

GOD'S WORKMANSHIP (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Ephesians 2:1-10

1/Saved

Save = rescue

- From sin (Matthew 1:21)
- From wrath (Romans 5:9)

Save = make whole

- From sickness (Matt 9:22; 14:36; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 17:19; 18:42)
- From sin (Acts 4:12; 15:11; Romans 10:10)

2/By grace

- Grace = undeserved favour
- Kindness and mercy we don't earn (2 Cor 8:9; 9:8)
- English martyr, John Bradford (1510-1555), on seeing criminals taken to execution said, 'But for the grace of God, there goes John Bradford.'

3/Through faith

- Literally 'by means of'
- Faith = the instrument by which we appropriate grace

4/Not of works

- Works (*ergon*)
- No matter how effective our good works, we have nothing of which to boast.
- Cf small child's drawing/model. Child thinks it is wonderful; adult sees it differently.
- See the hymn written by the leader of the Moravians, Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) and translated by John Wesley (1703-1791). It was the Moravians' understanding of faith that led to Wesley's conversion on 24 May 1738.
- *Jesus Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy I shall lift up my head.
Bold shall I stand in that great day
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved from these I am,
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.*

See <http://www.zinzendorf.com.countz.htm>

5/God's workmanship

- 'Workmanship' = thing made. Its quality depends on the maker
- Great artists produce great art. When God does something, it is a masterpiece!
- We are God's masterpiece. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Just as an artist can transform an old piece of chipboard into a work of art, so God transforms us! What was once worthless becomes invaluable

- *Something beautiful, something good,
All my confusion, He understood;
All I had to offer him was brokenness and strife
But He made something beautiful of my life*
Bill Gaither

6/First contrast

- While good works cannot save us (9), we are saved to do good works (10)
- But these are now good works prepared by God for us to walk in
- As a mother might prepare appropriate tasks for her child

7/Second contrast

- Once we walked in sin (2)
- Now we walk in good works (10)

8/Faith image

- We need a faith image of ourselves
- To see ourselves as God sees us
- We are God's workmanship!
- So we can be and do everything God has purposed for us

SOMETHING TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT

Read: Ephesians 2:8-10

1. Think about the day you were saved (8). What was it like? Share your testimony with the rest of the group. What were you saved *from*? What were you saved *to*?
2. 'Grace' means 'undeserved favour.' What does God's 'grace' mean to you? (Give examples of people who have shown you grace. How did they do it? Does this help us to understand God's grace?)
3. Think about something you made when you were a child that you thought was a wonderful piece of work. What do you think of it now? What light does this throw

on our tendency to boast of our achievements now? What does this tell us about our need of God's grace.

4. God created human beings in his image (Genesis 1:26, 27). What does the word 'image' mean? (There is more than one possibility.)
5. What do you think it means to be created in the image of God? (It is obviously not a physical thing. So what is it?)
6. If we are God's workmanship, what difference does this make to the way we see ourselves? Can you give specific examples from your own life?
7. To understand what it means to be God's workmanship, go back over Ephesians 1 and 2 and note all the things God says about us.
8. Try re-reading this passage aloud and putting in 'I' or 'me' every time it says 'we' or 'us' or 'you'. Then believe it!

Want to read more by Barry Chant? Easy. Just go to www.barrychant.com and browse around. There is something for everyone – Bible studies, children's stories, articles, devotional materials, poems, short stories, Christian resources, pioneer Pentecostal research and more. And lots of it is free. Dr Barry Chant is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is an ordained minister in the CRC Churches International and was the founding president of Tabor College, Australia. He is married (to Vanessa) and they have three adult children and twelve grand-children.