

Tuesday, July 17, 2012—Grace Impact Summer Family Bible Conference—Does Salvation By Faith Require Works?

Purpose: A study to demonstrate the Calvinistic/Lordship fallacy of teaching that “good works” are a necessary to prove one has “saving faith.”

Introduction

- In order to accomplish this task I would to consider the following four points:
 - How are we saved?
 - How should we walk?
 - What is Lordship Salvation?
 - Practical tips for walking by faith

How Are We Saved?

- Are good works necessary to prove one has saving faith? No. Not according to the revelation given to the Apostle Paul. Good works are not necessary to: 1) Get saved, 2) Prove you are saved 3) Stay saved
- I trust that most of you at this conference understand and have trusted the Gospel of the Grace of God for your eternal salvation. In other words you came to the place where you realized and understood that you were a sinner in the eyes of God and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Likewise as sinner you realized that all your righteousness are as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6) and that your flesh was incapable of producing anything that God would accept.
 - Romans 3:9-12, 19-20—by the deeds or works of the law no flesh can be justified.
 - Romans 4:3-5—faith is not a work. To exercise saving faith in the merits of the crosswork of Christ is not a work.
 - Titus 3:5-7—we are not saved by our own works of righteousness. We are saved according to his mercy and justified by his grace.
 - Romans 3:24-25—we are justified “freely by his grace” “through faith in his blood.”
 - Ephesians 2:8-9—tooday during the dispensation of grace God is saving people by grace through faith. Works play no part in our salvation. Jesus Christ did all work on our behalf so that salvation could be offered to us freely.

- Once we have exercised saving faith by placing our complete and total trust in the death/shed blood, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the only total complete payment for our sin we are taken out of Adam and spiritually baptized by God the Holy Spirit into Jesus Christ. We are made members of the body of Christ.

How Should We Walk?

- It is logical for a believer to then ask, “now what?” Now that I am justified, saved, sealed, and seated with Christ in heavenly places how should I live my life? What change should these spiritual realities produce in my daily life? Put another way, what does it mean to walk with Christ? What does the Christian life look like?
- II Corinthians 5:7—this one sentence verse answers the question for us. We are to walk by faith and not by sight.
 - Walk—according to *Strong’s Concordance* the Greek word translated walk means to “make one’s way, progress; to make due use of opportunities.” *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* offers the following definition of the English word, “In Scripture, to live and act or behave; to pursue a particular course of life.”
 - Walk—94, Go—1, Walk About—1, Be Occupied—1 (Heb. 13:9)
 - According to II Cor. 5:7 our walk is to be occupied and conducted by faith not by sight.
 - Sight—the Greek word translated sight means, “the external or outward appearance, form figure, shape,” according to *Strong’s Concordance*.
 - Luke 3:22—“bodily shape”
 - Luke 9:29—“fashion”
 - I Thessalonians 5:22—“appearance”
 - All of these words relate to being able to observe changes in one’s external outward appearance. If one is going to walk by sight what will they be concerned with? External outward appearances which are by the Bible’s own definition not faith.
 - Hebrews 11:1—faith is the substance, elemental, or material part of things hoped for. In other words, without faith we have no hope. Secondly, faith is the evidence of things not seen. Therefore, to walk by faith is going to the exact opposite of walking by sight, because faith requires you to believe and hope in that which you cannot see.
 - Hebrews 10:34-39
 - II Corinthians 5:1-6, 8—the entire context of II Cor. 5:7 illustrates the concept of walking by faith. The only way that the Corinthians can know the realities of verse one and can

have confidence in verses six and eight is to walk by faith and not by sight. Faith is the substance of their hope, not only that they will one day be present with the Lord but that when they are in his presence “mortality might be swallowed up of life” and they will receive “a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.”

- How do the Corinthians know any of this? Have they seen it? No. They receive the teachings of Paul as the word of God by which worked effectually in them as they believed it (II Thes. 2:13).
- If good works are a necessary requirement for someone to prove they have saving faith what would that force us to do? Walk by sight. Is this how God wants us to walk?

