

January 31

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

In 2013 a remarkable discovery was made. Deep in a Swiss bank vault, they discovered a never-before-seen painting attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. It matched a pencil drawing he had done around 1499. Of course, with every such discovery, they had to authenticate the painting because it was common during that time for students of a master to sign the master's name to their paintings. Therefore, the bank sent for experts who minutely examined the painting for the tell-tale signs of an original da Vinci. It seems that da Vinci worked in intricate patterns in his paintings. His brush strokes were extremely unique and difficult to copy. Experts could see definitive da Vinci touches, especially in the face of the lady Isabella d'Este. The pigments were the same as in other paintings as was the primer used to treat the canvas. Finally, the experts agreed that the painting was a da Vinci even though some aspects may have been added later.

Paul tells us that we will encounter "authentic" Christians and "copies" of Christians. Just as I would not be able to tell the difference between a fake da Vinci and an original, many cannot tell the difference between an "authentic" Christian and a "fake." However, Paul tells us that we are God's masterpiece, and each one of us bears specific characteristics of our Master that cannot be duplicated. He has "painted" us with His love which cannot be duplicated. That love is interwoven throughout every aspect of our lives. He has "painted" us with His grace and mercy so that we reflect those traits in any light. He has colored us with His forgiveness that leaves a very definite mark of humility and thankfulness, and those traits, though often imitated, cannot be matched. Each of God's masterpieces has touches of His joy and hope. We can see His hand in the laughter that brightens a day and in His compassion that touches hearts. Mixed into every character is the color of service. When we know the signs of the Master, we can spot His masterpieces