**Steps: Journey with Jesus – Why Teams? [Ephesians 2:10]** – 35 minutes (42.5 allowed)

For Sunday, 5/7/17:

Text: Ephesians 2:10

Sermon Title: Why Teams? (Part 3 of the Steps Series)

Medimemo: Ephesians 2:10

Goal: Persuasion – Move hearers to a next step involving serving with a Team; affirm those who have…

Main Point: Use your God-given design to worship God while serving others through the community of Team

OUTLINE:

Worship Song & Transition (1 Minute)

1. “*Lord, I Need You*”
2. Children to Redemption Kids – have Worship Leader give instructions

Introduction (4.5 Minutes)

1. Scripture – Ephesians 2:10 (repeated several times dramatically and poignantly)
2. Context of This Message – Ephesians 2 and Steps: Journey with Jesus series

Main Body (30 Minutes)

1. Encouragement #1 – Know Scriptural Foundations for Serving (10 min)
2. Encouragement #2 – Consider Reasons for Serving Together in TEAMS (10 min)
3. Encouragement #3 – Take a “Next Step” towards Teams at RHC - (10 min)

Conclusion (5 Minutes)

1. Final Exhortations
2. Invitation to Respond

Prayer & Transition (2 Minutes)

1. Lead to Song of Response “All Creatures of our God and King”

NEXT (2 Minutes)

1. Lord’s Supper, then Offering
2. Encouragements & Benediction - Hebrews 13:20-21 (1.15 Minutes)

Options:

Attach a “Connect Card - Teams” to the Worship Guide

SignUp Sheets in the Rear?

**Steps: Journey with Jesus – Why Teams? [Ephesians 2:10]** – 35 minutes

###### TRANSITION & INTRODUCTION – 4.5 minutes

Atypical Transition: (Executed by Worship Leader):

1. Children are dismissed to the care of our Redemption Kids team.

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Scripture Recitation: (Ephesians 2:10):

1. *For we are His worksmanship,*

*Created in Christ Jesus for good works,*

*Which God prepared beforehand,*

*That we should walk in them…*

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[PAUSE]

Greeting & Welcome:

1. Good morning! My name is John Reddy. It’s my privilege to serve as one of the Pastors here at Redemption Hill Church. As you know, we’re in the middle of our series - *Steps: Journey with Jesus*
2. And… honestly, there is a part of me that believes that Paul’s words from his letter to the church at Ephesus is so clear that I could consider stopping right now, dismissing everyone in attendance, and letting us all apply this Word immediately.
3. But… If you’ll indulge me, I think that over the next 30 minutes, we may be able to tease a few insights on Why Teams?
4. *For we are His worksmanship,*

*Created in Christ Jesus for good works,*

*Which God prepared beforehand,*

*That we should walk in them…*

Context:

1. I invite you to open up your Bibles to the second chapter of Paul’s letter to the Church at Ephesus – Ephesians 2.

[Pause]

1. Ephesians 2:1-10 is a single sentence in the original Greek. The overarching theme is that God lavishes his grace on Christians through his saving initiative.
   1. We are born hopeless and helpless as sons and daughters of Adam & Eve.
   2. We live our lives as “The Walking Dead”… spiritual zombies that have no inclination or responsiveness to love and obedience to God, Our Creator.
   3. Rather, our energy and passions are in alignment with serving ourselves and all who oppose God’s holy nature.
   4. Therefore, we rightly should be considered “lost” – distant and alienated from God.
   5. But… According to the Apostle Paul, our merciful Father provides hope… where we can be made “alive in Christ”… changed as the power of His Spirit moves us to saving faith… as we humbly admit our sin and distance from God, look to the sacrifice of Christ made on our behalf, and confess Him as the Lord, the Master, the Savior of our lives… then we can rightly apply today’s Scripture – Ephesians 2:10
2. Paul concludes this long Greek sentence…
   1. This earth-shattering truth of His marvelous grace…
   2. His free gift of unmerited favor… His rich mercy towards us…
      1. *For we are His worksmanship,*

*Created in Christ Jesus for good works,*

*Which God prepared beforehand,*

*That we should walk in them…*

1. I think that if we take a closer look at this verse or focus our attention just a little… that it will prove fruitful as we consider the larger question of “Why Teams?” in our Steps: Journey with Jesus series.

