

(Through the Bible) Ephesians 2b

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon on Ephesians 2b explores the themes of grace, our identity in Christ, and God's purpose for our lives.

Duration: 43:13

Scripture: Psalm 118:22, John 14:9

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the concept of seeing the Father through Jesus. He challenges the audience to believe that Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Him, based on the works that Jesus does. The speaker also highlights the purpose of God's work in our lives, which is to conform us into the image of Jesus Christ. He references the fourth chapter of Ephesians, where Paul talks about the different roles appointed by God in the church. The speaker concludes by sharing personal experiences of hardship and learning to trust God, emphasizing that God prepares us for specific moments in history to bring deliverance.

Transcript

God has done a wonderful thing for us. He's brought us salvation and eternal life, and He doesn't want us boasting in what we have done. In fact, He doesn't want any flesh to glory in His sight.

So, even the faith by which we are saved, God gives to us as a gift. So I can't even boast about my believing the truth of God. Well, the truth came to me, and I examined the truth, and I decided I'm going to believe it.

Nope. By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It's a gift of God.

It's not of works, lest any man should boast. You see, God knows the tendency of our old nature to want to receive glory. That's a part of that sinful nature.

That's the thing that tripped up Satan. I'm going to exalt my throne above the stars of heaven. I'm going to sit in the congregation in the sides of the north.

I'm going to ascend into the heights. I will be like the Most High. I want people to recognize and worship and glory in me.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning, who didst exalt thyself, looking for glory? God knows that that's a part of our nature, and therefore, He placed salvation outside of our capacity, outside of our ability. He made our salvation on the basis of His grace, His work, His work through Jesus Christ, and my believing that work, and then He gave me the faith to believe it. He drew me unto Himself, placed the faith in my heart to believe His truth, and granted unto me through His grace this glorious gift of eternal life.

For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is a gift of God, that faith by which you were saved. And it is not of works, your salvation, lest any man should boast, for we are His workmanship.

The Greek word translated workmanship is *poema*, from which we get our English word poem. You are His work, you are His poem. A poem is a thing of grace, a thing of beauty.

God wants your life to be a thing of grace and a thing of beauty, and as God works in your life, it will become a thing of grace and a thing of beauty. You are His poem. The poet seeks to express himself in beautiful terms.

He seeks to express beauty in attractive terms. God is seeking to express Himself, and your life becomes that expression. As God works in you, you are His work.

As God works in your life, conforming you into the image of Jesus Christ, you then become the revelation of God to the world around you. The expression of God. Now, Jesus, it says, was the express image of His glory.

He said one day to His disciples, if you have seen the Father, you have seen Me. Or if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father, rather. Philip said, show us the Father, we'll be satisfied.

If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father. How sayest thou then, show us the Father? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me, and the works that I do? I do not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me. He doeth the works.

Believest thou then, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me, or else believe for the very works sake. So, God wants you to be the expression of Himself to this world. And that is the purpose of God's work in your life, to conform you into the image of Jesus Christ.

Now, as we get to the fourth chapter of Ephesians, Paul will tell us that God is appointed in the church, pastor, teachers, evangelists, prophets. Apostles, and not in that order. He put pastor, teachers last, but I like to reverse the order since I am a pastor, teacher.

But their purpose was for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ until we all came into the unity of the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the complete or fully matured man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the image of Christ. You see, this is God's work in you, conforming you into the image of Christ. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said, And we all with open face, as we behold the glory of the Lord, are being changed from glory to glory, even into that same image.

God expressing Himself through you, as God knocks off the rough edges, and as God smooths out those rough spots, His whole purpose of His work in my life is to conform me into the image of Christ that He

might reveal Himself through me to the world. His love through me, His grace through me, His kindness through me. Now, a lot of times as God is doing His work in me, and He begins to chip off some of those clumsy edges, I begin to scream.

I don't always like that work of God, but it is important that I submit to that work of God. I don't always understand it. Lord, why did you chip that one off? I thought that looked pretty good, you know.

And I don't always understand why certain hard places have come into my life. But God is working. It's important that I know this, because as I know this, then I can yield to these things.

