

Chapter Eighteen

Faith, Grace & Works Sincere Belief is Not Enough

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." (**Revelation 20:12-15**)

Some Churches teach that all one must do to obtain salvation, is to believe in Jesus Christ.... just believe and have faith. They mock and attack those who believe also in doing good works, saying that, "you are trying to work your way into Heaven". Let's take a look at what the Bible has to say....

Faith, Grace & Works - Sincere Belief is Not Enough

Scriptures used by some Christian faiths to substantiate their belief and teaching that “Belief and Faith” in Jesus Christ and “The Grace of God” is all that is required for Salvation:

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:15)

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
(Mark 16:16)

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24)

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9; read verses 8-22 for total understanding)

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Romans 4:4-5)

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”
(Romans 6:14 - read also verses 15-17 for complete understanding)

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Romans 10:9)

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

“But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.”
(Acts 15:11)

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,” (Titus 2:11)

“And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” (Romans 11:6)

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” (Galatians 2:16-21) (Verses 17-20 not shown for brevity)

Note: Works and “the works of the law” spoken of in these verses are the Law of Moses. Paul is explaining that the atonement of Christ and the grace of God replaces the Law of Moses. When Paul speaks of the “works of the law,” he refers to what we know as the six hundred and thirteen precepts of the Torah, such as Jewish prohibitions against eating pork, the mandate of circumcision, and the observance of Passover. Paul’s epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians are particularly concerned with some baptized Jewish Christians who wrongly believed that the observance of circumcision and the other ceremonial precepts were necessary for salvation. Some Roman and Galatian Christians had wrongly concluded that a Christian must believe in Jesus and obey the ceremonial precepts of Moses in order to be saved.

Now see for further understanding...

“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;”
(Romans 9:30-32)

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” (2 Timothy 1:8-9)

Sola Fide (*by faith alone*) was the other watchword of the Reformation. This doctrine maintains that we are justified before God (and thus saved) by faith alone, not by anything we do, not by anything the church does for us, and not by faith plus anything else. It was also recognized by the early Reformers that Sola Fide is not rightly understood until it is seen as anchored in the broader principle of **Sola Gratia**, by grace alone. Hence the Reformers were calling the church back to the basic teaching of Scripture where the apostle Paul states that we are "saved by grace through faith and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God," (Ephesians 2:8).¹

Now the rest of the story.... (scriptures that further explain or clarify the topic)

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Note: Verse 16 is often used by modern-day Christians in their claim that God actually dictated the Bible verbiage unto those who wrote it down, (see the KJV, ESV, NIV verses in chapter Faith, Grace & Works – Sincere Belief is Not Enough). Verse 17 is a great example of God instructing man to do good works.

“Also unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth* mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.”
(Psalms 62:12)

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

“In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,” (Titus 2:7)

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?” (James 2:14)

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”
(James 2:17-18)

“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (James 2:19-20)

“Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?” (James 2:22)

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” (James 2:24)

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” (James 2:26)

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” (James 4:17)

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” (Titus 1:16)

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” (Matthew 16:27)

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Ecclesiastes 12:14)

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds:” (Romans 2:6)

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:” (1 Peter 1:17)

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.” (Revelation 20:12-13)

“And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work:” (2 Corinthians 9:8)

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus 2:14)

“But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.” (Acts 26:20)

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:13)

Sincere Belief is NOT Enough.

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:20-23)

“Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matthew 15:7-9)

“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” (Romans 10:2-4)

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?” (Romans 10:16)

Here are the definitions of “Faith”, “Grace”, and “Salvations”; as defined in the LDS Bible Dictionary.

Faith: Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, but which are true (Hebrews 11:1), and must be centered in Jesus Christ in order to produce salvation. To have faith is to have confidence in something or someone. The Lord has revealed Himself and His perfect character, possessing in their fullness all the attributes of love, knowledge, justice, mercy, unchangeableness, power, and every other needful thing, so as to enable the mind of man to place confidence in Him without reservation. Faith is kindled by hearing the testimony of those who have faith (Romans 10:14–17). Miracles do not produce faith, but strong faith is developed by obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ; in other words, faith comes by righteousness, although miracles often confirm one’s faith.