Prayer of Transition:

1. Now, let’s bow our heads for a moment before we start.
2. Would you simply repeat after me while I pray?
   1. *“Heavenly Father… Speak to our hearts… and change our lives”. Amen.”*

**MAIN BODY – Encouragement #1: Know Scriptural Foundations for Serving (10m):**

***For we are His worksmanship,***

1. Workmanship… not a term that we hear used commonly today in our world of mass produced products and common items.[[1]](#footnote-1)
2. It could have been just as easily translated “creation”.
3. It conveys the idea of craftsmanship and the design of the Originator or Creator.
   1. Think of a unique water jar crafted on a Potter’s wheel as opposed to a mass-produced Terra Cotta pot.
   2. Or the Literary skill of a writer who beautifully composes poetry.
4. The Scripture’s reference to “workmanship” should make us think of “Work of Art” or “Handiwork” or “Masterpiece”.
5. This term places the emphasis on God’s skill and intelligent design in actually “making us”.
6. In Romans 1, Paul uses this term to refer to God’s creative energy in crafting all of nature.
7. And, here he makes sure that we understand that we are crafted with that same wonderment and amazing beauty. For we are of His making. He was personally attentive.
8. In fact, Paul uses a writing technique in the Greek to make sure that the reader is absolutely convinced that the workmanship that is being discussed comes with God’s personal attentiveness.
9. “His workmanship” is doubly emphasized; almost shouted, underlined, or printed in caps.
10. This description of God’s initiation in crafting each one of us individually and masterfully comes after a long list of rich mercies recorded previously in Ephesians chapter 2, and is another illustration or evidence of His grace to us.
11. Question: In a world that elevates and celebrates self-empowerment and yet suffers from record levels of low self-esteem, how should knowing that you are God’s “workmanship” affect the way that you feel about yourself? **[Pause]**
12. My prayer for us is that we would recognize that we are the personal extension of God’s creative energy… a Masterpiece… His handiwork… and that it might properly fill us will a sense of supreme value given the value that the Creator-of-the-Universe has placed upon us.

***Created in Christ Jesus for good works,***

1. For the Christian, not only has God created you physically but… he has re-created you spiritually…
2. “*Just as the creation of heaven and earth (Gen 1:1) was accomplished by God apart from human intervention, Paul asserts that all who are in Christ are God’s creation*” – Arnold
3. We ourselves are a “work” of His hand, miraculously made new by Our Heavenly Father again, as we confess Jesus as Lord, and the Holy Spirit saves us from the corruption now found in our broken world.
4. Our renewal or restoration or re-creation, Paul reminds us is once again due to God’s grace and unmerited favor, not to ourselves and our own efforts. Our new creation is “in Christ” and we are now “united with Him” in a manner that could have never taken place left to our own efforts.
5. And, as a result, there is no room for us to boast in its accomplishment any more than there is room to boast about our original physical creation. We are simply the recipients of God’s best favor lavishly demonstrated to our benefit.
6. And because all followers of Jesus are united “in Christ”; the church – is created “in Christ” and therefore our very existence depends upon this vital union with Him and we become mutually interdependent upon one another.
7. And this mystical but very real union is created with a view, not from good works, but to good works.
8. Pure, selfless, true good work cannot be performed until we are renewed by the Spirit of God for even our best and most noble attempts at good works - before being united “in Christ” - have some form of self-interest at the core of our motivations.
9. We have to be re-fashioned by God before we can do anything truly right. Once re-fashioned, however, we can then begin to bear good fruit through good works.
10. In writing to Titus, the Apostle Paul put it like this:
    1. ***11****For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,****12****training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,****13****waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,****14****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 2:11-14]
11. One of the purposes of our new creation is to produce good works.
12. They are a necessary and natural outgrowth of our salvation found “in Christ”.
13. The Scriptures are full of insight on what these good works should be like.
    1. Galatians 5:22-24 reveals the character of those good works: love and patience and kindness and goodness to name just a few.
    2. 1 Thessalonians 1:3 reminds us that they are to be “work(s) of faith, labors of love, + steadfast in hope”.
    3. Our good works are directed towards God himself, those within the church, and all who are made in the image of God.
    4. They are to meet a wide range of needs of others: spiritual and emotional and social and physical…
14. Filled with His Spirit, as we perform good works in attitude and deed, we display the gospel (the good news) found “in Christ” and God, Our Creator, receives the glory that He so richly deserves.
15. Question: In a world that oftentimes seems without purpose, how should knowing that God created and then re-created you as an agent of good works affect the way that you perceive your purpose in living? **[Pause]**
16. My prayer for us is that we would seize the lifestyle of good works and service to others so that others that God loves would be loved through us and His name would receive the honor and glory that He rightly deserves for that is one of our chief purposes in life.