I don't fight them. I say, well, Lord, my life is Yours. If any man suffers according to the will of God, let him commit the keeping of his soul unto Him as a wise creator.

God, my life is in Your hands. You do what You know best and what You see best. Lord, I accept these things that are coming my way.

You work, Lord, Your work in me that You might reveal Yourself through me. You are His poema. Created together in Christ Jesus unto the good works that God has before ordained that You should walk in them.

God has already determined, foreordained that work that You're to accomplish for His glory. God has a plan and a purpose for Your life. You remember when Mordecai sent the message in to Esther after she had said, Hey, I can't just go in and see my husband anytime I want.

You know, we've got laws here in Persia. And unless he calls me, I really can't go in to see him. And if I would presume to go in and see him, if he doesn't hold the golden scepter, they'll take my head off.

And her cousin Mordecai sent back a message and said, How do you know but what God has brought you into the kingdom for such a time as this? The whole background. The beauty contest where she was chosen to be the new queen. The deposing of the old queen, Vashti.

And all of these circumstances. How do you know that God isn't working and hasn't been working all the way through up to this point to prepare you for this precise moment in history to bring deliverance for God's people? Now, don't think within yourself, he said, that if this edict goes through that you're going to escape. Or that the edict can actually go through for deliverance will arise from another quarter.

Or God is going to do his work, but you will be the loser. If God has chosen to use you to do that work and you fail. So God has been preparing you.

How do you know? But this isn't what God has been preparing you for. And as God works in our life, we can know that God has a purpose and a plan. He doesn't just work happenstance in us.

It isn't just some kind of a capricious act of God that I've been through these severe testings or trials. It's a part of God's plan in preparing me to do the work that God has already decided that I should do for the glory of his kingdom. So I can look back in my life and I can see how God was preparing me and working in me to prepare me for this place that I am today.

And I can go back all the way back actually to my birth and even before my birth to see how God had his hand upon my life even in the prenatal state as he was preparing me for the work that he wanted me to accomplish for his glory someday. And I can see that preparation in my early childhood as God gave me such a godly mother who before I was born, when my sister for all practical purposes had died, made a

covenant with God and said, God, if you'll just spare my little daughter's life, if you'll give me my little girl back to me, I will serve you and minister for you the rest of my life. And how God miraculously healed my sister instantly, brought her back to life.

She started breathing again. And two months later when I was born, my mother said, Father, I will fulfill my vow to you through my son. I'll dedicate him to serve you.

And thus, from my earliest memories, my mother was teaching me to memorize the scriptures, following me around at my place. She let me be a normal boy, play ball and everything else. But as I was a child, she'd follow me around, having me recite scriptures.

Bedtime. I never heard of Goldilocks or Red Riding Hood until I grew up. But I knew all about David and Moses and Joshua and Paul.

These were my bedtime stories. David. God was preparing our early years of ministry.

Those times of great frustration. Those times of failure. Those times of hardship.

Those times of learning to trust God for the evening meal. When we would be absolutely... Well, no, that's an overstatement. When we would be almost broke.

Because one night when we came right down to it, we were almost broke. We went through Kay's purses and my pants pockets and our dresser drawers and we did find 37 cents. And we headed out to the store with 37 cents to buy our evening meal.

Challenged by how nutritious a meal that we could purchase for 37 cents. How balanced and nutritious. It was a real challenge and we made it.

We had a bunch of carrots and a can of pork and beans. And when we laid them on the counter, the guy totaled them up, he said 37 cents. Had it figured out.

Laid the cash on the counter and we started out the door and he called us back. And he said, you know, I'm sorry. I've been intending for a long time to do something for your kids and here, I want you to take this.

And he reached under the counter and gave us a \$10 grocery certificate. I told Kay, let's go over to the meat counter. And I said to Kay, pick out two of the best T-bones.

God's treating tonight, we're going to eat steak. God was in it. God was preparing us.

Preparing us to trust Him for the evening meal. Preparing us to just believe in Him and to know that He would supply the needs. Teaching us to be careful and frugal with His funds.

