

GOD'S MASTERPIECE: WHAT IS IT?



by Grant Hawley

"For we are His masterpiece..." - Ephesians 2:10.

Ephesians 2:10 is one of those fantastic verses that can just utterly change the way you live. Ephesians is full of verses like that, but I want to focus on this one right now. It says, literally, "For we are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, in order that we should walk in them."¹

Some translations translate the word for "masterpiece" here as "workmanship" but that is unfortunate for a couple of reasons. First, the word workmanship is a bit pedestrian for this word, especially in this context. The word is *poi?ma* which is where we get the English word *poem*, and the word really means masterpiece. We are His masterpiece, His crowning achievement.

The second reason why "masterpiece" is a better translation than "workmanship," is because masterpiece is singular, like the Greek word behind it. Workmanship can be either singular or plural, and like the rest of us, I so often gravitate toward making the Bible out to be all about me individually, missing the big picture. Even many of those who know the word means "masterpiece" still take it as if it were about the individual Christian. Saying, "I am God's masterpiece" just isn't Biblical. It's Biblical to say, "We are God's masterpiece."

So, what does Paul mean by saying, "We are His masterpiece"? Who are the "we"? The "we" is the Church, not the local church and definitely not the building where we meet. Those buildings can be beautiful, but at best they are man's masterpiece, not God's. The "we" is the universal body of Christ—all believers in Jesus Christ from the dawn of the Church to the moment the Lord returns to collect His saints in the air.

We are His masterpiece. We had been lost, dead in trespasses and sins, pretty much a disaster (2:1-3). God gave us new life and fashioned us into the very Body of Christ (1:22-23).

He has destroyed the things that divide people from each other outside of Christ. Race, class, and gender distinctions need no longer keep people from having loving fellowship with each other (Gal 3:26-28).

He broke down, even abolished (Eph 2:15), the Mosaic Law which divided Gentiles from the Jewish people (Acts 9:6-10:48; Rom 6:14; Eph 2:14-16). And He destroyed the man-made religious laws that make us judge each other and have contempt for those who don't hold to our opinions (Romans 14; Col 2:11-23. Read more [here](#)).

He gave us each unique spiritual gifts, so that we would each be valuable to the whole, but also that we would all need each other to fill up where we were lacking (1 Corinthians 12). You can do things that I can't, and visa-versa, and God did that on purpose to create unity.

This thing God has done in fashioning us into a holy temple, the dwelling place of God (Eph 2:19-22), is really incredible. God did an amazing thing when He made the universe—the planets, stars, and a host of other breathtaking creations. He did an amazing thing when He made angels, glorious creatures that leave men in awe. He did an amazing thing when He created men in His image, made from dirt yet capable of art, science, and poetry. But He outdid all of that when He made the Body of Christ, His Church, His masterpiece, us.

So, practically, there are a lot of things to take from this. The first is just understanding where we fit in to the whole scheme of things. Second, falling in love with His Church and with the sheer beauty of what Christ has done in us will help us to heartily endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:3). Lastly, it helps us understand better what God has in store for us in eternity.

Each of these needs its own lesson, so I won't try to stuff it all into this short article. Check back soon for *Part 2: Where Do We Fit In?*



¹ Some people change the word *should* into *will* and take this verse to undercut what Paul has just said in 2:8-9, that we are saved by grace, through faith, apart from works. Works can't contribute to our being saved, and they don't inevitably flow out of being saved either, but that's a discussion for another time. God certainly does have good works in mind for us, I'll address that too, but for now I'll just say they have to be kept in their proper place—separate from salvation.

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