

The Divine Poet

Ephesians 2:10

Even as a child, I was charmed by books. There was one book which contained miscellaneous stories and short poems, and I turned to it again and again. One of the poems which grabbed my attention early on was written by English poet, Christina Georgina Rossetti:

*Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you.
But when the leaves hang trembling,
The wind is passing through.
Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I.
But when the trees bow down their heads,
The wind is passing by.*

That may have been the beginning of my fascination with words, and how they can be grouped and shaped into thoughts and ideas. As I grew older there were other poems that grabbed my imagination in one way or another. When I became a follower of Christ and began attending worship services, I was delighted to discover that the hymnbook was full of poetry. At the time I wasn't sure what all the strange markings on the pages were which surrounded those words. But I was captivated by the poetry I saw there.

Here is one of them:

*O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!
Rolling as a mighty ocean
In its fullness over me!
Underneath me, all around me,
Is the current of Thy love;
Leading onward, leading homeward
To my glorious rest above!
--S. Trevor Francis*

And another:

*How tedious and tasteless the hours,
When Jesus no longer I see!*

*Sweet prospects, sweet birds and sweet flow'rs
Have all lost their sweetness to me.
The mid-summer sun shines but dim;
The fields strive in vain to look gay;
But when I am happy in Him,
December's as pleasant as May.
--John Newton*

Some poems I've run across over the years are humorous:

*I dreamed that death came the other night
And Heaven's gate swung wide.
With kindly grace an angel came and welcomed me inside.
Well, there to my astonishment stood folk I'd known on earth,
Some I had judged and called unfit, and some of little worth.
Indignant words rose to my lips but never were set free,
For every face showed stunned surprise—
No one expected me!*

Or

*One day as I sat musing
Alone and melancholy and without a friend,
There came a voice from out of the gloom,
Saying, "Cheer up! Things might be worse."
So I cheered up,
And sure enough—things got worse.*

Some are very simple, such as this one:

*Lord, fill my mouth with worthwhile stuff,
And bid me stop when I've said enough!*

What does this have to do with Ephesians? Here in Ephesians 2:10 Paul tells us that we are "*God's workmanship*," and he used a word from which is derived our English word "poem." But the word means much more than that. Outside of the Bible, it was used to refer to any work of art, or even a masterpiece. It could be a song, or a statue, or a painting. We could take any aspect of this word today and apply it to our lives in a meaningful way, but let's choose just one. Let's stick with the idea of each of us being a poem that God has written. He is the Divine Poet.

To get a fuller understanding of God's role as the Divine Poet, let's look at the only other place where this word translated "workmanship" is used in the New

Testament. It's found in Romans 1:20—*“For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from **what has been made**, so that men are without excuse.”*

In Romans 1:20 we see God at work in creation, designing and creating the entire world and universe just....*so*....with every detail designed with such precision that it all works together. Is there any doubt in our minds that God created a masterpiece when He spoke the universe into existence?

So now pair that verse with Ephesians 2:10 and here is the picture that develops for us. Creation was an act of God; the new creation in Christ is also an act of God. Creation is beautiful; the new creation in Christ is even more so. And if we can look at creation around us and know that God designed it with great love and care, then we can also know that the Divine Poet has designed our lives with great care and detail. He has worked to create in our lives beauty and form.

Creation is a masterpiece, a unique, precise work of God; in the new creation in Christ we have become works of art, God's workmanship, unique, one-of-a-kind masterpieces. Yes, *you* are a masterpiece of divine poetry!

A little boy was full of energy one Sunday morning in Sunday School; his poor teacher was frazzled and very quickly losing patience. Finally the teacher asked him, “Why do you act like that? Don't you know Who made you?” The little boy hardly missed a beat, and said, “God did, but He ain't through with me yet!”

And right now, your Heavenly Father, Who loves you more than you can possibly imagine, is designing your life in an ongoing process, completing the work He has begun in you. You see, He took six days to create the universe out of nothing, but with us He takes our entire lifetimes to shape us and mold us into something beautiful and glorious. That's how much He loves us—that He would take that long to get us just right!

This might be a truth that gives us warm and fuzzy feelings, but how does it make any difference? What does this tell us?

1 Our lives have purpose.

A poem may not have a moral or a lesson to it, but it always has purpose. Behind every poem there is some idea or thought burning in the heart of the poet, shouting for expression. In the same way, through Jesus Christ, we

who know the Name of Jesus have purpose. We don't just drift along aimlessly and without direction. Sometimes we are slow to understand the purpose and direction, but it is there just the same, pervading and guiding and influencing.

