

## Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> '17 God's masterpieces

1. Read Ephesians 2 and summarize what Paul says in this chapter.

2. Focus on v8 & 9.

i) What does it mean that God's people 'have been saved by grace'? Define grace.

ii) Paul says that we have been "saved through faith". Faith is the means by which we are saved. Does that mean faith is our contribution to being saved? What does the rest of the verse say about that?

iii) God said this salvation is a 'gift of God'. What is Paul trying to stir up in our hearts and minds?

For what reason does the apostle say that salvation comes through grace and not by good works?

3. Read v10.

i) God says that He created us in Christ Jesus for good works. What does that mean? What might 'good works' include?

Is He just interested in works? What is needed so that they become good?

ii) What does this mean for our purpose in life? Will we be accountable? How are we to know what we should be doing?

iii) Read James 2:14-17. What does James add to our understanding of the relationship between faith & good works?

4. *God's masterpiece* – it's an amazingly profound image.

Look up 2 Corinthians 5:17 as well.

Talk about the care & the skill God takes in fashioning our lives; and the joy that it brings Him to observe us - as we give our lives for Him day by day- as His masterpieces. C S Lewis said "We are a divine work of art."

What challenge & encouragement do you find in this?

5. Oct 31<sup>st</sup> is the 500 year anniversary of when Martin Luther (a German monk) nailed his 95 statements or "thesis" on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg in Germany – which acted a bit like a public notice board. Luther was challenging practices within the medieval church of his time. The thing he was really distressed about, was that the church was taking grieving relatives' money to ensure that the person who had died would spend less time in purgatory. The money was used to fund the building of St Peter's in Rome.

For a 4 minute summary of Luther's life watch this:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tox2TfIUH90>

Going back to what we've read about salvation as God's gift of grace. Luther talked about "passive righteousness". In other words, God makes us righteous (right before Him), rather than righteousness being something of ourselves. Why do you suppose that Luther linked this "re-discovery of truth" with joy?

The Reformation was basically about going back to what the Bible says. Discuss whether you think the church today needs a similar renewal. Or us?