

## **The Wednesday Word, February 7, 2024: His Works not Mine!**

When God saves us, He declares us righteous. We are reckoned as having a righteousness that comes from God to man, not a righteousness which man brings to God. Therein lies the difference between the Gospel and religion.

We are justified, (*declared not guilty*), without doing any good **works**. In fact, we are saved when we have done nothing at all but bad works. (See Romans 3:10-12). We have no merits with which we can earn salvation. Salvation is entirely of grace and mercy, freely given to those who deserve nothing. Because of the doing and dying of Christ we are declared not guilty. Jesus alone is our qualification for heaven.

When it comes to salvation, we are like the prodigal. (See Luke 15:11-32). He, like us, brought nothing with him but his sin and need. Notice how the father in this story doesn't tell the prodigal to make himself worthy to sit at the banqueting table. The Father doesn't say, "Tell that boy to clean up, mend his ragged clothes and make himself fit to come in here?" No! There was no fitness which the prodigal could bring. That which made him fit came from the father himself. The father brought out the best robe, and put it on the prodigal, and by his embrace qualified the lad to sit with him at his banqueting table.

Likewise, our reception in Heaven is by grace alone. Christ has poured out His blood for our redemption and if we know the power and value of Christ and His shed blood, we will have no doubt as to our welcome into glory. As blood bought believers, we know we need no other qualification for heaven than the blood. We, as Finished Work believers, have been delivered from trusting that our prayers, tears, doings and feelings need to be added to that which has been already accomplished in the Gospel.

Consider this, if the blood of the Lord Jesus is not our only title to heaven, we have none.

We are saved without works. Some people assert that Paul and James disagreed over Justification by faith and Justification by works. After all, they say, James taught that people were saved by their works, (James 2:24), but Paul taught that we are saved by grace. (Ephesians 2:8). However, to teach that our works legally acquit (*justify*) us is a wretched thing. Why? Because it means that we contribute something to our salvation... our works. However, in the first chapter of his book,

James says that every good and perfect gift comes down from above (See James 1:17). Is salvation a gift? Of course, it is. Can anyone deny that salvation is a good and perfect gift? Of course not. Therefore, salvation comes from above. That means it was accomplished apart from our works.

So let me illustrate what it means to be saved by works. Take breathing for example. Breathing is a sign of life. A person breathes because they are alive. If they did not breathe, we would know they were dead. A person is justified by faith alone then works automatically follow. Works reveal that a person is spiritually breathing. They demonstrate that the person has spiritual life. But works in no way render us legally right with God. Good works have been

prepared for us. (Ephesians 2:10). May we enjoy doing them but not look to them to cause our acceptance in heaven. May we rest entirely on the person of Christ and His Finished Work.

And that's the Gospel Truth!