 in the Old Testament the Lord said,

Oh that one of you would shut the temple doors so that you would not light useless fires on My altar. I'm not pleased with you and I will accept no offering from your hands.

God said, "I would rather shut the temple doors than you come in here and not mean it" because this is a very serious issue with God. This is a very big deal with Him. And let me tell you why.

Just a practical illustration of this, you know, if you told me this morning, on your way to church that you got hit by a truck. I would say, "I don't believe you." If you said you came into church and on your way in here, you got t-boned by a semi and destroyed your car and ruined your life. I would say, "Then why are you not dead? Why haven't you changed as a result of that?" In a similar way, if you've been hit by God, you have to change. You have to be different.

That's what this passage is about this morning. And Paul talks about the change that happens at the end of this and the impact it makes on your life. And that's what we're going to talk about today. So, if you're taking notes this morning in Ephesians 2:8-10 we're going to look at three things you need to understand if you want to experience this change. That's our outline for today. That's what we're talking about, three things you need to understand if you want to change like this passage is talking about. And I'm going to gear this toward the unconverted just to let you know. I want to gear this toward anyone who's here this morning who looks at this passage and says, "I don't know what this is talking about." Because there's a great misunderstanding on that issue today.

There's a great confusion on this because a lot of people think the way to experience this change is through works. They think the way to change is to start coming to church, doing good deeds, and being a better person, but that's not what this says. You see this with parents who tell their children, "You just need to get your act together and come to church. That'll solve your problems, that'll make it better." You know, it probably won't. It might make them a hypocrite. Or you see it with wives who tell their husbands, "You just need to show up on Sunday and join the choir and go on a missions trip and that'll fix you." No, no it won't. That's not what this says. It's got to go deeper than that. Just like you wouldn't tell a dead man to do that you wouldn't tell that to a sinner and a lost person. He needs to understand God's grace. He needs to understand that salvation is all of God and not of him. And that's how you get this, which is what we're going to talk about this morning. With three things you need to understand if you want this change.

The first one is this. You need to understand that you can only boast in grace. That's where this begins. That's where it starts out. The first thing you need to understand if you want to experience change like this is that you can only boast in grace, which means you can't boast in yourself if you want this. You can't look at yourself and say, "Look what I did. I'm a wonderful person." That's not how this works. You have to only boast in Him, and if you want to look in verses four through nine again, let me just read this to you. Paul writes this, he says,

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead and our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (for by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Just to give you a little background about this, chapter two comes at the end of a long discussion about God's power. That's how chapter one ends. It ends with a long discussion about God's power. Paul makes a prayer request in chapter one verse 18, and to show you that God can answer it, to show you that He is strong enough to answer prayer, Paul says that God is powerful because He has raised Christ from the dead. And then chapter two Paul says, "Christ has raised you," if you look in verse four, this phrase, "But God" is an important phrase. Because it means you were all these things in verses one through three, but God was this. You did all these things in the first part of the passage, you were dead. You lived in your lust, but God stepped into the picture. And He made you alive in verse five. He raised you up in verse six. He seated you with Him in the heavenly places. We talked about that last week if you'd like to listen, that's online. But if you look in verse eight, it starts off with the word "For" because it tells you what God did that for. It's a preposition of purpose. This is the purpose for all have that. And it says, eventually if you read through the passage, "So that no one may boast." We're going to go through verses eight through nine in a moment, walk you through it word for word, but you can't get the point of this passage until you get this. God saved you so that you would boast in Him. That's why He did this. That's why He went through the trouble so He would get all the glory.

Christianity is not a self-glorifying religion. We're not into that. It's a self-denying religion. It's not a religion that puts us out in the forefront. It's a religion that puts God in the forefront. I've told you before, you know, you go around the room, go around our church go to other churches across the city across the country across the world. And what do you see there you see a bunch of nobodies, right? Because that glorifies God.

Verse seven, right above it says, "So that in the ages to come, He might show the surpassing riches of His grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." That's kind of a mysterious passage,

but it means the time is coming in the ages to come, when God is going to show you off to heaven, a time is coming when He's going to show us off to the angels. But He's gonna do it to say, "Look at My grace. Look at My mercy." He's not going to do it to say, "Look at you and how wonderful you are." He's going to do it to say "Look at how wonderful I am."

The new English Bible translates the end of verse nine this way when it says, "There is nothing at all for anyone to boast of," and that's really the idea here. There's nothing anywhere in all of creation for anyone to brag about because this is all of God. The word "boasting" here, *kauxomai* in Greek it means to boast in, to glory in, to take pride in because that's what it comes down to at the end of the day. That's what it's all about, who you're going to take pride in for your salvation, who you're going to glorify, You or God. Paul says you have to glorify God, there's no other option because you were dead. You are a mess in verses one through three, and the only thing that changed you was the power of God, so you have to boast in Him. He's the only one you can boast in.

