

Better Way Apostolic Church – Bible Class

Subject: Purged for a Purpose: Ephesian 2:10

Create- to produce from nothing. To form out of preexistence matter (Woman) I Cor. 11:9 To create and form in a spiritual sense, regeneration or renewal.

Purge-to clear of guilt

Psalms 51:7 What dirt is to the body, sin is to the inner person, so it was right for David to feel defiled because of what he had done. By committing adultery and murder, he had crossed over the line God had drawn in His law ("transgression"); he had missed the mark God had set for him ("sin") and had yielded to his twisted sinful nature ("iniquity"). He had willfully rebelled against God, and no atonement was provided in the law for such deliberate sins (Leviticus 20:10; Numbers 35:31-32). David could appeal only to God's mercy, grace, and love (v. 1; Exodus 34:6-7; 2 Samuel 12:22). "Blot out" refers to a debt that must be paid (130:3; Isaiah 43:25), and "cleanse" refers to defilement caused by touching something unclean (Leviticus 11:32) or from disease (Leviticus 13:1-3). "Wash" (vv. 2, 7) refers to the cleansing of dirty clothing (Isaiah 1:18; 64:6). In the Jewish society of that day, to wash and change clothes marked a new beginning in life (Genesis 35:2; 41:14; 45:22; Exodus 19:10,14), and David made such a new start (2 Samuel 12:20).

Who Said "Broad-Mindedness?"

There is no room for broadmindedness in the chemical laboratory. Water is composed of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. The slightest deviation from that formula is forbidden.

There is no room for broadmindedness in music. The skilled director will not permit his first violin to play even so much as one-half note off the written note, chord, and key.

There is no room for broadmindedness in the mathematics classroom. Neither geometry, calculus, nor trigonometry allows any variation from exact accuracy, even for old time's sake. The solution of the problem is either right or it is wrong (no tolerance there).

There is no room for broadmindedness in biology. One varying result out of a thousand experiments will invalidate an entire theory.

There is no room for broadmindedness on the athletic field. The game is to be played according to the rules with no favors shown for "charity's sake."

There is no room for broadmindedness in the garage. The mechanic there says the piston rings must fit the cylinder walls within one-thousandth part of an inch. Even between friends there cannot be any variation if the motor is to run smoothly.

How then shall we expect that broadmindedness shall rule in the realm of Christianity and morals? He that forsakes the truth of God, forsakes the God of truth.

God's Work in this (Eph. 2:10)

"For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus." The Greek word translated "workmanship" is *Poima*, from which we derive our English word "poem." It means, "that which is made, a manufactured product." In other words, our conversion is not the end; it is the beginning. We are a part of God's "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17), and God continues to work in us to make us what He wants us to be. His purpose is to make us more Like Christ (Romans 8:29).

But how does God work in us? Through His Holy Spirit, "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Christ finished His work of redemption on the cross, but He arose from the dead and returned to heaven. There He carries on His unfinished work of perfecting His church (Ephesians 4:7-16; Hebrews 13:20-21).

Christ is equipping us for our walk and our work here on earth. To do this, He uses three special tools: the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13), prayer (Ephesians 3:20-21), and suffering (1 Peter 4:11-14). As we read God's Word, understand it, meditate on it, and feed on it, the Word goes to work in our lives to cleanse us and nourish us. As we pray, God's Spirit works in us to release power. And as we suffer, the Spirit of God ministers to us. Suffering drives us back to the Word and prayer, and the cycle is repeated.

Too many Christians think that conversion is the only important experience, and that nothing follows. But this is wrong. We can use the resurrection of Lazarus as an example. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He said, "Loose him, and let him go" (John 11:44) In other words, "This man is now alive. Get him out of the grave clothes!" Paul has this concept in mind in Ephesians 4:22-24 when he writes, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation [behavior] the old man which h is corrupt ... and that ye put on the new 'man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Colossians 3:1 has the same message: "[Since] ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."

The same resurrection power that saved you and took you out of the graveyard of sin can day help you live for Christ and glorify Him. At great expense to Himself, God worked for us on the cross. And today, on the basis of that price paid at Calvary, He is working in us to conform us to Christ. God cannot work in us unless He has first worked for us, and we have trusted His Son. Also, He cannot work through us unless He works in us. This is why it is important for you to spend time daily in the Word and prayer, and to yield to Christ during times of suffering. For it is through the Word, prayer, and suffering that God works in you.

The Bible shows many examples of this principle. God spent 40 years working in Moses before He could work through him. At the beginning of his ministry, Moses was impetuous and depended on his own strength. He killed an Egyptian and had to flee Egypt, hardly a successful way to start a ministry. But during those 40 years as a humble shepherd in the desert, Moses experienced God's working in his life, a working that prepared him for forty more years of magnificent service.

There are other examples. Joseph suffered for thirteen years before God put him on the throne of Egypt, second to Pharaoh. David was anointed king when he was a youth, but he did not gain the throne until he had suffered many years as an exile. Even the Apostle Paul spent three years in Arabia after his conversion, no doubt experiencing God's deeper work to prepare him for his ministry. God has to work in us before He can work through us; and this leads to the fourth work in our passage.

