



The Bible teaches neither of the doctrines most often vouched for by our religious friends but, in fact, a third alternative: **“He [Jesus] is the source of salvation to all those who OBEY Him”** (Heb. 5:9 emphasis mine). True faith is more

comprehensive in scope than some would have us believe. It is no mere intellectual exercise or acknowledgement, but carries with it a desire and determination to work. First-century Christians understood belief in Christ to be a work, and that in acknowledging Jesus as Lord they had to obey His will—even as He Himself declared, **“Why do you call Me Lord, and do not do what I say?”** (cf. John 6:29; Luke 6:46). Let us never forget the victory has been won, and His grace covers all our sin, but let us also never grow lax in service to Him, for we will be judged according to our deeds (cf. Rom. 8:37; Heb. 7:25; 2 Cor. 5:10).



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Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.

● Let us know if you have any questions.

ISSUE

13.5

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

January 30
2011



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Pat Goguen
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Jason Garcia

Faith or Works

By Jason Garcia

The discussions we have about spiritual things with our religious friends can become heated very quickly when the conversation turns to faith and works. Both play a vital role in the Christian life and are integral to God’s plan for salvation, so what’s the disagreement over? There seems to be primarily two schools of thought when it comes to faith and works: one says essentially that anyone that has put their faith in Christ has done all the Lord requires and perhaps they would cite Ephesians 2:8 to support this teaching. The other school of thought is one that says salvation has to be earned or *worked* toward, and if someone has put their faith in Christ and worked hard enough, when their time comes they will be acceptable to God. The Bible, however, teaches neither view to the extreme their advocates would have us believe.

Consider what Jesus has to say in the Gospel of Luke: **“Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him... ‘Come immediately and sit down to eat’? But will he not say to him, ‘Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and**



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drink’...He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? So you too, when you do ALL the things which are COMMANDED you, say, ‘We are UNWORTHY slaves; we have done only that which we OUGHT to have done’”(Luke 17:7-10 emphasis mine). The Lord taught that even those of His servants who could keep *all* of His commands perfectly (though I have never met anyone who has) would still be an *unworthy* slave, and in need of His grace. We can most certainly conclude that no one, not even the Lord’s most faithful servants, can earn points with God so as to eventually *merit* salvation. The very best we can hope for even if we can keep all of Christ’s commands perfectly is the satisfaction of knowing that we have only done that which we were created for—to serve God (Ecc. 12:13). It is here, also, that the truth of Ephesians 2:8 rings loudly as Paul declares, **“For by GRACE you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast”** (emphasis mine).

However, some clarification is needed now. When Paul says we “have been saved by grace through faith”, does he mean through faith *only*? There is nothing in this passage nor in any other

mentioning faith in God to suggest Christ is sufficiently pleased with those who have simply acknowledged Him as Savior. There were many who believed or had faith that Jesus was the Son of God, yet within in the same passage those men are described as **“loving the praise of men more than the praise of God”** (cf. John 12:42-43). Were they saved? (cf. Matt. 10:37-38) Certainly not! What was missing? Why had these men who had faith in Christ not been counted as *faithful*? They lacked obedience, their “faith” was a dead faith because they were not willing to *confess* Christ and commit themselves to Him (cf. Luke 9:62). Consider what James had to say concerning the matter: **“What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?... faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, ‘You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works’... are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?... You see that a man is JUSTIFIED BY WORKS and NOT BY FAITH ALONE. In the same**

way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead” (Jas. 2:14-26 emphasis mine). James settles the matter and removes any doubt regarding the efficacy of working for the Lord. Does James contradict Paul and teach that works merit salvation? No, that is nowhere to be found in the context, but we must understand that true faith in God results in works—in a servant bearing the fruit of good deeds for His Master.