And this is important because this is where change begins. This is where it starts. It starts with understanding that all the glory goes to God. We get this show twisted. Some people say, "Well, if I believe enough, then I'll be saved. If I trust enough, then I'll go to heaven." But friends, it's not about whether you believe enough or not. It's about what you believe *in*. Other people say, "If I just pray more, I'll be saved." It's not about whether you pray more. It's *who* you pray to. The power is all of Him it's not of you. Which is something we need to think about, we need to talk about this morning because to be honest, and I say this to help you not to hurt you, but some of you haven't changed because you don't get this. Some of you haven't experienced this because frankly, you're proud. You're proud. You want to glory in your own name so you come to church week after week for that purpose, so people will notice you. Or you come so people will say "What a great Christian he is. What a great Christian she is." And when it doesn't work you wonder why, when you come in here week after week with that mentality and you don't change, you wonder what's going on. Well, this is what's going on. God does not share His glory with another. God will not share His praise with you or me or anybody.

Some of you may be reading your Bible and praying in order to say, "Look at what I did for you, God, look at how I did my part." But friends, here's what Paul is saying, you don't have a part, not in this. This salvation is all of God. And you have to remember that if you want to change. The Bible says, "God gives grace to the humble, but He opposes the proud," which means that if you want God to give grace to you, if you want God to save you, then you have to be humble. It also says, "Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will lift you up," which means if you want to be lifted up, if you want your prayers to be heard in heaven, then you have to do this. You know, it's a shame so many people miss this. There's so many proud Christians in the church today.

We've got all kinds of humble people. I'm not thinking about anybody in particular, but there are so many people just worldwide that go to church thinking about me, me, me all the time I, I, I. Friends, the church is not about you, it's about God. True Christianity is not about you, it's about Him. You didn't die on the cross, you didn't rise from the grave and you didn't live a sinless life. That's all of Christ. And the only way to truly change is to believe that. It's been said there's only one hero of the Bible and it's God. And salvation begins with knowing that. Which leads us to the next point to talk about this morning, the next thing to understand if you want to experience this change. The first one is you can only boast in grace. That's the starting point of this, that's where it begins. This is a matter of boasting. This is a matter of what you're putting your trust in. You put it in the Lord because He's the one who does all the work.

It brings us to another point to consider, a second thing to understand if you want to experience this change, and that is that your faith is all of grace. And I'll explain that in a moment. But not, not only can you only boast in grace, but the second thing you need to understand is that your faith is all of grace. Which means that even though the ability to believe even the ability to trust comes from Him and not from you, so that you can't boast in that either.

If you read on in verse eight, this is what Paul says. He says,

For by grace, you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Just to say a few words about that verse there, Paul is talking about what God did to save us. He is explaining the great change that occurs inside of our lives. It's almost as if he could hear the objections coming forth as he was writing this. It's almost as if Paul could read the minds of his audience because some people might read this and say, "But you've got it all wrong, Paul, I did do something. You don't understand. I had a part to play. I believed. That's what I did, that's all of me. God didn't have to do everything, that wasn't necessary, that's overkill. I helped Him out." And Paul answers that right away here by saying, "No, you didn't help God out because even your faith was a gift of God. Even your faith came from Him." Which is surprising thing to say because the Bible places a very high value on faith, holds it in very high esteem. But the theme in this passage is boasting, the theme is bragging, and Paul says you can't brag about that. You can't take pride in your faith.

If you notice, as you read through this passage, Paul says this three different ways, he covers it from three different directions. And for instance, he says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves." That means the faith was not of yourselves, the power to believe to believe did not come from you, it came from him. Then he says, "It is the gift of God," which also refers to your faith. Your faith is a gift of God. It's God's present to you. And nobody receives a present and brags about it. Nobody deserves a gift. Then he says, "Not as a

result of works, so that no one may boast.” And if you see in your Bibles there the word “works” is in the plural to signify a multitude of works. Every work. Your faith is not a result of that. It's not a result of any work you can think of because it's all of God. I said a moment ago, you know, some people treat their faith like a work because they say, “If I believe enough, and if I trust enough, God will save me.” And Paul says that's not the way this works. It's not about whether you do something enough, it's about Him.

And just as a side note, we need to qualify this a little bit just to be clear. We need to explain that Paul is not saying that our faith doesn't matter, because it does matter very much. Absolutely, it does. Listen, believe the wrong thing and you'll go to hell; believe the right thing in Christ and you'll go to heaven. It matters very much. And he's not saying it's not our responsibility because it is our responsibility. The Bible is clear about that. The point here is that you just can't boast in this because it's not about you. The point Paul's making here is you can't even brag about your ability to believe because it came from God. The one thing you could look at and say, “This is mine. I deserve this. Let me take credit for this,” Paul says you can't do that. It's amazing how subtle our pride is. And then it's amazing how ugly it is to take a thing like faith and say, “This is mine, let me take credit for it.” To take something like that, something beautiful like that and turn it into a work, but that's what pride does. Pride destroys everything.

