

The Importance of Works

Romans 2:5-11

Introduction: The subject of works causes a lot of confusion. Mostly because people don't pay attention to how the word "works" is used in the various passages where it is found. Like the confusion over the subject of belief where people will attach themselves exclusively to one given passage while refusing to accept other passages; the same thing is done with works in order to further a preconceived idea. In this lesson we will learn the importance of works in our salvation.

I. We are not saved by works (Eph. 2:8-9).

A. We are saved by grace through faith.

1. Grace saves us because it is the means by which we can obtain forgiveness (Christ's death on the cross). Grace is an unmerited favor but not an unconditional favor.

2. Through faith because it causes us to be obedient (works).

3. The idea concerning works is that we cannot earn or merit our way to salvation.

B. However, that does not mean that works are not necessary for our salvation. God expects us to perform good works (Eph. 2:10).

II. We are judged by our works (not by our faith).

A. Jesus said it (Matt. 16:27).

B. Paul taught it (Rom. 2:5-11; 14:12; 1 Cor. 3:8; 2 Cor. 5:10).

C. Peter taught it (1 Pet. 1:17).

D. This was even understood in the Old Testament (Job 34:11; Psm. 62:12; Prov. 24:12; Jer. 17:10; 32:19).

E. We will be saved through faith (Eph. 2:8) which is evident by our works (Jas. 2:18).

III. Application:

A. If works are not necessary for our salvation, then why are we being judged by them?

B. Works don't save but they are necessary for salvation. Can we be saved if we are not baptized (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38)? Baptism is a work.

C. However, the act (or work) of baptism isn't what actually saves us (1 Pet. 3:21). Through our sincerity (the good conscience toward God) our faith saves us by the work of baptism.

D. Even if we do all the righteous works that the Lord requires, we still won't enter Heaven unless faith is the reason we did all those works. Even at that, we are only saved by God's grace because sin prevents salvation (Rom. 3:21-25). In other words, we will never earn our way to Heaven!

IV. The unprofitable servant (Luke 17:7-10).

A. The unprofitable servant was unprofitable because he did only what he was expected to do. It wasn't because his works served no purpose. But notice he is being judged by his works (or lack thereof). We too are unprofitable when we **do** only what we are expected to do.

B. Since we are going to be judged by our works and only doing what we are suppose to do makes us unprofitable, what does that say about us when we do less than what we are suppose to do? "*If you love me...*" (John 14:15).

C. Our works (or lack thereof) show our faith (Jas. 2:14-26). "*Faith without works is dead*" (Jas. 2:26).

Conclusion: Therefore, we are judged by our works which shows our faith which is required for salvation (Heb. 11:6). Our faith saves us because it causes us to be obedient to the Lord. Without that obedient faith, God would not extend His grace to us; hence, it is God's grace that saves us through faith.

That should help us understand why people don't react immediately to the necessity of baptism for salvation when we tell them (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). They need faith. Without faith, people won't do the works which is necessary to the saving of their souls.