What is Lordship Salvation?

- Lordship Salvation comes in many forms:
 - Salvation requires faith plus works
 - Salvation requires obedience to God
 - Salvation requires repentance either before or in conjunction with faith
 - Salvation requires total submission to the Lordship of Christ.
- Lordship Salvation is a completed system with all of its forms, but they all have one thing in common. They either state explicitly, or at least imply, that faith alone in the finished word of Christ is not sufficient for salvation. This is the common denominator of all forms of Lordship Salvation.
- The problem with Lordship Salvation, as with all false doctrines in our day, steams from a failure to rightly divide the word of truth. Was there a time in the outworking of God’s plan when sight was vitally important to what God was doing?
- Exodus 14:13—Moses calls Israel to see the salvation of God for the Egyptians.
- John 4:48—the Jews required a sign without which they would not believe (I Cor. 1:22). Israel was supposed to look for signs to authenticate that a message was from God.
- The verses used by the Lordship salvation crowd are taken from the Old Testament, Matthew-John, or the Hebrew Epistles. Are there verses in the Bible that teach that good works are to be brought or performed as evidence of faith?
- Genesis 12:1-2—the covenant was unconditional God simply promised these thing to Abram; it had nothing to do with anything Abram did.

- Genesis 17:4-14—God establishes some conditions for participating in the promise. The original promise is still unconditional. But those who get to join in and participate in this blessing could now do so only upon the condition they be circumcised. Salvation under the covenant consisted of being identified with the people of God. To be cut off from the people is to be cut off from the promise along with the blessing.
- Galatians 3:17-19—the law was added because of sin.
 - Exodus 31:14—remember, under the covenant, salvation is found in indentifying with the people of God. To be cut off from the people, is to be cut off from the covenant. Therefore, Sabbath keeping was not an option.
- Mark 1:4, 16:16—if someone believed the message of John or the 12 Apostles what were they to do? Repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). Faith is doing what God tells us to do.
- Matthew 19:16-19—Jesus tells the rich young ruler that if he want to enter into life he needs to keep the commandments.
- Romans 9:31-32—if a person kept all the rules, all of the laws, offered the sacrifices and yet just did it out of ritual, that wasn't good enough. He had to do it in faith. In time past, Israel had to believe, but their faith had to be demonstrated by their works.
- Matthew 7:15-20—how can you know someone by their fruits? The only way you can do this is to do is by sight. During the earthly ministry of Christ the disciples were instructed to look at people fruit in order to discern their spiritual condition.
 - Matthew 6:14-15
 - Matthew 7:21
 - Matthew 19:16-19
 - John 15:1-6—these are not isolated texts. The message of the Old Testament and the Gospels is not only must you believe you must also do. You must keep the covenant. You must show your faith through forgiving and by bearing fruit; otherwise, you will cast into the fire and burned. It is therefore easy to see where those who believe in and advocate for Lordship Salvation are getting their ideas. They are coming from the Bible.
- James 2:14-26—notice how James is calling his readers to evaluate good works by looking at things they can see. It is not enough here for someone to say they have faith. They must prove or demonstrate their faith through their works. This is where Lordship Salvation gets its gospel, from James and the teachings of Christ in the gospels. If one were to remove the writings of Paul from the Bible, it would be difficult indeed to build a case against the teaching of Lordship

Salvation. The necessity of good works AS EVIDENCE OF FAITH is clearly taught in the Old Testament, the four Gospels, and in the Jewish Epistles.

- Consider the following common statements made by supporters of Lordship Salvation:
 - Salvation requires works or obedience (Jam. 2).
 - Salvation requires continuing in the faith (Matt. 24:13).
 - A sinful lifestyle proves a person is not saved (I Cor. 6:9-10, Gal. 5:21).
 - Salvation WILL BE manifested by good works or fruit (Matt. 7:16-20).
- What common idea can be observed in these statements? All of them suggest that the only way we can determine if someone is saved is by viewing/observing their works, fruit, and/or lifestyle. In other words, for one function according to this paradigm they would constantly be operating on the basis of sight rather than faith. Walking or progressing on the basis of sight is not in line with II Corinthians 5:7.

