

# Saved By Grace XII – Saved To Good Works

**Introduction** – The five points are not the end all of Reformed Theology. They are not even central. Central to the work of salvation is the exhaustive sovereignty of God. We have argued that God is absolutely sovereign in the work of salvation, from beginning to end. But this is true because God is absolutely sovereign over all of His creation over all time. This has tremendous implications for how you individually think about what you will be doing tomorrow morning, and where the Lord is leading the corporate church, the descendants of the second Adam, over the course of history.

**Saved to Good Works** (Eph 2:10) – From death, brought to life, Paul argues this is all the work of God in His free grace through faith. God is active, we are responding. We are not saved by any good works. But, as James argues, faith without works is dead. We are saved to good works.

**God, the Workman** – God was active in our salvation. He did not wait for us to apply for a new heart. Neither does He wait passively for our application to sanctification. He is at work in us.

**Created in Christ** – This harkens back to the original creation (and we are the new creation). Out of nothing, God spoke the creation into existence. Then He shaped form into that which was formless and void, separating, identifying, and blessing. In Christ Jesus we are brought to life out of nothing and then God shapes us and places us into our vocations, our works, and blesses us.

**Prepared Beforehand** – Here we see the exhaustive sovereignty of God again at work. Ordained before we have done anything are the works that God has for us. He is not passively waiting for our service. He is actively leading us in the works He prepared.

**“Good” Works** – Certainly these refer to the fruit of the Spirit manifest in our lives. Certainly these refer to our witness of Christ to the lost and our works of charity and mercy to others. But God charged the moon to rule the night and called this work “good”. Good works are much broader than we often think.

**Understanding our Vocation(s) in Christ** – We have all been created in Christ to particular works that He has for us. Therefore, all of that work is sacred and good.

**Priests and Kings** (1 Pet 2:9-10, Rev 5:10) – As God’s covenant people, called out of darkness, we all serve as priests, proclaiming His excellencies in our words and deeds, and as kings, serving Him as vice-regents upon this earth, bringing the dominion of Christ to bear (law, truth, peace) and tending the new garden (beauty, order).

**“Holy” Work** – If God has called you to the offices and jobs and duties you find yourself doing (and He has), then it is all sacred work. You are not to work ‘for the weekend’ but for the Lord (Col 3:23-24). William Tyndale said something to the effect that ‘in God’s eyes, there is no difference between washing dishes and preaching the gospel’. As an employee, your time is therefore rendered to your employer as unto the Lord. As a shop-owner, your excellent work, your faithful word, your honest work, are more important than whether you have a ‘fish’ on your business card.

**Multiple Callings** – Vocations are not limited to the thing that brings a paycheck, but it does include that. There are familial, civil, and ecclesiastical vocations in our lives. And God encourages those who do not ‘feel called’ in their work to remain faithful serving Him until such time as God releases them to another calling (1 Cor 7:21-22).

**The Work of Christian Culture** – We have so little to offer the world today because we have so little culture. But if we are the new creation, if we are the kingdom of heaven that is to spread from a mustard seed to become the largest of the trees in the garden, if we are the sons and daughters of the second Adam, then we are to cultivate something that is much more than a truncated ‘seven steps to Christian faith’. And we can only do so by faith if we believe in the exhaustive sovereignty of God; we can only do so consistently if we are Calvinists.

**Ministers of Mercy** (Matt 5:7) – Mercy is to be extended as we seek to bring Light to the lost (1 Cor 2:2) and care to the downtrodden (Luke 10:29-37). It is our protection from becoming preoccupied with religious trifles (Matt 23:23-24) because it is the heart of true religion (James 1:27). There are no unplanned meetings in the providence of God.

**Not a Harmless Delusion** (Matt 28:18-20) – God (and therefore His church) is not interested in a smattering remnant. As His Son rules at His right hand, He is going to bring all nations to Himself through the faithful work of His church. Too often, we act as though we would rather crawl off into our little Christian ghettos rather than go and live in the world. But this is because we have been taught that in the end, Jesus will not have saved the world. But that is not the teaching of scripture (John 3:17).

**Absolute Truth** (2 Cor 10:4-6) – We are allowed to be tenderhearted towards those who do not know God. We may even tolerate their sins. But we must never compromise our mission of discipleship and our commitment to the Truth. And we must remember that we do not believe that Truth is simply a set of abstract propositions. Truth is the second Person of the Trinity. Truth is our Lord to whom we submit, worship, and follow. Science, law, ethics, medicine, education, and every other discipline of life must therefore be called upon to submit to the Lord Jesus, who is Truth.

**Guardians of Beauty** (2 Chron 3:6, Phil 4:8) – Why bother with things beautiful? Because God apparently cares. He is to be worshipped in the beauty of holiness and He wants us to know what that is in the area of the arts and aesthetics. Our minds are to be dwelling upon such beauty and our hands given to creating ‘in His image’.

*Dave Hatcher, October 6, 2002*