



PEACE BY *piece* SERIES

WEEK ONE: PROBLEM

Grace, Good Fruit & Glory

Jesus, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. ~Titus 2:14

We often get this turned around in our heads. The Bible says, we are forgiven and accepted by God, not because we have already done good works, but to make us able and passionate to do them. Doing good works is not a prerequisite of our acceptance by God, it is the overflow, the fruit of God's love and acceptance. Jesus died to purify for himself a people passionate to do good works.

This is grace. We can't buy our way into the Kingdom with our works. It is a free gift. We can only receive it by faith. This is why the Bible says, "By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Jesus suffered and died so that good works would be the fruit, not the cause, of our acceptance.

We are created in Christ Jesus FOR good works, not by good works (Ephesians 2:10). Jesus provides not the mere ability to do them, but passion to do them. That's why the Bible uses the word "zealous." Jesus died to make us "zealous for good works." Zeal means passion. Jesus didn't die to make good works merely possible or to produce half-hearted attempts. He died to produce in us a passion for doing good deeds. The life of a follower of Jesus is not about the mere avoidance of evil, but the pursuit of good.

Jesus paid the infinite price in part to produce our passion for good deeds. "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). God's glory is shown by the good deeds of followers of Christ. Jesus suffered and died for that glory.

When we receive God's forgiveness and acceptance we are freed from fear, pride and greed, we are filled with love, so that, we love others the way we have been loved. When we love others like Jesus, our behavior becomes counter-cultural to self-focus and self-preservation. This is how we glorify God, through our life-transformation.

"Good works," simply put, is helping people in need, especially those who possess the least and suffer the most. The Bible says, "Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need" (Titus 3:14).

Jesus died to make us this kind of people – free from the bondage of sin, passionate to help the poor and the suffering. It's the life we were made for, whatever it costs us in this world. We receive grace, people in need receive help, and God gets glory.

Prayer

Today, thank Jesus for intentionally coming to suffer and die, so that you could receive grace. Pray the grace you have received would lead you, influence you and change you to be more like Him and continue to have a profound affect upon your heart. Ask God to reveal ways for you to produce good fruit, operating in your God-given identity and purpose to bring Him glory.