God's Work through this (Eph. 2:10)

We are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." We are not saved by good works, but saved unto good works. The famous theologian John Calvin wrote, "It is faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies can never be alone." We are not saved by faith plus good works, but by a faith that works. The basic Scripture on this theme is James 2, where the writer points out that saving faith always results in a changed life. It is not enough to say that we have faith; we must demonstrate this faith by our works.

The Bible speaks of many different kinds of works. There are "the works of the Law" which cannot save (Galatians 2:16; 3:11). There are also "the works of the flesh" which are listed in Galatians 5:19-21. Paul spoke of "works of darkness" (Romans 13:12; Ephesians 5:11). The "dead works" in Hebrews 6:1 seem to be "works that lead to death," since "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). The "works of righteousness" in Titus 3:5 refer to religious works, or other good deeds, that sinners try to practice as a means of salvation. Isaiah declared that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight" (Isaiah 64:6). If our righteousnesses are filthy, what must our sins look like!

The "works" Paul writes about, in Ephesians 2:10, have two special characteristics. First, they are "good" works, in contrast to "works of darkness" and "wicked works." If you contrast Ephesians 2:10 with Ephesians 2:2 you will see that the unbeliever has Satan working in him and therefore his works are not good. But the believer has God working in him, and therefore his works are good. His works are not good because he himself is good, but because he has a new nature from God, and because the Holy Spirit works in him and through him to produce these good works.

It is too bad that many believers minimize the place of good works in the Christian life. Because we are not saved by good works, they have the idea that good works are evil; and this is a mistake. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). We do not perform good works to glorify ourselves, but to glorify God. Paul desired that Christ would be magnified in his body, even if it meant death (Philippians 1:20-21). We should "abound to every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8), and be "fruitful in every good work" (Colossians 1:10). One result of a knowledge of the Bible is that the believer is "thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17, NASB). As believers, we are to be "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Our good works are actually "spiritual sacrifices" that we offer to God (Hebrews 13:16).

It is important to note that we do not manufacture these good works. They are the results of the work of God in our hearts. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). The secret of Paul's good works was "the grace of God" (1 Corinthians 15:10). Our good works are evidence that we have been born again. "Not everyone that saith unto Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Our good works are also testimonies to the lost (1 Peter 2:12). They will us the right to be heard.

A pastor friend told about a Christian lady who often visited a retirement home near her house. One day she noticed a lonely man sitting, staring at his dinner tray. In a kindly manner she asked, "Is something wrong?"

"Is something wrong!" replied the man in a heavy accent. "Yes, something is wrong! I am a Jew, and I cannot eat this food!"

"What would you like to have?" she asked.

"I would like a bowl of hot soup! "

She went home and prepared the soup and, after getting permission from the office, took it to the man. In succeeding weeks, she often visited him and brought him the kind of food he enjoyed and eventually she led him to faith in Christ. Yes, preparing soup can be a spiritual sacrifice, a good work to the glory of God.

But these works are not only good; they are also "prepared." "Good works which God hath before ordained [prepared] that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). The only other time this word is used in the New Testament is in Romans 9:23: "vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory" The unbeliever walks "according to the course of this world" (Ephesians 2:2), but the believer walks in the good works God has prepared for him.

This is an amazing statement. It means that God has a plan for our lives and that we should walk in His will and fulfill His plan. Paul is not talking about "kismet" - an impersonal fate that controls your life no matter what you may do. He is talking about the gracious plan of a loving Heavenly Father, who wills the very best for us. The will of God comes from the heart of God. "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Psalms 33:11). We discover God's exciting will for our lives as the Spirit reveals it to us from the Word (1 Corinthians 2:9-13).

It would be helpful to close this chapter with a personal inventory. Which of these four works are you experiencing? Is sin working against you because you have not yet trusted Christ? Then trust Him now! Have you experienced His work for you - in you - through you?

Are you wearing the "grave clothes" or the "grace-clothes"? Are you enjoying the liberty you have in Christ or are you still bound by the habits of the old life in the graveyard of sin? As a Christian, you have been raised and seated on the throne. Practice your position in Christ! He has worked for you; now let Him work in you and through you, that He might give you an exciting, creative life to the glory of God.

Making the Best Use of What You Have

There is a vast difference between the man who follows his business with a servile feeling, giving just as little attention to it as he can and yet obtains a living from it, and the man who masters his business, and with enthusiasm seeks to improve it and admire it. John Curzon, a Polish mechanic, who was presented with a gold medal for his inventions, performed a most extraordinary thing when he succeeded in manufacturing a complete watch in the space of eight hours, and from materials on which most watchmakers would have looked with contempt. It appears that the Czar of Russia, hearing of the marvelous skill of Curzon, determined to put him to the test, and forwarded him a box containing a few copper nails, some wood chippings, a piece of broken glass, an old cracked china cup, some wire, and a few pieces of pegboard, with the request that he should transform them into a time piece. Undaunted, and perceiving a golden opportunity of winning favor at the court, Curzon set about his task with enthusiasm, and in the almost incredibly short space of eight hours had despatched a wonderfully constructed watch to the Czar, who was so surprised and delighted at the work that he sent for the maker, conferred upon him several distinctions, and granted him a pension. The case of the watch was made of china, while the works were simply

composed of the odds and ends accompanying the old cup. Not only did it keep good time, but only required winding once in three or four days.