Teaching us to be wise and careful as we spent His funds. All of it was important and necessary preparation for God had in mind the whole while the ministry that we're experiencing today. I didn't have any idea what God had in mind.

I had ambitions. Hopefully one day I'd have a church of 250 people. That was my great ambition in life.

I was tired of little churches of under a hundred because they could never support the needs of the family. And so I worked as Paul, laboring with my own hands so that we would not be chargeable to the churches.

When we first began Calvary Chapel, we worked laboring with our own hands.

And I was prepared to continue to work. But God had other things in mind. Far and above anything we'd ever dreamed.

The work that God has in mind for you to do for Him. Now, I do believe that we can check out of God's program if we desire. I think that we can say, OK, Lord, that's it.

I've had it. I don't want to go through this anymore. I'm going to take another path.

And I think that we can actually miss out on that plan of God that He has ordained for our future. Not that we were going to miss salvation. Don't misunderstand me now.

That's not the issue at all. The issue is God's perfect plan for your life. Not the work that God has before ordained that you should accomplish for His glory.

I think you can miss that. If you rebel against the work that God is seeking to do in your life today, to prepare you for that work. Now, I do believe that God does prepare the instrument before He uses the instrument.

It is the days of preparation that we often despise. Though the Bible tells us, do not despise the days of preparation. The days of the small things.

Lord, I want to get on to the big thing, the big work you've got. No, no. It's necessary that God first work in me before God can work through me.

That is why we are told in the Scriptures to count it all joy when we go through some real hard testings. That's why we are told to rejoice in tribulation. For God is working in you because God wants to work through you.

He's got a plan for you. A work that He wants you to accomplish. Now, I don't think that I've arrived.

I think that God has yet a greater work in mind for me to accomplish for His glory. And it is exciting to me each day to see the new opportunities that God brings into our path in the expanding of the ministry as we seek to do His work. And so God still prepares me.

I haven't arrived by a long shot, but I'm on the way. And one day when I do arrive, I'll look around and I'll see Paul and John and I'll be in glory. You know, when I have apprehended that for which I've been apprehended.

Paul was very conscious of the fact that when the Lord called him, God had a plan in mind. And he said, I have not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended. Still on the road.

There's still something to be done. God still has a purpose and a work for me yet to fulfill. And when I have completed, when I have apprehended that for which I was apprehended, do you think God's going to leave me in this sin-cursed world any longer? Oh, He loves me too much.

He's going to take me to be with Him in the eternal glories of His kingdom. Wherefore, remember that you, in time past, as a Gentile in the flesh, were called the uncircumcision by those which are called the circumcision in the flesh made by hand. So, remember as a Gentile you were totally excluded by the Jews.

Excluded to salvation. That at that time you were without Christ. Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, you had no hope and you were without God in the world.

Now, He's going back again. You, before the coming of Jesus Christ into your life. A real separation.

A real wall between you and God. You and the people of God. You were without Christ, you were an alien from the covenants and strangers from the covenants of promise and you had no hope for you were without God in the world.

That is one of the saddest, most tragic pictures of mankind. No hope without God in the world. Without Christ, without hope, without God.

It's a tragic thing to try to exist in a hopeless state. One of the greatest things the Bible does for us, it gives us hope. Even in a world that is deteriorating around us, there is hope.

In fact, the more the world deteriorates, the greater the hope becomes. Do you know what is the latest conclusion of the most brilliant economists in the world? Do you know what they declared to be the only hope for the world at this point? They are now declaring that the only hope for the world is a unified monetary system. In their latest writings, publications, they are beginning to espouse this as the only salvation for the world.

The only hope for the world is a unified monetary system worldwide. That's the only thing that will cause mankind to lay down their arms because we'll all realize that we're having the economic problems in trying to build these tremendous armaments and everything else and we'll all be joined together in an economic endeavor to make the world a better place. So we've got to have a unified monetary, worldwide monetary system.

Interesting that they would come upon that as the only hope of the world and when that is established, they will be hailing that as the salvation of the world. And it is interesting for us as children of God to realize that the Bible says that's exactly what will be established by the Antichrist and will cause him to be hailed as the savior of the world is when he brings to pass a unified monetary system worldwide. And so the world is talking about these things and, you know, this is our only hope and we can't do this, you know, we've had it and all and they're without hope really because whoever could put together a worldwide unified monetary system.

