

HC 62-64–Good For Nothing Good Works

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Pastor Lankheet concluded the last time that you are saved (justified) by grace alone, through faith alone. That is a most humbling doctrine. There is not a single thing you can do to earn your salvation, so there can be no ego自我 in your salvation.

But there are those who argue, that while their good works do not save them, their good works at least earn them some credit toward their salvation.

Arminians (which include Pentecostals) are the largest group that believes this. They use phrases like “God has no hands but yours” or “God has done all he could do and now it is up to you.” They say that you must cooperate with God in your salvation.

Roman Catholics teach that God must give you faith which will cause you to do works, and only when you do those works will God justify you. In reality, they teach the necessity of good works for your salvation.

The Bible teaches neither of these! These are lies from hell’s pit坑, lies that rob our Savior of the credit that belongs to him. Let us look at 3 things the Bible actually teaches about good works.

Our headings are:

Your good works don’t meet God’s standard for salvation

Your good works are only rewarded because they are purified by Jesus

You will always pursue good works if you are a true Christian

Our goals are: **That you will do good works to show that the better work has already been done in you by Jesus Christ.**

Your Good Works Don’t Meet God’s Standards for Salvation

62 Q. WHY CAN’T THE GOOD WE DO MAKE US RIGHT WITH GOD, OR AT LEAST HELP MAKE US RIGHT WITH HIM?

A. Because the righteousness which can pass God’s scrutiny **must be entirely perfect** and must in every way **measure up to the divine law**. Even the very **best we do in this life is imperfect** and stained with sin.

1. If you want to earn your salvation you have to do perfect works.

But only Adam and Eve were able to do perfect works...and only before they fell into sin. No one can do perfect works today.

2. Why can no one do good works today? For a work to be good, it...

a. It must be from faith in Christ:

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

You need faith to do good. But only God can give faith to you. God can’t give you faith unless you are regenerated. So God must regenerate you first. Weren’t you are passive in your birth? More, when you were born you didn’t have good spiritual genetics. You were born in sin. Your genetics reflect your reality: You are children of the Devil and he is in enmity with God.

John 8: 44 "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him..."

b. It must be done according to the law of Christ:

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

When you obey God’s law, it must be complete and perfect, and your motive must be pure. But your motive can’t be pure unless your heart is pure. Your heart can’t be pure until God regenerates you and changes your heart first.

c. It must be done for the Glory of Christ:

1Corinthians 10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

It is natural to do all you do for the glory of yourselves. If you help someone and hope to get the slightest glory, it is not a good work. Even if you made sure you provided everything you parents needed...or if you dig a dozen wells in Africa, or you pay all your taxes, it is tainted with sin, and therefore, it is no good. It is abominable – totally unacceptable to God if it is not done 100% for the glory of God.

3. So even the best work you do is tainted 污染 with sin.

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

4. The picture gets worse. Not only is man work unable to do anything good, the fact is, man is only able to commit sin! If you

are not a Christian, everything you do is bad!

Genesis 6:5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that **every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

5. So those who try to use good works to earn his salvation are doing a bad thing. Good works are bad works if you want to use them to earn your salvation or help earn your salvation.

6. This is a motivation for evangelism, isn't it?

You know that the Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, or any other religious person cannot please God because his work cannot please the Lord. You must speak to him about Christ's work.

Your Good Words are only Rewarded because they are offered through Christ

63 Q. HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT THE GOOD WE DO DOESN'T EARN ANYTHING WHEN GOD PROMISES TO REWARD IT IN THIS LIFE AND THE NEXT?

A. That reward is not earned; it is a gift of grace.

1. Does it mean that that your good works are useless? If you are a Christian, your good works are not useless.

They are not perfect, but they have value. How could they have value? God is kind. He accepts your good works because he sees them through your Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ's work is like eye-glasses...when the Father looks at you, he doesn't have that repulsive 丑恶 feeling as when a non-believer tries to do good works. Because of Christ between you and God, God's view of you changes. Your good works then become acceptable. That is why the Apostle Paul could say with confidence:

2Timothy 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

2. To prove the benefit of your good works, obeying any of God's laws bring rewards for you in heaven.

Matthew 6:19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

What are some specific things that will bring great rewards in heaven and on earth?

a. Enduring persecution...