And there are a lot of ways you can do this. There's several ways you can show pride through your faith. You know, one is by studying the Bible. One is by reading God's Word. I think we've all known people that have read the Bible, learn the Bible, and they're proud about it. I mean reading scripture is a very good thing to do. You need to be reading your Bibles. But some people do that and say, “If I just do it enough, God will bless me. If I do it enough, God will forgive my sins.” It doesn't work that way. “If I get one more theology book on the shelf. read one more blog here, one more sermon. One more, one more, one more. They do it through prayer. Prayer is also a good thing to do. You need to be praying. But some people think, “If I just pray long enough, if I just pray hard enough, if I just if it's just me, me, me, me, then God will do it.” That's pride. Or they do it through evangelism and say, “if I just witness one more time,” or they do it through worship and say, “If I just sing one more time.” But the problem with that is it's all selfish. And it goes right back to the problem we're talking about here. It's what Paul is warning against, that's the kind of danger he's talking about here. Don't make a work out of your faith. Don't do something where you can get the credit for it. The glory needs to go to God. You do it understanding your salvation is all of Him.

You know, in one brief passage of scripture, Paul obliterates human pride. In one brief passage of the Bible, he burns it to the ground, because he says there's just nothing, absolutely nothing you can glory in but Christ. You know, Henry Morehouse, a famous pastor from the 1800s tells about the time he visited a lost woman and asked her if she wanted to be saved. To which she said “yes,” but she didn't know how. And so what he did was he had her turn in her Bible to

Isaiah 53 and read it, which she did. She read Isaiah 53. And then he asked her to read it again, but this time to change the words “we” and “our” to “me” and “my.” And here's what she read. She read this,

“He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom I hid my face. He was despised, and I esteemed Him not. Surely He bore my griefs and carried my sorrows. He was wounded for my transgressions, He was bruised for my iniquities, the chastisement of my peace was upon Him, and with His stripes I am healed. I like a sheep have gone astray, I have turned to my own way and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of me.”

And after reading that the woman, the dear woman with tears in her eyes said, “Dr. Morehouse, is that true?” And he said, “Dear child, did God not say it?” Friends, I tell you that story because that's what faith is. That's what it means to believe. God said it, and I believe it. God did it, and I know it's true, but it's not about me. It's about Him.

Which brings us to one more point to consider this morning. One more thing to understand if you want to experience this change, just to review these other ones. First, Paul says you have to understand that you can only boast in grace. That's where this begins, where this starts. Second, you need to understand that your faith is all of grace, even the ability to believe even the ability to trust in Christ comes from him. We can't be proud of that either. Friends faith is outwards, do you understand that? Faith is directed outside of us, not inside of us. It's focused on an external object, and that is the Lord.

Which brings us to a third point to consider. One more thing to understand if you want to experience this change, and that is that your works are all of grace, which is how we introduced the passage this morning. But a third thing to understand is that your works are all of grace. Which means that if you want to look like a Christian and do all that other stuff that we talked about a moment ago you have to understand that the ability to do that is of grace. It flows out of His mercy too. If you read on in verses eight through 10. It says,

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship.

To round off this passage and kind of draw this to a close, Paul goes into the issue of works here. That's interesting because it's the first time he goes into any detail about works. He's talking about how you're saved and he spends nine verses on grace and faith, and one verse on works. And he does it by saying, if you notice, that we are His workmanship.” That's an interesting phrase in English, because it means that we are God's work and not our own. We are His labor.

It's also an interesting phrase in Greek, because it's the word *poeima* from which we get the word "poem" and it means we're God's work of art. Anytime a person is saved, it is God's thing of beauty. The world may look at a Christian and say, "What an ugly thing, what a nobody." God looks at him and sees beauty. Which means He took great care in saving us, He took great effort to draw us to Christ. It's been said that in order to create the world, God spoke, but in order to save it, He died. Which means it was work for Him.

And there's a lot of implications to that. You know, for instance, this means God is not a passive God. He's an active God; He's active in your salvation; it means He's personally involved in it. But the thing Paul's pointing out here is that our works do not come from Him. That's the important part of this verse. We work because He first worked in us, which is what he goes on to say,

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we would walk in them.