And while they're talking about this doom and gloom, we're saying, all right, it's getting close. You know, as soon as they get that thing inaugurated, I'm going to be gone. All right, you know, and so we have this glorious hope in Christ.

Where the world is without Christ, it's without hope. Where it's without God, it's without hope. But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off, you've been brought nigh by the blood of Jesus Christ.

You were once an alien. Now you've been made a part of the family of God. You were once a stranger.

Now you're at home in the kingdom. For he is our peace. Not he will bring us peace.

He is our peace who has made both one, that is both the Jew and the Greek or the Jew and the Gentile. He's made us both one and broke down that wall of partition that used to separate us. Having abolished in

his flesh that enmity that once existed, even the law of commandments contained in the ordinances in order that he may make in himself of the two one new man, so making peace.

So Jesus took the two diverse and divergent systems. The Jew who was trying under the law to be righteous before God and failing. The Gentile who was totally alienated because he wasn't even close by way of the law.

And this tremendous difference that existed between the Jew under the law and the Gentile without a law. Both of them failing to please God or to come into fellowship with God and Jesus broke down this barrier, this wall that existed between man and mankind and he's made us all one in him. So Jesus, the common denominator and he is the one way by which man can come to God.

The Gentile apart from the law, the Jew within the law system all have to come this new route that Jesus has established. So that as we all come by the same path through Jesus Christ, we become one and no longer does this great difference exist between the Jew and the Gentile. So in making from the two one new man and thus he has made peace.

That he might reconcile both unto God in the one body by the cross having slain the enmity thereby or in the cross, you see, he fulfilled the law. The righteous demands of the law were fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ. The law righteously demanded that the sinning soul should die.

Now under the ordinances, they had the provision that they could take an animal as a substitute and thus cover their sins. But the righteousness of the law had to be satisfied. It was satisfied in the death of Jesus Christ and so there he brought an end to the law and its authority over man because the law has now been totally satisfied through his death and now through his death, he has reconciled both.

That is the Jew who could not keep the law, the Gentile who had no relationship to the law. We've both been reconciled to God in the one body of Christ by the cross and there he put an end to this enmity that existed between the two and he came and preached peace to you which were far off and to them which were close. The same message he preaches to all men whether you were far or near for through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father.

There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus and you have no access to God apart from Jesus Christ and I don't care how I am accused of being narrow in that statement. I am only stating to you what the scriptures declare. You can only have access to God through Jesus Christ.

Yes, it is a straight gate and it is a narrow path but it leads to eternal life. Broad is the gate and broad is the path that leads to destruction and many go in. There is the flow, the flow of the world but straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to eternal life and few there be that find it.

So Christ has made the way by which man can come to God. It is a road that is marked by blood but it brings us into fellowship and in communion with the Father. So you are no longer strangers and foreigners but you have been made a fellow citizen with the saints and of the household of God.

So it is not only Christ settling down and making himself at home in your hearts but you just being a part of the household of God at home with God and you are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. Now these are not the prophets of the Old Testament but the prophets in the New Testament church and we are not really built upon the foundation of the apostles. They are not the foundation upon

which we are built but we are built upon the message of the apostles.

That is the foundation. Paul said, No other foundation have we than this which is already laid which is Jesus Christ. Peter said, You are the Messiah, you are the son of the living God and Jesus said, That's good Peter, God revealed that to you and upon this rock I am going to build my church.

He is the foundation upon which we are built. The message of the apostles and the prophets that God has provided salvation through Jesus Christ and that he is the way by which we might come to God. That is the foundation laid by the apostles and the prophets in their teaching and in their ministry.

Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. God is building a habitation for himself. A body in which to dwell.

The body of Christ. The body of believers. I become a part of that building of God.

You remember Jesus said, Where two or three are gathered together in my name there I am in the midst. We are the building of God. We have been built upon that foundation laid by the apostles and the prophets.

