

A Doing Community, Sam Ferguson, October 11, 2020

Series Goal | May our love for Christ, and Christ's love for us, foster a togetherness that bears witness to the Gospel of Hope, which we hold out to a weary and divided world.

Key Scripture | [Eph. 2](#)

Sermon Outline & Questions

"Clearing space"—

Eph. 2:10. We need to understand "good works" rightly.

We approach good works differently depending on background, stage of life, calling, and the responsibilities before us.

So, we must be sympathetic to others.

We might agree on ends but not on the means.

Historical/social context also shapes good works (i.e., Christianity illegal during Nero then Constantine (Christianity national religion)).

Has your approach to or understanding of 'good works' changed throughout your life? Given your current stage of life and walk with the Lord, what does 'good works' mean to you and look like right now?

Institutional church vs. individual Christians—

The institutional church's mission is to baptize, discipline, confirm, and serve the Lord's Supper.

The individual Christian has the ability to exercise good works in ways the institutional church cannot (e.g., join a political party, vote).

This sermon focuses on individual good works

Works-based righteousness—

Type 1: "No works are necessary because I am saved by grace." It is to be lethargic instead of being salt and light.

Type 2: "My works save the world." This is to assume we can put the world aright.

But the world is not ours to save. We are not the hero.

See [The World is Not Ours to Save](#) by Tyler Wigg Stevenson. "The ability to do good depends on our ability to confront our particular weaknesses."

With honest reflection, do you find yourself defaulting to either of these forms of works-based righteousness?

Have you ever caught yourself trying to "save the world" with a good work? If yes, and if you recognized this at the time, how did you respond?

Sermon Focus | A Doing Community

1. What God has done proceeds our do.

[Eph. 2:8-9](#). God has done something. We are accepted by God because of something God has done.

[Eph. 2:10](#). Paul immediately pivots: *You're not saved by your works...Now, you have work to do!*

Paul is helping us with heart motivation. In the first 9 verses, he shows us the wrong reason for doing good works (salvation).

Consider a parent-child relationship. The child delights to obey to be loved, but *because* they are loved.

How might these truths connect with truths we gleaned from The Lord's Prayer series? (Specifically thinking about God as our Father.)

2. Our doing depends on God.

Think of this in terms of lifting weights. Form matters!

We can have bad form in doing good work. Or, we can have a *God-centered-weight-bearing-form*.

God bears the weight of ultimate responsibility when it comes to good works.

God is working on us and in us for purpose of equipping us for tasks and accomplishing his purposes. ("...so that we should walk in them.")

This is an *active passivity*. We are like a tool in God's hands

Only God bears weight of final analysis of success

How did Paul bear weight of work? [Rom. 15:17-18](#).

What purposes is God accomplishing here on earth? What is our role in it?

How does knowing that God bears responsibility for the outcomes of good works change the way we approach and handle the good works set before us?

3. Our doing is assigned by God.

Eph. 2:10: "*Prepared beforehand...*"

This is an extremely personal passage.

What might these things include? It includes the mundane things to marvelous things. (See [1 Tim. 5:9-10](#).)

“We feel the pleasure and delight of our heavenly father in the arena of daily life.”

Have you ever had a task, responsibility, project, opportunity, etc. that felt particularly prepared for you by God? Share with someone.

Concluding thoughts—

Lesslie Newbigin, a missionary to India, reminds us that how we engage the world depends on the lens we're looking through. Our “lens” needs to be through God's story, not man's. Our citizenship is in heaven

We will be loved and hated by the world. See [Acts 17](#).

Christians bless the world *and* destabilize its idolatrous ways. Be prepared for a bumpy ride. God is with you.

Being and doing go together in God's economy. So, be God's person. Abide in him. Sometimes the most strategic thing you can do for the world is to rest in God. (For doing requires a certain type of being.)

Aim at service, not success. Ultimate success rests in God's hands.

There is inherent dignity and joy to being called to good works. God delights in our efforts, whether small, clumsy, or effective.

“You Christians who do good works, the world is not yours, not to save, only serve the one whose it is.” -*Tyler Wigg Stevenson*

Read [John 15](#) and pray for help to abide in Christ.

Overarching questions—

What is one thing that stood out to you in this sermon?

What might Christ be saying to you? What truth can you seek to apply to your daily life this week?