That's a big passage, but a couple things to point out here. It means our good works are created in Christ which means we did not create them, they were not our idea. If your life changes, like we talked about, if you become something different, let me tell you something, you didn't come up with that, God did. And he says they were prepared beforehand by God just to show you how much God has done this for you. Paul says God prepared your works beforehand, which is another way of saying He predestined them. Just as He predestined your salvation in chapter one verse five, so He predestined your works in chapter 2 verse 10, just as He ordained your adoption and redemption earlier in chapter one, so now He ordains what that produces in chapter two.

And then he ends by saying so that we would walk in them. The word "walk" there gives the idea of progress and momentum. When you walk somewhere, that's what you're doing. You're making progress and you're going somewhere, and when you're saved, that's what begins to happen in you. It's been said there is no justification without sanctification, which means there's no justification without change, ongoing change, regular change, daily change in someone's life. And if you guys have met someone who knew you 10 years ago, 20 years ago, maybe even before you were saved, and they don't even know who you are anymore. That's what this is talking about.

The reformer Martin Luther said, "Good works do not make a Christian, but a Christian makes good works" They're a sign that you're saved. But when you produce the works, you have to remember they come from God. When you show signs of salvation, you have to remember that originated with Him. And going back to how we started this message today, I think if there's areas where the church is confused today, it's this one. Christians today are really confused in the area of faith and works. They really get it all twisted and mixed up. For instance, a lot of people

think they don't matter. A lot of people think works are not important. Because they say I don't need this. I can be saved without them. I can live like hell and go to heaven. I can live like the devil and then go meet God. The term for that is "easy believeism" because they think salvation is easy. It doesn't take a commitment. On the other hand, there are people who say works are very important because they save you. Works are so important that they buy your way into heaven. And I have to tell you that's called legalism. Salvation is legal by the law and I have to tell you, both ideas are wrong. Both of them are a mistake. This pastor says if you are saved, you will work. If you're saved, you will show it with good deeds, but you will do it because it's all of God. You will do good deeds because you are His workmanship, not your own.

And if you notice the order here, this is very important. He works and then you work. He predestined you from eternity past and you respond. But the works are not from you. You can't take credit for this. I can't say that enough. Which I hope encourages you this morning because that means the weight is off your shoulders. You know you don't have to come in here beat down every week thinking, "Boy if I just do more, if I do more, if I do more, that's not on your shoulders that's on God's" You know, we were talking about this at our care group last week and one of our people said, "you know this is almost too good to be true. The passage like this, you read this and you say, 'that can't be because I was always taught if I work hard enough, I'll get a reward. If I try hard enough, I'll get a trophy,'" at which point someone else said, "But this has to be true because I can't live without this. This has to be true because every week I go through my days sitting and sitting and failing and messing up with God and I go to church thinking, 'I don't deserve to be here. I don't deserve to be with these people,' until I read this passage. And I realize no one else does either. I read Ephesians 2 and I see everyone else is in the same boat. No, this has to be true. Otherwise, I could never be a Christian at all." Friends, that's exactly right. You can't be a Christian without this. You can't be saved unless you understand that your salvation is all of God.

Friends, it's a very simple question at the end of the day, whose works are you going to trust in, yours or His? It's not a mixture, one or the other. Whose deeds are you going to believe in? If you trust in your deeds, you will go to hell; if you trust in His deeds, you will go to heaven. Going back to what we said a moment ago. Who are you boasting in? Why do you come to church? Do you come here so people will notice you, or do you come so they will notice Him? Is this about what He has done for you, or is this about what you're doing?

Friends, I want to encourage you this morning you can change today. I don't care where you're from, I don't care who you are, you can experience all the things this chapter talks about. You can be made alive. You can be raised from the dead, but you have to trust in Him. Will you do that today? Will you give him all your hope and faith? Let me pray that you would. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for this amazing passage this morning. I feel like we go to passages and texts like this and we can never really do them justice. We're always just scratching the surface. Because as I said before, we're talking about things that are going to be discussed for all eternity. But Lord, I praise you as I read this chapter and I see the faces of this congregation, I see the faces of those who have been changed. I see the faces of those who have been made different by the power of God. Lord, I rejoice in that. I pray they would as well. I pray that as we read this, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ would remember the great thing You've done in them. And they would, and they would have a peace in their heart that they don't have to come in here and try to be something they're not. They can just live in the light of Your Grace.

I pray for those also, Lord, as we kind of directed the sermon toward the lost this morning. Those who have no idea what this is talking about, but they want it. They want to be different. They want to be alive. They want to be changed. Father, I pray for them that You would do a work in their hearts this morning. I pray You would raise the dead among us. As one author said, they would take off the grave clothes and put on the grace clothes today.

Father, thank You that You are a God that cares about sinners, and You're a God that chases them to the ends of the earth and predestined what they would do. Father, we give You all the glory this morning. We praise Christ for His work on the cross and we go out rejoicing in that today. We pray this in Jesus name, Amen.