

WORKS

Eph.2:8-10 - For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Salvation is a free gift from God. There is nothing anyone can do to earn it. If anyone could earn salvation then Jesus did not need to come here and lay His life down and be crucified for our sins. If it could be earned then it would make what Jesus did of no consequence. And if there were things we could do that would be counted sufficient to earn salvation, then people would have bragging rights. And we just read, that is not possible. No human effort can earn salvation, not even by keeping God's law of The Old Testament. **(Romans 3:28)**

That same passage said no one could "work" to earn salvation but then it continues and says that we were created in Christ for good "works." God has a specific plan, **(Jeremiah 29:11)** and purpose for each one of us which He planned from the beginning and that knowledge takes us to predestination. Predestination because God knew from the beginning who would come to Him and who will not.

There are different kind of works such as works of the law. Works of the Law refer to the specific laws and commandments given in the Old Testament, such as dietary restrictions and the requirement of circumcision. There are people who believe they can be saved by works of the law. The Bible tells us no one can be saved by keeping the law. **(Galations 2:16, 3:11, Eph.2:8-9)** Jesus fulfilled the law, faith in Christ is the new Covenant.

There are works of the flesh which are sinful and opposed to God's will.

Good works are actions that are considered morally good and align with God's Word, such as acts of compassion, **(James 2:13)** charity and kindness. Some examples are: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and showing love to one's neighbor. **(Matt.25:31-46)**

When we are saved, we are a new creation, the old sinful man is dead. **(Romans 6:6-7, 2 Cor.5:17)** One purpose of this new creation is to do good works. The cultural context of the early church involved a strong emphasis on community and service, reflecting Jesus' teachings in the Gospels about loving one's neighbor and serving others. These good works are not the means of salvation but the evidence of it. Once you are saved and The Holy Spirit has come into your life, He begins to teach you and help you grow in the faith and He helps to guide you into what God has for you to do. He helps you to do the good works God created for you to do.

Works generally refers to outward actions, deeds or behaviors that reflect a person's faith and relationship with God. This consists of actions done in accordance with God's Word and actions that demonstrate love and service to others. Our good works are an evidence of a transformed life. Obedience to God's Word is part of our good works. God blesses obedience.

Good works are not occasional acts but a continuous lifestyle. This aligns with the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, where He calls His followers to be the light of the world, consistently reflecting God's character. The historical context of the early church involved living out one's faith in a way that was countercultural, often facing persecution. This lifestyle of good works serves as a testimony to the transformative power of the Gospel.

Scripture says that anyone who calls on the name of The Lord shall be saved. **(Romans 10:13)** This is true as long as it is sincerely from the heart. Truly sorry about your sin against God and really believes Jesus left heaven and came to the earth in the flesh and was crucified buried and rose again and is alive forevermore seated at God's right hand. That He shed His blood for their sins. When you believe that then faith is present.

This Scripture does not give Christians a pass from doing good works. It does give grace to the unbeliever who sincerely cries out on their death bed to be saved. They won't have a chance to do good works.

There are people in this world who do good deeds, who do good things but that doesn't mean they are Christians. Before we were saved, Scott used to say, well

I'm a good person. We both thought like that. We were like, well we aren't hurting anybody and we don't break the law etc. What we really thought was that we were ok with God because we were good.

Mark 10:17-18 – And when He was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God.*

This is a lesson to each one of us showing us that our good deeds are as nothing to God. Scripture tells us that when we believe we are righteous in our own eyes and our own strength, that kind of righteousness is self righteousness and it is as a filthy rag to God. The real translation is that it is like a menstrual rag to Him.

(Isaiah 64:6) Jesus is saying that in our human strength, we are limited and cannot obtain to perfect goodness, only God can do that. That is why we need God's Spirit to live truly righteous lives. The final statement, there is none good but one, that is, God - seems to affirm Jesus' divinity because Jesus is God and Jesus was good, there was no sin in Him. Those that heard what Jesus said would have been able to make the connection that Jesus is God. He was also bringing glory to The Father since He was in human form at that time.

