

Ephesians

Generosity of God's Plan†

2 1*† You were dead in your transgressions and sins† 2*† in which you once lived following the age of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the disobedient. 3* All of us once lived among them in the desires of our flesh, following the wishes of the flesh and the impulses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, 5*† even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6* raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, 7* that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8* For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; 9* it is not from works, so no one may boast. 10* For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.

James

III: Exhortations and Warnings

Doers of the Word

1 22* Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. 24 He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like. 25*† But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does.

26*† If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart,† his religion is vain. 27*† Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Faith and Works

2 14*† What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, 16* and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? 17 So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 Indeed someone may say, "You have faith and I have works." Demonstrate your faith to me with-out works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works. 19 You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe that and tremble. 20 Do you want proof, you ignoramus, that faith without works is useless? 21* Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by the works. 23*

Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called "the friend of God." 24 See how a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25* And in the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by a different route? 26 For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Comments

2, 14–26: *The theme of these verses is the relationship of faith and works (deeds). It has been argued that the teaching here contradicts that of Paul (see especially Rom 4, 5–6). The problem can only be understood if the different viewpoints of the two authors are seen. Paul argues against those who claim to participate in God's salvation because of their good deeds as well as because they have committed themselves to trust in God through Jesus Christ (Paul's concept of faith). Paul certainly understands, however, the implications of true faith for a life of love and generosity (see Gal 5, 6.13–15). The author of James is well aware that proper conduct can only come about with an authentic commitment to God in faith (18.26). Many think he was seeking to correct a misunderstanding of Paul's view.*



Faith Versus Good Works

Ephesians 2, 1–10 deals with the question of faith versus good works (good works are moral living and Gospel-motivated works of service, justice, courage, and so on). This issue has divided Christians since the early church and was a major issue at the time of the Protestant Reformation. Some say that we are saved by our good works. Others say good works are irrelevant, and we are saved only through our faith in Christ.

The writer of Ephesians makes it clear that both those statements are incomplete. The core Christian belief is this:

We are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. We are saved not by doing good works but in order to do good works. Our salvation is God's gift to us; how we live is our gift to God.

► Eph 2, 1–10

Salvation through Grace *and* Faith *and* Works

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God;
9 it is not from works, so no one may boast.

Rom 3:28 For we consider that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

St. Paul is teaching that the people coming into the Church, the non-Jews could not achieve salvation simply by following the OT Mosaic law. He wants to teach them that in the NT, faith DOES bring salvation...that is, faith that's made ALIVE and put into ACTION through acts of charity.

Gal 5:6 For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor un-circumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

1 Cor 12:2 And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love (agape), I am nothing.

Mt 19:16 Now someone approached him and said, "Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?"
17 He answered him, "Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. ¹³ If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."

James 2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day,
16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,"
but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?

17 So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 Indeed someone might say, "You have faith and I have works."
Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works.

19 You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe that and tremble.

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completed by the works.

23 Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called "the friend of God."

24 See how a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Gal 2:9 Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up.

Rom 2:5 By your stubbornness and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself for the day of wrath and revelation of the just judgment of God,

6 who will repay everyone according to his works:
[Paul reproduces the Septuagint text of Psalm 62:12 and Prov 24:12.]

7 eternal life to those who seek glory, honor, and immortality through perseverance in good works,

Mt 7:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne,

32 and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

33 He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me,

36 naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.'

37 Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?

38 When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

39 When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'

40 And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

41 Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,

43 a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.'

- 44 Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?'
- 45 He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.'
- 46 And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."
- 2 Cor 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.
- 1 Cor 15:58** Therefore, my beloved brothers, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

So, when someone says that it's by 'faith alone' that we're saved, our response should be, "Yes, we are saved by grace through Christ, and His incredible sacrifice for me 2,000 years ago on that Cross, in which He redeemed all of humanity. As a result of that grace, we are enabled to put that faith into action, and into works done in love. All good works MUST be done in the grace of God to have any true value or merit."

*Basically, we don't perform 'good works' out of 'gratitude' to Christ, we do them to further live out what He did for us. A Catholic who does good works in Christ is NOT denying that Christ completed everything through His sacrifice...we are not **DENYING**, but **DEPENDING** on it.*