Jesus Christ the chief cornerstone upon which this building is built. You remember that Peter standing before the Sanhedrin quoted that particular Psalm 118 referring to Jesus Christ. He said, This is the stone which was set up not by you builders but the same has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the work of God. It's marvelous in our eyes. Psalm 118 Christ the chief cornerstone.

He was the stone that was set up not by the builders. They rejected him. He came to his own.

His own received him not. Those leaders of the Jewish religion rejected the chief cornerstone. There is an interesting story that in the building of the Temple of Solomon remember not the sound of an axe or a hammer was heard.

No sound of iron. But all of the stones were quarried away from the building, carried to the building, perfectly carved out and then just fit in without even the use of mortar. Perfectly carved and fit together.

So they had the architect and he drew the blueprints for each stone and they would mark them and put them in their position within the temple as they were building it. And the story goes that there came from the quarry a stone that did not have its mark. And so the builders could not figure where the stone went.

So they finally just cast it aside. Figured it was a mistake from the quarry. And when the temple was complete they sent to the quarry and they said where is the chief cornerstone? And the quarry sent back and said we already sent it a long time ago.

And they sent back and said we have not received it. It's not here. And they said we've got our invoice and you've signed it.

It is there. And finally over in the bushes that had now grown over the thing someone dug out and said well there's a stone over here. Could this be it? And sure enough it was the chief cornerstone of the building that the builders had neglected and cast aside and they found out hey this is the one it fits.

It's the chief cornerstone. So Jesus Christ said of not by the religious leaders by the builders but God has made him to be the chief cornerstone. This is the work of God.

It's marvelous in our eyes and neither is there salvation Peter said in any other for there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved. The chief cornerstone upon which the whole thing is built in whom all of the building is fitly framed and grows unto the holy temple in the Lord. So when you have Christ building on him the whole building goes together fitly framed together the holy temple in the Lord in whom ye also are builded together as the house of God through the Spirit.

Again where two or three are gathered together in my name there I am in the midst the house of God where he comes to dwell among his people. And how glorious it is to be able to gather together with the family of God and to experience the presence of Jesus Christ and the power of God's Spirit as he is working to build this habitation not a physical building but our lives that are being knit together fit together in this whole plan of God this glorious building where God will reveal himself to his people and through his people to the world.

Thank you Father for that wonderful work of your Holy Spirit in our hearts and lives for that grace whereby we were saved for your work in us as you prepare us to do your work for your Spirit drawing us near when we were without hope and without Christ and without God in this world for making us a part of the family of God fitting us together as we are built upon Christ O Lord you're beautiful and we love your work Amen You are his workmanship created together in Christ Jesus under the good works that God has before ordained that you should walk in them God has a plan for your life this week God is working in you God wants to work through you as you yield yourself your lives to God you'll begin to discover that which God intended and purposed for you to do for his glory but you can only discover it by yielding to him as a potter works with the clay and as he begins his work with the clay in his mind he has a vessel that he intends to make out of that lump of clay to take that shapeless bit of mud and to carefully work with it until he forms a vessel that he has in his mind to form from this bit of clay so God takes your life as a bit of clay and has in his mind a vessel that he wishes to form in order that it might perform a specific work or function God knows exactly what function he wants you to fulfill within the body now that clay has really no choice of its destiny nor does it have necessarily any knowledge of its destiny until as the potter begins to form it it can begin to understand what its destiny is going to be as you begin to look at the shape that things begin to take and begin to realize God is preparing me for this or God is preparing me for that and I begin to understand what God is preparing me for as I see the thing take form and take shape but the only way I can really discover what God has in mind for me is to remain completely yielded to his touch the moment I resist and stiffen the work will be marred in the hands of the potter and many times he has to start all over again take that piece of clay here we go again back to zero you know hope I listen this time the wheel starts turning oh Lord what are you doing now I don't know I like that you know point how many times I was back to zero just a blob again poof but in time we learn that the potter knows best just to yield our lives to the touch of God to let God work in us that we might do the work that he's planned for us so God bless you as he works in your life this week making of you an instrument that he might use to bring glory to his name

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