Faith is a principle of action and of power, and by it one can command the elements, heal the sick, and influence any number of circumstances when occasion warrants (Jacob 4:4–7). Even more important, by faith one obtains a remission of sins and eventually can stand in the presence of God.

All true faith must be based upon correct knowledge or it cannot produce the desired results. Faith in Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel and is more than belief, since true faith always moves its possessor to some kind of physical and mental action; it carries an assurance of the fulfillment of the things hoped for. A lack of faith leads one to despair, which comes because of iniquity. Although faith is a gift, it must be cultured and sought after until it grows from a tiny seed to a great tree. The effects of true faith in Jesus Christ include (1) an actual knowledge that the course of life one is pursuing is acceptable to the Lord (see Hebrews 11:4); (2) a reception of the blessings of the Lord that are available to man in this life; and (3) an assurance of personal salvation in the world to come. These things involve individual and personal testimony, guidance, revelation, and spiritual knowledge. Where there is true faith there are miracles, visions, dreams, healings, and all the gifts of God that He gives to His saints. Jesus pointed out some obstacles to faith in John 5:44 and 12:39–42 (see also James 1:6–8). Other references to faith include 2 Corinthians 5:7; Ephesians 2:8–9; Hebrews 11; James 2:14–26; 1 Peter 1:8–9.

Grace: The enabling power from God that allows men and women to obtain blessings in this life and to gain eternal life and exaltation after they have exercised faith, repented, and given their best effort to keep the commandments. Such divine help or strength is given through the mercy and love of God.

Every mortal person needs divine grace because of Adam’s fall and also because of man’s weaknesses. However, grace cannot suffice without total effort on the part of the recipient.

It is through the grace of the Lord Jesus, made possible by His atoning sacrifice, that mankind will be raised in immortality, every person receiving his body from the grave in a condition of everlasting life. It is likewise through the grace of the Lord that individuals, through faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ and repentance of their sins, receive strength and assistance to do good works that they otherwise would not be able to maintain if left to their own means. This grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts.

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Salvation: To be saved from both physical and spiritual death. All people will be saved from physical death by the grace of God, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Each individual can also be saved from spiritual death as well by the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ. This faith is manifested in a life of obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel and service to Christ.

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Martin Luther was the originator of “justification by faith alone”. He characterized the Epistle of James as “an epistle of straw”—largely because it seemed to disagree with his teaching of “justification by faith alone”.

The Eastern Orthodox churches also do not accept *solafidianism*, the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. “Eastern Orthodox Christians emphasize a unity of faith and works. For the Orthodox, being conformed to the image of Christ ... includes a response of our faith and works.” ²

Some Modern Protestant writers, sensing the danger that a “grace alone” position could become “cheap grace” (to borrow an expression from the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer) or “a theologically thin, no-sweat Christianity,” some modern Protestant writers have adopted a similar position, recognizing that works also play a vital role in salvation. ³

Catholic theology: The doctrine that salvation depends both on God’s grace and man’s good works is very old in Catholic theology. One of the canons at the Council of Trent specifically repudiates the notion of grace alone: “If anyone saith that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sin for Christ’s sake alone; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified, let him be anathema.” Are we to say, then, that Roman Catholicism is not Christian because it does not subscribe to the doctrine of salvation by grace alone? ⁴

The generations immediately following the New Testament period also recognized the need for both grace and works for salvation. The famous Didache, “The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles”, which dates back to before A.D. 70, is conspicuous for its moralism and legalism. It is also significant that the oldest datable literary document of the Christian religion soon after the time of the Apostles, the letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, written in the last decade of the first century, emphasizes “good works, as it is in the Epistle of James”. ⁵

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Conclusion: Faith, grace, and sincere belief, are not enough without Christian good works.
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