Practical Tips for Walking by Faith

- How do you know that I am saved? Can you see it? Do I have a tattoo on my forehead that says saved? How do I know that you are saved? There is no neon light flashing saved above each of our heads. We believe that someone is saved based upon their testimony or profession of faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. In other words we have faith/believe that they have believed/place faith in the work of Christ. None of this is anything we can see with our eyes.
- II Corinthians 5:7—we are called to walk by faith not by sight. That means that we must make sure we understand what faith is.
- Hebrews 11:1—tells us that faith is the “substance of things hoped for.” We all hope for many things, but the question is, what foundation or ground have we for our hope? Everything depends upon the fact that God has spoken, and that what He has said is true.
 - Romans 10:17—if we have heard nothing, there can be nothing to believe. Our hopes and thoughts and imagination are all vain, being without any foundation or “substance.”
 - Romans 4:3—God had spoken; Abraham had heard; and he believed God. What Abraham heard came by the word of God and his faith came by this hearing. Hence by hearing and believing God, Abraham’s faith in God’s Word was the substance or ground of that for which he hoped.
 - According to Hebrews 11:1, faith is not only the substance of all we hope but it is also the evidence of what we have heard but not seen. Thus faith is the opposite of sight.

Many say that “seeing is believing.” This is one of his many fallacies. Faith is the demonstration to us of what we do not see. Hence we are instructed to live in, and by this faith.

- The examples of faith given in Hebrews 11 are those who having heard God, believe what He said to them. Notice that every instance of faith in Hebrews 11 falls under the categories of “things hoped for,” and of “things not seen.”
 - Noah—believed the truth of “things not seen as yet” (7).
 - Abraham and Sara—“not having seen the promises, but having seen them afar off” (13)
 - Moses—“endured as seeing him who is invisible” (27)
 - Abraham—“rejoiced to see Christ’s day: and he saw it, and was glad (John 8:56) even though he saw it “afar off” (Heb. 11:13)
- Ephesians 2:8-9—how did you get saved? How did you receive Jesus Christ? By works or by grace through faith?
- Colossians 2:6—the believers walk is to be conducted on the principles by which we received Jesus Christ. Our walk is to be conducted by grace through faith.
- First, our walk is to be based upon faith in God’s word to us. We need to believe that we are who God says we are. We need to know, reckon, and function in the reality of who God has made in Jesus Christ.
- Second, we need to walk by the principle of grace. We need to understand that Grace is what teaches us how to live Godly in Christ Jesus. Law keeping and short accounts do nothing but fertilize the flesh in our lives.
 - Titus 2:11-12—quite frankly, some Christians seem to have a hard time handling Grace, for it puts the responsibility for many of the decisions of life squarely upon them. Many would rather live under the Law, for then every decision is made for them. Under Grace, the Lord wants to do the right thing, but He wants it to be because we freely choose to do so, not because we are coerced into it by the heavy hand of the Law.
- Ephesians 2:10—it is based upon the twin pillars of grace and faith that we have been made the workmanship of Jesus Christ and ordained unto good works. When we walk by grace through faith the life of Christ is made manifest in our mortal flesh and the good works that God has ordained then we should walk in are produced.
- Philippians 2:12-13—as members of the Body of Christ we are instructed to work OUT our salvation not work FOR our salvation. The sense of this verse of this verse is the same a working out a mathematical problem. The idea Paul is seeking to convey is that those who have salvation WITHIN them should WORK IT OUT to its logical conclusion. The result of verse 12 should

lead one to the realization of verse 13, “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

- Philippians 1:6
- Romans 8:38-39—we need to take comfort and refuge in the fact that we (“any other creature”) cannot conduct our lives in such a way that would result in the loss of our own salvation.