

Grace, Faith, and Works

How are we saved? You may have heard many answers. What is God's answer?

By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. EPHESIANS 2:8-9

One is justified by faith apart from works of the law. ROMANS 3:28

When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. TITUS 3:4-7

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” MARK 16:16

Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” ACTS 2:38

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ... 1 PETER 3:21

Texts which focus on grace and faith explain how salvation is provided. Sin causes spiritual death— separation between us and God— and we cannot raise ourselves (Ephesians 2:1-7). God provided life through his own sacrifice. Our work cannot supplement or replace that. Our faith must be in the complete sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice rather than in ourselves (self-righteousness) as the payment. Salvation is a gift because we cannot earn it.

Texts which focus on our works explain the conditions for reception of salvation. As the owner and provider of the gift of salvation, God has the right to place requirements on those who wish to receive it. The requirements must be fulfilled before the gift is given. These conditions met by the recipients must not be confused with the payment made by the giver.

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The difference may be illustrated with a simple parable:

One summer, a father bought a car and said to his son, "If you make straight A's this year, I'll give you this car." The son made the grades and received the car. The father worked to earn the money to pay for the car, and then the son worked to meet his father's conditions. The car was not paid for by the son's grades. The car was a gift, paid for entirely by the father, but until the son met his father's (the owner's) requirements, he could not receive it.

Heaven and hell are eternal. We cannot afford to get this wrong. God has done his part. He offers you salvation. Have you fulfilled his conditions?

Our mission is to spread the good news of God's amazing gift of salvation, to accurately teach his instructions for receiving it, and to help each other hold onto it. We welcome you to join us on our journey to heaven. Ready to be baptized? Want to learn more? We're ready to help you today.

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! 2 CORINTHIANS 9:15

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