***Which God prepared beforehand***

1. This communicates the sense that in eternity-past, prior to Creation, God was making ready His purposes for our “good works”.
2. This is not to say that he programmed us like robots with fully predetermined observation, action, and response. Rather, the character and direction of the works are made ready by God, as the necessary outcome of faith.
3. He prepared:
   * 1. The **nature** of particular good works…
     2. The providential **opportunities** for the good works that we would encounter…
     3. The **attraction** that we might feel towards them as we are re-created “in Christ”.
     4. Our **design and capacity** for performing them…
     5. And, within that design and capacity, the creative **ways** that we would choose to actually accomplish them consistent with His sovereign will.
4. Before He created us in Christ by our conversion, He had destined these good works and made them ready for us in His purpose and decree.
5. And, the means for successfully pursuing those good works were made established also – the long-suffering love of the Father, the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus, and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.
6. For even Jesus himself testified about the purposefulness from eternity-past that is at the heart of the Father’s will and pleasure when He said in John 5:
   1. *“I can do nothing on my own… For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.”* [John 5:30, 36b]
7. As the one who created time itself, from eternity past, envisioned the trajectories of His creations and set into motion the momentum to see His sovereign will accomplished.
8. Question: In a world that oftentimes seems unstable, how should knowing that God has a sovereign will and plan that stretches back as far as time itself cause you to experience greater confidence in the pursuit of godly good works in your life? **[Pause]**
9. My prayer for us is that we would deeply appreciate God’s preparation of all that is necessary to for us to accomplish good works consistent with His good will and pleasure.

