

Poetic Creation

Long Beach Alliance Church • May 11, 2014 • Pastor Chris Lankford

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

~Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

We Wear The Mask

*We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.*

*Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.*

*We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask!*



By Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906)

First Published in "Lyrics of Lowly Life," in 1896 by Dodd, Mead, and Company

1) A New Poetic Creation

- A) God's kindness to mankind is demonstrated through Jesus Christ in the provision of "saving grace" (Ephesians 2:7). God's unmerited gift of grace is obtained through faith in Jesus Christ (2:8-9, cf. Romans 10:17).
- B) As another vivid example of God's kindness ("For...", 2:8 & 2:10), salvation is described in terms of a fresh and new creation (2:10), again supporting why no man can take credit for salvation ("boast," 2:9).
- C) Grace by faith recreates a person, producing "His workmanship," a poetic creation of an expert craftsman. Like the poet who is able to weave mundane words into a masterful composition, so God crafts meaningless humanity into eternal vessels of God's Gospel work (2:10).

2) Liberated For Good Works

- A) At one time "you were dead in the trespasses and sins" (2:1) "but God..." (2:4) has re-constituted you "in Christ Jesus" as a new creation (2:10; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17) for new, fresh, "good works" (2:10).
- B) "You once walked" (2:2) in a way leading to sinful results (2:1-3, **hostile** and following the world, **helpless** against supernatural forces, and **hopeless** in sin nature), "but God..." (2:4) has re-constituted you so "that we should walk" into "good works" (2:10).
- C) **DO YOU SEE IT?! Do you see what God has *already* done?! He has remade you, recreated you, reconstituted you, resuscitated you! You were dead, and now you are ALIVE IN CHRIST! **ALL THINGS MADE NEW!****
- D) The good works are not the cause of your new life, the new life is the cause of the good works. All our works flow from a dependent life lived "in Christ Jesus" (2:10). He is the author, we are the poem.

3) When You Walk In Christ You Will Walk Into Good Works

- A) At one time you were a child deserving "wrath" (2:3), but now you are 'walking in Christ,' transformed to encounter "good works" for which God has "prepared beforehand" (2:10). Like 'setting the table' prior to hosting guests, God has prepared His creation with fruitful Gospel opportunities which require our responsiveness (cf. Galatians 5:22-23).
- B) The free gift of salvation in Christ is by grace through faith causing good works displaying the redemptive Gospel story, all for the glory of God!

growth group guide

“poetic creation”

(ephesians 2:10) may 11-16, 2014

warm up

What is the most beautiful thing you have ever seen or heard? Describe it to your group and why you found it so beautiful.

Any comments, observations, or questions from Sunday's Sermon?

chop it up

Read The Text: Ephesians 2:10

The word “workmanship” (in this context) emphasizes craftsmanship or creative design, like a potter's skill with clay in creating a beautiful jar (cf. Isaiah 64:8). In what ways has God remade you/your life?

Why has God remade your life in this manner?

Ephesians 2:10 notes we are “created in Christ Jesus for good works.”
What are “good works?” What are the source of “good works?”
How can you be sure the source of your “good works” is right/correct?



live it up

It is very easy to substitute our own “moral works” for the “good works” of life in Christ. In fact, many Christians fake their behavior to conform to a social expectation in a church, or a worldly expectation of Christianity. This is called “moralism,” a moral life without Jesus Christ as its source. Are there “works” in your life which do not have Christ as their source? How do you know for sure what you do (works) comes from who you are (in Christ)? How does a person “unlearn” moralistic living?

(Always feel free to support your ideas with the Bible 😊)



extra

Clearly, God expects His people to live lives which are intentionally and distinctively virtuous so that the world will experience the glory of God. In what ways did Jesus Christ example this kind of life?