The word “workmanship” refers to a product ready to be used. If we believe what the Bible says, that we are God's workmanship, then we must also understand that we have been created by Him for a purpose. Even if you don't know what that purpose is *exactly*, the teaching of Scripture is that God has given each of us a reason for our existence.

Perhaps you've never considered yourself to be a poem composed by God, and today you're trying to figure out what your purpose in life is. You may have arrived on this earth a long, long time ago, and so far, you've just been drifting along, trying to figure it out on your own. Today the Good News is for you—this is not something you have to figure out. You do not have to worry if your life has a purpose or not. The plain and clear teaching of Scripture is that it absolutely does!

I'm not going to stand here and pretend that I know all of what your purpose is, but I can tell you some of it. Are you ready? It's right here in 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.”* Take a closer look at that verse. Remember that last week we opened up vv. 8-9, and we pointed out that not one of us can do a single thing to earn our salvation or entrance into Heaven. Our good works aren't good enough. We are not saved because of our good works.

But verse ten tells us that we are saved ***in order*** to do good things. Think of it this way: God's creation proclaims His goodness and power. Psalm 19:1 reads, *“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”* But God's redemption of us brings Him glory in a much grander way. Matthew 5:16 reads, *“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

So the bottom line is that I cannot do good things in order to be saved, but once I am saved, the good things I do grow out of my relationship with, my position in, Jesus Christ. Or put another way: “We do not work to try to gain Heaven—we work because we are on the way to Heaven.” The purpose God has given me is intricately designed, and I learn more and more of it as time goes by, but it certainly includes doing good things.

2 Our lives have order

The critic of poetry calls this “rhythm.” The way the various words are linked together and bounce off one another is one of the major distinctions of a poem. The rhythm of a poem may be either metered or free verse, depending on the style the poet chooses to use in writing his poem.

All of creation has rhythm. Think of the colors in the autumn—every autumn, followed by the falling of the leaves. Think of the precision of our universe, and even of our own planet as it moves around the sun once a year. There is rhythm in the waves coming to shore, in youth and age, birth and death, sunrise and sunset. It is clear that the universe was not thrown together by chance.

If that is true of planets and stars and solar systems, then it is certainly true of those for whom Christ died! Sometimes, though, it appears that our lives are *out* of order, that there is definitely no order to our lives at all. This is especially true when our schedules are so filled and hectic that we exhaust ourselves trying to please everyone else. Or when, in spite of our best efforts, everything seems to go wrong. I identify very well with the man in the old Dunkin’ Donuts commercial, where he gets up very early in the morning, saying, “Time to make the donuts.” He barely gets home before it is “time to make the donuts” again. At the end of the commercial, as he is leaving to go make the donuts yet again, he meets himself coming in the door. The one who just got out of bed says, “Time to make the donuts,” while the one coming in the door says, “I *made* the donuts.”

Have you ever felt like that? Life meets you at the door and hands you yet another disappointment or setback or trouble. Yet even through the tough, hurried times in our lives, those of us who follow the Lord Jesus Christ can know a peace and an order to life which gives us strength and courage. Even when things seem out of control, and they are not going the way we think they should, we can know deep inside of us with a knowledge born out of trust, that God has designed and is ordering our lives according to His great purpose and rhythm for us.

Look again at verse ten. We have been redeemed by Christ to do good works, but what’s the rest of the verse? “...*which God prepared in advance for us to do.*” This was part of God’s eternal purpose, not an afterthought, that those who are redeemed from sin and death will be fitting into God’s purpose for us, that of doing good—not in order to *be* saved, but because we *are* saved.

Just think of it! You and I are not accidents! If we truly believe that, then we must also believe that God, the Master Designer, the Divine Poet, has with great love and care designed our lives and the events of our lives. That person sitting next to you is a Masterpiece of God. That individual walking down the street has a purpose, even if they haven't discovered it yet.

Whoever you are, wherever you've been, whatever you've done—you have a purpose, and your life has an order that has been designed with great precision. It doesn't matter what you look like. Your height is not a factor. Your age is not important. Your skin color is irrelevant.

Begin today to see yourself the way God sees you, and stop listening to others' opinions of you—or even your own opinion of yourself. Out of the billions of people who have lived on this planet, you are one-of-a-kind, a magnificently beautiful work of art.

What will you do with this? How will you respond to this revelation that if you are in Christ, God considers you His workmanship, His creation, His masterpiece, His poem? You can move out and away from the bondage that has held you back, once you understand the worth and value God Himself places on you.