***That we should walk in them…***

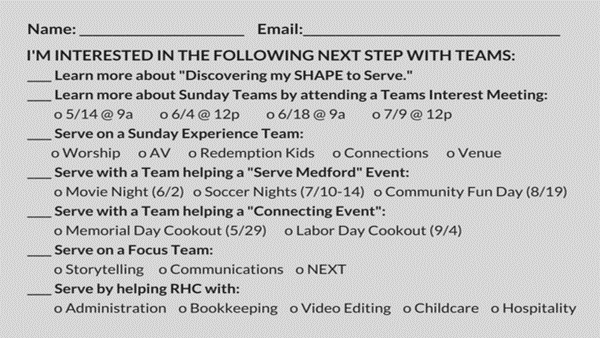
1. *“In eternity past, God not only chose a people to be in a relationship with himself, but he marked out a path for them to walk. This is a path of good works, which would characterize their lives throughout their Christian journey and would bring glory to God.”* Arnold.
2. In other words, God pre-arranged a sphere of moral action for us to walk in. God’s purpose in the place which He gave to good works in His decree was that they should actually and habitually be done by us. His final object was to make good works the very element of our life, the domain in which our action should move.
3. *“God has made it possible, and indeed expects us, to live a virtuous life… full of attitudes consistent with his holy and righteous character… a lifestyle of good works that demonstrate love to others – directly and indirectly – in the same way that He has loved us.”*
4. And as a result, consistent with His design of us, His re-creation of us, and His preparation of us, we have to decide if we will be faithful and pursue a pathway of good works.
5. One Commentary put it like this: *“He hath purified the fountain, that the streams may be pure; hath made the tree good, that the fruit may be good; hath made us new creatures, that we may live new lives…”* [Benson’s Commentary]… So, will you live “new lives”?
6. In this verse, Paul uses the term “walk” to describe those series of decisions that each follow of Christ must make each day. This common New Testament term points to the habitual tenor of life conducted within an atmosphere of good works. It captures the truth that the duties as well as the sufferings of the followers of Christ find their deepest peace and truest wisdom when we simply choice to “do the next right thing” in the daily pathway of good works before us.
7. And… this might be tough for us to hear… our decisions to “do the next right thing” is based on the self-sacrificial gift of God. He expects His people to give, and to love, and do good deeds while expecting nothing in return – for that is His nature.
8. He will not force himself upon us. Rather… *“The Spirit of God who produces all good works and attitudes (Gal 5:22-25), does not take control over man in such a fashion that men are manipulated like puppets on strings, but he activates man and makes him a responsive partner of God’s covenant”.* [Markus Barth]… So, we have to decide:
9. Question: In a world that often seeks after its own self-satisfaction, will you be responsive to the commands, promptings, and opportunities for good works that God has made available to you? **[Pause]**
10. My prayer for us is that we would choose to act when God grants opportunities for good works as part of our daily walk with Him.