There are no good people apart from Jesus. Just being a nice person, doing nice things and not hurting anyone is not going to get you to heaven. God made the ultimate sacrifice in Christ for this world and those that don't receive Jesus, don't obey Him, don't love Him, don't worship and serve Him, they will not be in heaven no matter how nice and good they were. Don't be fooled into thinking someone is a Christian just because they are a giving person, or always willing to help in any situation. I'm not saying they are not, they might very well be, but we have to look for righteous fruit in their lives. I know people who do nice things but there is no godly fruit in their lives. The nice things they do is not for God's glory.

There are plenty of so called Christians who don't want to do anything. They say, Christ did it all and we don't have to do anything. I believe people with this attitude just want an excuse to be lazy and the truth is that they are not saved. Satan's ministers will teach that Jesus finished all the work on the cross and there

is nothing for you to do. They want you to fail. Jesus certainly didn't say we don't have any works to do.

John 14:12 – (Jesus speaking) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.

We will do more works than Jesus did because we are greater in number. We won't do things that Jesus didn't do but we will have a greater multitude of works throughout the whole body of Christ spread out over the whole world. So again, we see we have works to do.

The ones who don't want to grow and learn and draw nearer to God are useless in the battle we are in. They are no good spiritually. They will never do powerful things for God's glory.

Once you are saved, The Holy Spirit will supernaturally cause you to desire to do good works. He is the One moving you to do God's will and live a righteous life. He is the One Who causes you to want to please God. God has equipped each one of us to do the good works He created for us to do. Your gifts and talents play a huge part of fulfilling your good works. If you don't know what your gifts and talents are I encourage you to listen to the sermon series I gave in 2022 entitled "Gifts and Talents" – you can find that on our church website.

Good works are the result of salvation. Once a person is saved and filled with The Holy Spirit they are moved by The Spirit to do good works to glorify God. Our good works help to draw others to Christ.

Matt.5:16 - Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

1 Peter 2:12 - Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

If someone believes they are saved and doesn't have any good works to speak of they probably aren't saved.

Here are some examples of good works:

Helping those in need, showing compassion, and providing care for others.
Sharing the gospel with others and inviting them to faith.

Praying for others and for God's will to be done.

Learning about God's will and applying it to your life. Following God's commandments and living in accordance with Christian values.

Doing your job as unto The Lord is a good work. **(Col.3:23-24)**

James 2:17, 26 – Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Faith without works is dead, this emphasizes that genuine faith manifests in actions. Those actions are the good works we were created for.

Matt.7:16-20 - Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

A good person cannot consistently produce bad actions, and a corrupt person cannot consistently produce good ones; their true nature will eventually be revealed by their conduct.

Genuine faith is evidenced by your actions and lifestyle. Our actions and lifestyle will show our good works and also the fruit of The Spirit in our lives. This is what we look for to know if someone is truly a Christian. That's the fruit. Our good works is righteous fruit and the fruit of The Spirit in us is also godly fruit.

CLOSING

We are the trees in that passage of Scripture and we are either good or corrupt. The corrupt trees, not producing any fruit are not doing good works and do not have the fruit of The Spirit in their lives either. God said they would be cut down and cast into the fire. Fire is a common biblical symbol for judgment. In this context, it represents the final and irreversible judgment of those who fail to produce good fruit. The imagery of fire is used throughout Scripture to depict God's righteous judgment, as seen in passages like Malachi 4:1 and Revelation 20:15. The use of fire underscores the seriousness of the warning, as it denotes complete destruction and separation from God. This phrase serves as a sobering reminder of the consequences of a life that does not align with God's will, urging believers to examine their lives and ensure they are producing the fruit of righteousness. Be sure you are doing the good works God created you to do.



Keep up the good work.

PRAYER