Mathew 5:12 "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in

heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Even though the person might have complained when he was persecuted, God would be pleased to reward his imperfect work because his imperfect work was done through the glasses of Christ's perfection.

b. Giving up family, friends, or career...for the sake of serving Jesus Christ. This is always a tough one...but sometimes friends or family may walk away from you because you are living for Jesus. He will reward you.

Matthew 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.

c. Being generous to the poor. The Lord promises to restore to the giver many times over. It is true that you may not be perfect in giving...and may even want some credit in the world, but because you are a Christian and you give through the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, the Lord will reward your work.

Proverbs 19:17 He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, And He will pay back what he has given.

3. What rewards might you get out of this world?

The rewards out of this world are: crowns of righteousness and other unspecified glories. You will have to wait for heaven to understand them in fullness. For sure, you will have perfect blessedness in which you will be able to praise God eternally.

4. And God is the judge of these good works.

So some Christians may have done outwardly good works and are heralded as being truly good by fellow Christians, but they may not be as rewarded as some who may have done less outwardly good works but had more good thoughts of God, spoke more kind words to others, or spent much secret time in prayer. Yes, even words and thoughts bring much glory to Jesus.

5. Are there also rewards for good works in this life?

Yes. Love, peace, truth, friends, comfort, material things may come to those who do well.

Matthew 6:3 "But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself **reward you openly.**

You will always pursue Good Works if you are faithful

64 Q. BUT DOESN'T THIS TEACHING MAKE PEOPLE INDIFFERENT AND WICKED?

A. No. It is impossible for those grafted into Christ by true faith not to produce fruits of gratitude.

1. As long as you are in the Vine, Jesus Christ, you will bear fruit.

Better: You will do good works because Jesus is in you. The Vine is good. The Vine transfers his nutrients to you and you can't help but produce good fruits.

This is why you worship each Sunday. Here you are nourished.

Luke 6:44 "For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. 45 "**A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good**; and an evil man out

of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. **He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing.

Only if a branch has fallen off the vine could it then not bear fruit. There is no neutrality in Jesus Christ. No branch remains for decoration!

2. You will do good works in order to show that you love God; if you love Jesus you will keep his law.

3. How does this translate today? A few examples:

a. You will not presume your children are saved; you will work to make sure they understand the Gospel and trust the Lord for themselves.

b. You will not assume that because you are saved you can be indifferent about worship in church and in the home. Instead, you will work hard to listen to the preaching and struggle to understand what you read so your soul will be nourished and that you can nourish your family.

c. Because you are daily cognizant认识到of the greatness of Christ's work for you, you will show it by praising him. You will not complain when things don't go your way. Those in the vine will simply draw from the root and produce worthwhile fruits.

Conclusion:

You may look at your good works and be most impressed. You might think they are valuable. Others might think they are valuable. But God is never fooled. He said that your good works (unless he views them through Jesus Christ) are like filthy cloths. No too impressive, is it? Your good works can do nothing, not even help in a little way, to earn your salvation. You do good works as a result of your salvation. Positively, God uses the good works of a Christian, though not perfect, to reward you in heaven. Every Christian will do good works.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. While good works don't save you, don't ignore doing good works which are like treasures that you store up in heaven. Those treasures you will enjoy when you get there.

2. Jesus made it possible for you to do good works. Your good God recreated you through the shed blood of Jesus Christ to do good. Yes, Adam lost that ability to do good, but Jesus, the 2nd Adam, has restored it to you.

3. The best work you can do good is love. Love your neighbor and tell him of Jesus

and hell. Love God and worship him. Love your neighbor and confront his sin.

Finally, if you have thought of yourself as good, I hope God is humbling you today and showing you that your good works are good for nothing and can never even help to save you. Only if you receive by faith the life of righteousness and the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ will you be saved. This is the only thing that truly matters in the grand scheme of life. What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and lose his own soul?