**MAIN BODY – Encouragement #2: Consider Reasons for Serving Together in Teams (10m):**

1. You may now be convinced that serving is an integral part of the Christian life.
2. However, you may still be wondering Why Teams?
3. SO: Why do “Teams” (together)?
   1. The biblical pattern of working together (teams in the Bible – examples)
      1. How about the Trinity? Father – Son – Holy Spirit…
         1. Genesis 1 – “Let us make man in our image?” –
         2. You could say that even Jesus had a “Team”.
         3. In fact, the only time He was ever truly alone was for a split second on the cross at Calvary at the moment of death, when God the Father “looked away”.
      2. Adam/Eve –
         1. Genesis 2:18 - “It is not good that man should be alone” – We have a social or interdependent nature (in the image of God).
      3. Moses –
         1. administering Israel – Exodus 18:14 – “Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?”
      4. Nehemiah –
         1. Nehemiah 2:17 – “Come let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision”
      5. The 12 Apostles of Jesus – See Matthew 10:2
      6. 72 Disciples sent out - 2x2 – See Luke 10:1
      7. Barnabas & Saul – 1st Missionary Trip – Sent by church at Antioch - Acts 13
      8. Apostle Paul –
         1. Instructs Corinth to serve as a Team because they are one body with many different members – it is the nature of the Church - 1 Corinthians 12
      9. Heaven – Worship & Serve Together – Revelation 4-5
   2. The nature of some activities is simply best suited for doing together, not alone.
      1. Some tasks are simply too big for one person to tackle alone.
         1. Time required; scope of the project
      2. Some work is too complex for one person to figure out by themselves.
         1. A set of gifts is needed; seldom held by one person
      3. Fun and joy can often become contagious in a group or shared experience.
   3. You will benefit personally from the dynamics of “community” while serving together
      1. You will discover the many benefits of community found in “Connect with a Group”
      2. You might observe more seasoned team members as they model maturity.
      3. You may break down social barriers - esp in a multi-generational, multi-ethnic team.
      4. You will be able to have others observe and affirm you as you discover your SHAPE
      5. You will receive support in areas that are not personal strengths.
      6. You can receive affirmation and celebration as others see your efforts and progress.
   4. You will benefit others through the dynamics of “community” while serving together.
      1. Take the list above and now make you the person that is providing, not receiving!
   5. Our community will see the witness of a “new community” as we serve together.
      1. Consider the one-ness that Jesus spoke of in “His High Priestly Prayer” (Jn 17:20-23)
         1. ***20****“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,****21****that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.****22****The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,****23****I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.*
      2. We want to be the Church!
      3. As RHC becomes better as a gathered community, your Team efforts will help us make disciples who make disciples.
4. Lingering Objections to Teams:
   1. *Can’t I simply do good works by myself? Is serving with a team the only way to serve?*
   2. *After all, my schedule is too unpredictable.*
   3. *I'm not used to getting up that early on a Sunday morning.*
   4. *I'm work or travel on a lot of weekends.*
   5. *Truthfully, I just want to rest on Sundays.*
   6. *I have a huge exam on Monday (I need all the extra time I can get to study on a Sunday).*
   7. *Joining a Team is too big of a commitment for me right now.*
   8. *I already have 2 jobs and I don't want a 3rd.*
   9. *I don't want to give up extra time during the week to prep for Sunday.*
   10. *I don't have enough time to eat before serving.*
   11. *How can I invite friends to join me on Sunday when I’m serving?*
   12. *I don’t want to miss the service.*
   13. *I need childcare while I serve.*
   14. *I'm too introverted to work alongside people I don't know.*
   15. *I am physically disabled.*
   16. *I'm too old and can't keep up.*
   17. *Serving at a church isn't something I think about.*
   18. *I don't know what I'm good at doing.*
   19. *I don't think I'm very reliable.*
   20. *I don't see how it's valuable for me to participate in.*
   21. *I've observed some Team disorganization and I don't want to be a part of that dysfunction.*
   22. *The Teams seem like they're all set - why do they need me?*
   23. *If I let the RHC leadership know about my new idea to serve, I'm afraid I'll be held responsible for it.* [It’s what I call the “Black Hole of Volunteerism”]
5. Yes, yes, yes…. I hear the range of your concerns… some are valid; and, honestly – in the light of our Scriptural teaching – a little weak…
6. Nevertheless, even in the face of many possible hesitations, there still remains some simple “next steps” that can be taken towards Serving with a Team at RHC.

**MAIN BODY – Encouragement #3: Take a “Next Step” toward Teams at RHC (10m):**

1. My third encouragement is to take a “Next Step” as you move to SERVE with a Team.
2. In order to help you think about some possible “Next Steps”, we’ve provided you with a special Connect Card for Teams. [Instruction: Take and hold them up]
3. Let’s consider some of the many possibilities…
4. Types of Teams at RHC

I’M INTERESTED IN THE FOLLOWING NEXT STEPS WITH TEAMS:

