

We are God's workmanship \* Ephesians 2:10  
January 16, 2022 \* Langford Community Church \* Graham Gladstone

I want you to think for a moment about who you are, what makes you 'you.'

If someone came up to you on the street and said 'Who are you?,' what would you say?

You'd probably start with your name. And right away, you've revealed a part of who you are. You're part of a family. Parents came before you, children and grandchildren have come after you. You are a part of that family.

And then the next thought would probably be your work – I'm a farmer or a health care worker; I'm a grocer, a public servant, an educator; I'm a student; I'm self-employed or retired – what you do is part of your identity.

And then of course there's a whole host of other things that make up who you are – your nationality, your language, your hobbies, your interests, your political leanings, your little quirks and idiosyncrasies that make up who you are.

Those are all a part of your identity.

But I would like to suggest to you that there is one more aspect that we need to consider, an even more fundamental part of who we are that affects all the rest – and that's who we are in Christ.

Our work, our families, our hobbies – those are all important parts of our identity, but they all need to be seen in light of our relationship with God.

That being the case, we are going to spend the next seven weeks or so, up until Lent, thinking about who we are in Christ. Each week, we're going to look at a different aspect of who we are in God's eyes and then think about how that impacts all the other parts of our own identities. We're not just 'parents' and 'children of God;' our identity as children of God should shape how we parent. We're not just 'employees' and 'servants of God;' the fact that we are servants of God should impact how we act at work.

My hope over the next few weeks is that this will help you to see yourself more and more in relation to God; where being a follower of Jesus is not just 'an' aspect of who you are, but the foundation upon which the rest of your identity is built.

So today, we begin with a very foundational idea. Who are you? You are God's workmanship. We are God's handiwork.

That idea comes from Ephesians 2, verse 10.

Ephesians 2:10 says “Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph 2:10 NIV).

We are God’s workmanship, God’s masterpiece, God’s handiwork. There are a variety of ways to translate that word, but they all point to the same thing. We have been made by a loving Creator.

I know that we have some expert woodworkers here – just think about the hours of work that they put into carefully crafting the piece that they are working on – that’s the time and effort that God has put into creating each of us.

Turn with me to Psalm 139 and you’ll see it in action – Psalm 139:13-16.

13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,

16 your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

We are God’s handiwork, carefully created by the expert hands of the master. All of the complicated details of your hearts and lungs and nervous system He carefully tied together. Yes, we know how the birds and the bees work and we know how a fetus grows stage by stage but the reality behind THAT reality is that God is carefully putting us together, even in our mother’s womb. Biology is at work, but God is too.

Now I realize that that statement flies in the face of conventional wisdom. The word on the street is that God had nothing to do with it. We’re not created beings; we’re just the product of biological forces. At best, we are the fortunate outcome of thousands of generations who managed to survive; at worst, we are the happy accident of random evolutionary processes. There was no Creator to make us; this is just who we turned out to be.

That’s what the world says but God’s Word says otherwise. The Bible tells us that there IS a Creator, a creator who creates with intention and purpose. There’s nothing random about who we are; we are exactly who God in His infinite wisdom intended us to be. According to Genesis 1 & 2, He made us in His image to be like Him, to share in His sovereignty and to bear witness to His goodness in the world. He made us His stewards, His representatives and that gives each and every one of us inherent value.

Think of a king, sending an ambassador to a foreign land, or a landowner turning over control of His holdings to a steward; it’s as if those representatives ARE the people they represent. That’s how being made in God’s image works; we take on the value of the God who made us.

You wouldn't know it by the way we treat each other sometimes though. You wouldn't know it by the way people online like to tear each other down, but the reality is, that each and every one of us is a masterpiece, handcrafted by God, deserving the same dignity and respect that we would give to God.

That means that you are a masterpiece, handcrafted by God. Age doesn't negate that; ability doesn't negate that; popularity or lack thereof certainly doesn't negate that – you are God's handiwork, made in God's image, and you matter. Your strengths, your weaknesses, your quirks, your idiosyncrasies; they are what makes you and they are valuable because God made you.

And it's not just you. This is why Black Lives Matter. This is why 'Every Child Matters.' This is why we resist racism and favouritism and discrimination on the basis of socioeconomic status – we do these things because every person that society would write off as inferior is all fearfully and wonderfully made by the same loving God as we are.

We are all important to God because He created each and every one of us.

Now, that begs the question – why? Why did God create each and every one of us? Generally speaking, we don't create things for no reason; we make things on purpose, because we have a reason. Why did God create us?

Again, Ephesians 2:10 gives us our answer – “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph 2:10 NIV).

We were made to do good in the world, to honour God and to take care of His Creation, to treat one another with the dignity and respect that we all deserve as God's handiwork. And ultimately, we were made to bear witness to the goodness of the Creator.

I mean, every time I come through the front doors of the church (out on the highway, the brown doors and the sandy cross), I think of the hours that Ross Pugsley spent out there under a tent sanding and staining and refinishing the door, and I think 'wow, what a marvelous creator! What skill, what expertise!'

That's what people should think of God when they look at us. 'Wow, what a marvelous creator! What skill, what expertise!' They should see the godness of God reflected in our actions. This really is a city on a hill situation like Jesus described, that people would see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven because of it (Mat 5:16 NIV).

And that's doubly so for all of us who know Jesus – Ephesians 2:10 again – we are God's workmanship, in the sense that He created us when we were born, but we are also God's workmanship in the sense that we are new creations when we give our lives to Christ. Again, the front door is a good metaphor; dirt and sand and dust and light ground down the door, to the point that it lost its colour, it lost its marvel. Sin does that do us too. But just as Ross made

that door into a new creation, Jesus remakes each of us into a new creation, to show the world just how gracious God really is.

This is what we were made for – to do good in the world and to point to the goodness of the Creator. We are accountable to God for that.

We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus, to do good works.

So think for a minute. When you think about who you are, who are you, first and foremost? Are you defined primarily by your work? Your family? Your talents? Your responsibilities? Or do you see yourself as a created being, made in the image of God, precious, perfect, priceless in His eyes? Those things are all true of you.

Sometimes in counselling, I run into people who have a very low view of themselves, who think they're not really worth that much. God loves them more I think than they love themselves. And I need to say to them. You're worth it. You're valuable despite what the world may say. God made you and He loves you and you are worth the effort to change. So make that effort. And invest in yourself in your relationship with your Creator.

Now, if you're already there, and you see yourself as a created being, made in the image of God, precious, perfect, priceless in His eyes – great! But let's take the next step.

Do you see other people the same way, as precious, priceless, perfect works of art that God has fashioned with the same care that He used to make you?

Do you treat them that way?

We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus, to do good works. Let us love all whom God has made in all our wonderful diversity. We are fearfully and wonderfully made; let's fulfill our Creation purpose, to do good works in the world and bear witness to the goodness of God.

## BENEDICTION

2 Th. 2:16-17 - Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.