

Work out your salvation

A. Does anyone in here today really love working?

1. How many of us just can't wait to wake up strap on our boots and go to our jobs in the morning or come back home and have a list of work to do on the fridge?

2. Some people might enjoy working or have a job they really love but it is probably not a big percentage.

3. Most people cannot wait to retire so they can relax and do what they want to do.

4. There is a rare breed that works really hard and does above and beyond what they are expected but sadly most of us do the bare minimum to get by.

5. When we start a new job we usually work really hard for the first couple weeks or even months.

6. We learn everything we need to know, focus on what needs to be done and get to know our co-workers.

7. Once we have the job secured we kind of sit back put it on cruise control and do just enough to get by. Some of us end up doing absolutely nothing.

8. The Church can be the same way. Once we are baptized we are on fire and excited to tell others about our great discovery.

9. It feels like we found the greatest treasure on earth.

Matthew 13:44-45 - "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

10. It is exciting to be a new Christian and we can't wait to dive in and do all we can to help the church.

11. The bible has a lot of exciting things to learn and we want to convert everyone we know and come across.

12. But after a few years that pearl has lost it's luster and we get frustrated, fall back into certain sins, get tempted by the world, and get lazy.

13. Some of us even quit and go back into the world.

14. Just like the parable of the soils we can be choked out by the things of this world.

Luke 8:14 - The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

15. Just like at school how many of us are content with being an average student.

16. One of my old preachers had said he was asked by people what is the least amount of work i have to do to make it to heaven.

17. Is that the attitude we want to have as a Christian we should be asking what is the most i can do for God.

18. We might even use the denominational excuse that we are not saved by works to be lazy and barely do anything.

19. Is it true that we are not saved by works? Can you be saved by sitting back and doing nothing and just accepting Jesus in your heart.

20. I think some of the denominational belief about works has crept into our church and caused some confusion.

21. I know it did with me i was actually doing this sermon on something completely different and i had so much information on works i changed my sermon to just that.

22. Lets take a closer look at works and what role they play in our salvation and our Christian walk.

B. The first thing we can look at is do works play a role in our salvation.

1. I think all of us know here know that we cannot work hard enough on our own merit to be forgiven of all the sins we commit.

2. It doesn't matter how many hail Mary's you say on the rosary or how many homeless you feed you cannot earn your way into heaven.

3. On the other end of the spectrum some religious groups say all you need is faith to be saved. (faith only)

4. This stirs up a lot of confusion and the bible also seems to contradict itself at first glance.

5. Paul says you are not saved by works that you should boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

6. But James says that Faith without works is dead.

James 2:17 - Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

7. You cannot be saved by a dead faith can you?

8. So which one is it? Do works play a part in our salvation or are we saved completely by faith alone.

9. I was honestly a little confused on this topic myself after being a Christian for 20 years.

10. I generally had the right idea on this subject but didn't understand fully understand the role of works in the church.

11. I think the devil realized he can't completely stop the church so he has done a great job in stirring up as much confusion as he can concerning religion.

12. Some of the denominational views can slowly seep into the Lords church and confuse us about the truth.

13. We need to realize that the bible will never contradict itself and with a deeper study on any subject we can find out Gods true meaning.

14. If God did contradict himself he would be a liar and the bible would lose all credibility.

Hebrews 6:18 - God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

15. The bible is the truth

John 17:17 - Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

16. And we need to rightly divide it.

2 Timothy 2:15 - Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

C. So which one is it? Do works play a role in salvation or not?

1. This is one of the biggest arguments among churches today.

2. Certain denominations like the protestans and the methodists believe in faith only salvation.

3. On the other hand the catholics believe in faith and good works leading to salvation.

4. The faith only crowd will argue that baptism is a work and therefore not essential for salvation.

5. They will quote the verse we mention earlier as part of their argument.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

6. The problem is there are different kind of works.

7. The term works is used in two senses. There are the works that are the devices of men and the works of God.

8. It is true that you will never be saved by works of merit where all the good works you have done are added up to the point you are owed salvation.

9. If you have sinned once you are guilty of all no matter what good you have done in your life.

James 2:10 - For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

10. The works of man's device allow glorying, but salvation does not come through that type of work.

11. Man is saved by the works of God which is walking in the way appointed by God and by doing the things he has commanded.

12. People want to argue that baptism is a work but did you know that believing in God is also a work.

John 6:29 - Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

13. It is not mans work but it is a work of God vital for salvation.

14. Repentance is commanded by God and therefore also a work!

Acts 17:30 - Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

15. We can't forget about confession it is also a work that needs to be done to be saved.

Romans 10:9 - that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

16. Even though these things are commanded they do not cause the doer to be owed salvation.

17. They are works of God that we are ordained to do in order to receive salvation but at the end of the day salvation is still granted by God's grace.