1. Learn more about “*Discovering My SHAPE to Serve*” by:
   1. Being supplied with recommended resources for me to read, hear, or view.
   2. Meeting with an RHC Pastor/Leader for an exploratory conversation.
      1. Note: I’ve got two such appointments scheduled for this week.
   3. Scheduling a Video-Call for a *SHAPE Assessment* and match my unique design to service.
   4. We would help you think about your Spiritual Gifts, Heart (Passion), Abilities (Skills), Personality, and Experiences – in other words, your S.H.A.P.E. and how it best fits into opportunities through RHC.
   5. And, as you discover your SHAPE, and commit your design to service, you will be fulfilling Romans 12:1-2 that encourages us to surrender our bodies as living sacrifices as an act of worship.
2. Learn more about Sunday SERVE Teams by attending a Team Interest Meeting on:
   1. 05/14 @9am 06/04 @12pm 06/18 @9am 07/09 @12p
   2. During this low-pressure 30 minute meeting, you can listen to the wide range of Sunday roles available, consider one to explore, and ask questions.
   3. The goal of that meeting is to help you identify at least one possible role that you’d like to observe firsthand in a simple “shadow” experience with someone currently serving in that role.
3. Serve on a Sunday Experience Team
   1. These teams are recurrent teams serving specifically on Sunday mornings.
   2. Generally, the commitment averages one Sunday every four Sundays.
   3. Worship Team
   4. AV Team
   5. Redemption Kids Team
   6. Connections Team
   7. Venue Team
4. Serve with a Team helping a “SERVE Medford” Event.
   1. These teams are organized to provide “no strings attached” benefit to our community as a way to display and sometimes declare the gospel through acts of service.
   2. These teams are episodic teams. While we have opportunities throughout the year, your commitment can be to just one specific event or you may commit to several throughout the year.
   3. At least one time this summer.
   4. Movie Night (06/23)
   5. SoccerNights (07/10-14)
   6. Community Fun Day (08/19)
5. Serve with a Team helping a “Connecting Event”.
   1. These teams are organized to provide safe environments of hospitality that are easy for us to extend invitations to friends and family not currently at RHC. It is hoped that as folks come, they experience community and are drawn closer in relationship to our church – and, ultimately to Jesus.
   2. These teams are also episodic teams. While we have opportunities throughout the year, your commitment can be to just one specific event or you may commit to several throughout the year.
   3. At least one time this summer.
   4. Memorial Day Cookout (05/29)
   5. Labor Day Cookout (09/04)
6. Serve on a Focus Team.
   1. These teams are organized around a special task, project, or focus.
   2. How often they meet; how often they “work” can vary depending upon the focus.
   3. Storytelling Team
   4. Communication Team
   5. NEXT Team
   6. Evangelism Team
7. Serve by helping RHC with a special need.
   1. Sometimes our teams need unique skills to support their team efforts.
   2. Current needs identifying by our leadership team include:
   3. Adminstrative Help
   4. Bookkeeping
   5. Video Editing
   6. Childcare (events)
   7. Hospitality
   8. Make a suggestion!
      1. Perhaps you have an idea that we haven’t identified or discussed today.
8. My attitude today? NGNP – but I do hope that The Word convicts and the discussion is persuasive… Why? Because of the joy in service to be found together!

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS & PRAYER (5 minutes):**

1. Concluding Story:
   1. Main Point: Use your God-given design to worship God while serving others through the community of Team:
      1. *For we are His worksmanship,*

*Created in Christ Jesus for good works,*

*Which God prepared beforehand,*

*That we should walk in them…*

* + 1. Walking the pathway of a lifestyle of “good works” is often best done in the community together
    2. So, I encourage you to take a next step towards serving with a Team here at RHC
  1. You may still be unconvinced…
     1. If you’ll indulge me, let me tell you how I first become part of a Team.
        1. TEC
  2. Folks, my prayer for Teams is this….
     1. That each of us may discover our SHAPE to serve and then release it as worship. And as the aroma of sacrifice and joy in service wafts towards the nostrils of God, he smells the rich bouquet of the many varities of service available through us – His Church gathered at Redemption Hill Church.
  3. Let us Pray

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**PRAYER & TRANSITION (2 minutes):**

Prayer & Transition (2 Minutes)

1. Transition – Let’s Us Pray: *Heavenly Father, …*
2. Lead to Song of Response “*All Creatures of our God and King*”
   1. Let us stand and sing together….

NEXT (2 Minutes)

1. Lord’s Supper, then Offering
2. Encouragements
   1. Member’s Meeting – today at 12pm; MBGC Gym
   2. SERVE Interest Meeting – Next Sunday, 5/14 at 9am in the Teen Center of the MBGC
3. Benediction - Hebrews 13:20-21 (1.15 Minutes)
   1. ***20****Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant,****21****equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*
   2. Let us go and…

1. Can I show a picture of something mass produced and something quite unique and valuable? [↑](#footnote-ref-1)