

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Volume: 855 April 18, 2022

Theme: Ephesians 2:8-9

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Is There Something More I Can Do?

Bill Brinkworth

A rich man came to Jesus unintentionally admitting he committed the same mistake that most would not dare confess. He confessed to having the same philosophy that sends most lost people to Hell. The man's misunderstanding is also where most churches and religions err. His false belief was in his question, "... what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life" (Matthew 19:16).

This ruler (Luke 18:18) tried to work his way to Heaven by doing all he could to earn himself a place there. He and most religions believe if you do enough good things, that good will outweigh the bad, and God will let you into Heaven.

False religions teach that obeying and following traditions, rules, catechisms, rites, sacraments, pillars of the faith, or their religion's teachings will get them to Heaven. Wrong! Unbiblical! That thinking distinguishes man-made religions from real Christianity!

True Christianity is the only “religion” that teaches one does not have to do anything to get to Heaven except believe what Jesus did for them and ask for salvation from Hell. One does not have to “pay” for salvation by doing good works because it already has been paid for them by Jesus Christ’s sacrificial deed.

After receiving salvation, one will want to do all one can to please and obey God and His commandments out of love and gratitude. However, those good acts have nothing to do with getting saved.

All have sinned. All do not only commit iniquity but were born sinners. Because of sin, no one can get higher than the coffin lid after death. That is the bad news.

However, there is good news. There is a person who never sinned. His undeserved death on the cross is the sole payment God will accept to cover anyone’s sin. It is Jesus alone, God’s only son, that was worthy enough to pay for our transgressions.

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

Trying to do good “works” to earn Heaven is not accepting Christ’s finished work on the cross. That rejection shows disbelief that Christ’s sacrificial payment was not enough to cover a person’s iniquities

Like the rich ruler, doing good deeds and living the way one thinks is right is not enough to earn eternity in Heaven. That

man had done “right” his whole life, yet he was still looking for one more thing to do to guarantee eternal life.

Good deeds never satisfy God because they are not enough. Trusting that one loves us so much that He gave his life so that we can live eternally is the only way God will accept.

Are you 100% certain that you would go to Heaven if you were to die today, tomorrow, or a hundred years from now? You can be sure because the “ticket” has been paid for. All you must do is believe and accept God’s wonderful gift!

“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,” *II Timothy 1:9*

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” *Romans 6:23*

Saved Only by God’s Grace

Bill Brinkworth

In Ephesians 2, Paul addressed converted Gentiles (Ephesians 1:1) and reminded them how they became Christians. This crucial action has eluded many religions, even some “Christian” denominations.

The distinctions that separate lost, even religious, people from the saved are:

- A saved person is saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 1:8) because Jesus died on the cross and

paid for their sins.

Grace is “free, unmerited love” from God. A person is saved not because one is good-looking, of superior intelligence, or a good person. All are saved because God is good, He loves us, and it has nothing to do with whom we are or what we have done.

- If we make the first step to believe Jesus died for our sins, God’s love will do the rest. We must go first, not wait to have proof, but do as a child does when doing what his parents tell him to do. The child believes and obeys. We must do the same and trust what God has told us.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:8

- We are saved because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. There is nothing we can do to earn God’s approval and allow us to go to Heaven other than trusting Christ as Saviour. No amount of good works, kindness, or religious mumbo-jumbo will get us higher than the coffin lid. We cannot earn our way because Jesus has already paid our “ticket” to Heaven. Trying to earn salvation is negating the trust by faith we must have.

“Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:9

- However, doing deeds according to what Scripture commands, doing what we can do for the cause of Christ, or bringing honor to God after we are saved is the right thing to do for Him (Ephesians 1:10). A

born-again person should want to serve the Lord, not just sit and soak up God's goodness.

Many nod their head in agreement with Ephesians 2:8-9 but do not connect what it says to what they may do or believe. The two verses' whole point is there is nothing we can do to earn an eternity in Heaven.

We must trust what God has already done for us. However, even biblical doctrines have been turned into good works people hope will make them worthy of Heaven. Countless people and religious leaders have justified their salvation because "I have been baptized," "I tithe," "I help the poor," "I live a good life," or "I obey the rules of my church." They are good works that will please God after one is saved, not good works to get one saved. Those deeds become conditions added to what God said to do in Ephesians 2:8-9.

It is only faith that will get one God's promise of Heaven. One cannot add anything to it.

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" Titus 3:4-5

You Cannot Work Your Way to Heaven

Bill Brinkworth

It seems natural to many people that if they do good deeds, God will be pleased and let them into Heaven. Although there are many scriptures encouraging people to be less selfish and concentrate on meeting the needs of others, nowhere is it mentioned that those good acts will get anyone to Heaven. The Bible declares that there is nothing we can do but trust Christ as Saviour to have a heavenly home.

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

God’s way for us to see Heaven is that innocent blood had to be shed to have our sins forgiven. The only payment God will accept for all of a sinner’s transgressions is the sacrificial death of God’s only son, Jesus. No one can achieve Heaven for what they have done, but because of what Christ did for them. Jesus is the only way to Heaven. *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6*

Although good works will get no one to Heaven, a Christian is to do good deeds. He is to do them, not to earn Heaven, but to be a good Christian example. We should be a blessing to others because we love the Saviour and want to be obedient to His commandments. When we shine our Christian “light,” others may see God’s goodness and will also turn to Him. *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see*

your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Mat. 5:16

“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” Titus 3:8 Also: Heb. 10:24, I Tim 2:10, I Tim. 5:10, I Tim. 6:18, II Tim. 3:17, Titus 1:16.

“I am not a Christian because I am strong and have it all figured out. I am a Christian because I am weak and admit I need a Saviour.”

— Author Unknown