18. Baptism is a work of faith

Mark 16:16 - He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

19. People will argue that the latter part of the verse doesn't include baptism therefore it's not vital for salvation.

20. That is because belief is a prerequisite for baptism.

- Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Acts 8:36-37

21. What is the point of being baptized if you do not believe in Jesus! You would not do it.

22. Baptism, along with repentance, is an act of faith where someone receives (not earns) forgiveness of sins.

Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

23. It is not a work of merit.

Titus 3:5 - not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

24. Washing of regeneration of the Holy Spirit refers to baptism

25. God is at work in baptism not us.

Colossians 2:12 - buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

26. God makes us alive in Christ and forgives us of our sins. It is not earned.

- When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,- Colossians 2:13

27. If you go to the hospital and have surgery who is doing the work you or the surgeon.

28. You have to trust and obey the surgeon and lay on the table but he is doing all the work.

29. When we are saved God is the surgeon operating on the sins of the flesh giving us the circumcision of Christ.

Colossians 2:11 - In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

30. In circumcision the foreskin only was put off; in Christian regeneration "the body of the flesh" is spiritually put off.

31. The old self is buried and the new self risen to walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:4 - Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

32. The old body is gone the new is here!

- Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

33. Sadly many people reject baptism because they see it as something you do.

34. But in reality baptism is the most passive act of faith required of us by God.

35. Faith, repentance, and confession are all acts which require much from the worker while baptism is something done to us.

36. Even Martin Luther who who came up with the phrase salvation by faith only said this.

37. "Yes, it is true that our works are of no use for salvation. Baptism, however, is not our work but God's."

E. We see how important works are in our salvation but what about in our Christian walk.

1. After we are added to the church by God can we sit back and coast our way into heaven?

2. Can we rely on Just faith alone to grow as a Christian and help others get saved?

3. There is only one place in the bible that mentions faith only.

- You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

James 2:24

4. To be Justified by God you need works along with your faith.

5. Faith and works go hand in hand. They build off each other.

6. We have the notion that we shouldn't be doing works because we are not saved by our works.

7. The problem is we cannot help someone out or convert them with faith alone.

8. If a starving homeless person came to you asking for food and you told him i believe that you will be fed and walked away are you helping them out?

James 2:14-18 - What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

9. James demands his objector to show faith without works which is impossible.

10. Faith and works are so related, that one cannot exist long without the other.

11. Faith without works is dead; and on the other hand works, without faith is also fruitless.

12. Works are something you can do that can be seen; these may be offered in evidence of faith which cannot be seen.

13. Faith, however, cannot be seen; one without works cannot offer proof of the faith which he claims to have.

14. If anyone disparages works he eventually must resort to doing them to prove that he has any faith at all!

15. The father of the Hebrew race Abraham was justified by works.

James 2:20-21 - But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

16. There was a definite time and place when he was justified and that is when he offered up his son.

17. If you are a Christian you are Abrahams seed.

Galatians 3:29 - And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

18. Therefore the principle illustrated in Abrahams Justification applies to us today.

19. Our faith is made perfect by our works.

James 2: 22-23 - Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

20. Although Abraham was earlier acknowledged as a believer and his faith accounted for righteousness.

Genesis 15:6 - And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness.

21. It was not until later in Genesis 22 that the patriarch's faith was made perfect in the act of obedience involving Isaac.

- Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? James 2:21

22. Works are vital in Gods plan.

23. Neither works nor faith operating alone can justify; each in cooperation with the other produces that status wherein God justifies.

24. James clearly shows in Abrahams case that the patriarch's faith did not reach its fulfillment until it had translated itself into action when he offered up Isaac.

25. God considered Abraham a friend because he was faithful and submitted to Gods will.

26. The same goes for us today. Jesus said.

- You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

John 15:14

27. Faith blesses only when it leads to the faithful obedience to Gods commands.

28. Not everyone who calls on Gods name will be saved but those who do his will.

Matthew 7:21 - "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

29. If we love Jesus we will keep his word.

- Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. John 14:23

F. I think the bible is very clear on this subject and after a deeper study we can see how vital works are in salvation.

1. So what does that mean for us as Christians.

2. It means quit being lazy, quit making excuses get out there and do God's work!

1 Corinthians 15:58 - Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

3. Work for the Lord and not for men.

Colossians 3:23 - whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men;

4. Devote yourselves to good works.

- And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful. Titus 3:14

5. Let men see your good works so they can glorify God.

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

6. Do not just be heares but doers of Gods word. As Bo Jackson would say just do it.

James 1:22-25 - But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

7. Let us work towards being rich in good works not rich in material things.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 - Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

8 By doing good works you are laying up treasures in heaven.

- "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21

9 We need to work out our salvation.

Philippians 2:12 - Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

10. We have very few workers for a great harvest.

- Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matthew 9:37-38

11. The field is ripe to harvest!

John 4:35 - Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

12. In the natural realm the harvest is slow but in the spiritual realm you can harvest immediately after sowing.

13. We receive wages when we reap and we gather fruit for eternal life.

- And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. John 4:36

14. Let us sow the seed of the kingdom and spread the gospel.

Matthew 28:19-20 - Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

15. There is only one name under heaven that offers salvation.

- Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12

16. Jesus is knocking won't you let him in.

- Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. Revelation 3:20

17. Those that overcome he will give the right to sit on his throne.

Revelation 3:21 - To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

18. We can have victory through Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:57 - But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

19. You have heard the Gospel and are offered the Free gift of eternal life.

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

20. If you would like to become a Christian or need prayers now is the time to come forward.