

prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” Why is all this secrecy? It is, that the whole work, may be solely from, and to, and for God, and that self may have neither beginning, nor end, or the least share in it. Now I ask, have these alms and these prayers nothing of salvation-goodness in them, when our Lord therefore commands them, that we may thereby obtain a reward in heaven? Can they help us to a reward in heaven, without helping forward our salvation? If a heavenly reward follows such works as these, must they not on the same ground, in the strictest sense of the words, be called saving alms, saving prayers, as any faith, from Adam or Abraham to this day, can be called saving faith? What are all the promises made to the faith of the fathers, of a “city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”? what is that better and heavenly country, which was to be the reward of their faith, but these very rewards here promised by Christ to the works of Christian alms, and Christian prayers? Our blessed Lord's whole divine sermon on the mount, is nothing else but a continual doctrine of good works, and a continual doctrine of such rewards as belong to the faithful, diligent workers. No blessedness is ascribed to a single faith, but all along to some one or other godly work. “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Do good to them that hate you. Give to him that asketh you.” But why all this? It is, “that you may be children of your Father, which is in heaven.” Surely then such works as make us to be children of our Father, which is in heaven, may be said to be saving works.

Law, William. *Of Justification by Faith and Works*. Holiness Data Ministry, 1995.

Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.’

(Matthew 7:21-23, NRSV)

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Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

11 November 2012

Sermon Topics:

AM: Cast the First Stone

John 8:1-11

PM: Wisdom

Ecccl 7:11-8:1

Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-5974

Elders

Ben Atchley: 428-2246

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Services

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

On Faith and Works

I have been reading an interesting e-book in which the writer plays the rolls of two people in a debate. One side is held by a person called “Methodist” and the other is taken by “Churchman.” Churchman argues that works are indeed required to obtain justification from God. The reading is a little advanced yet very interesting. I thought I’d include a short excerpt here. Below, Churchman observes that the argument against the need for works can be used as an equally strong (invalid) argument against the need for faith!

Methodist. Say what you will, I am fully assured of this great truth, thus expressed by our friend, “That the moment a man seeks to be justified by his own obedience to God's laws, that moment he falls from Christ, and ceases to have an interest in him.”

Churchman. Here just the same answer as before will be sufficient, viz., that the moment a man seeks to be saved or jus-

tified by his own faith in God, that moment he falls from Christ, and ceases to have an interest in him. This is just as good an argument against faith itself, as your friend's is against works. For own faith and own obedience are at the same distance from God, and are as mere works of the flesh, as self-seeking and self-love. But if your friend would have spoken to the purpose of the matter in hand, he should have expressed himself thus, viz., that the moment a man seeks to be justified, or made acceptable to God, by works wrought by the Spirit of Christ living in him, that moment he falls from Christ, and ceases to have an interest in him. Had he thus expressed himself, you see what an absurdity there had been in it, and yet, without thus expressing himself, his words are quite foreign to the matter, and touch not those works, which are affirmed to be essential to a justifying faith. For the true Christian man never thinks, or talks of being justified by any own obedience, any more than of being washed and saved by his own precious blood. But though he has no own obedience, no own works, any more than he has an own will, and own love, yet he has an obedience and works, and will and love that reach heaven, and unite with God. How so? It is because by the supernatural WORD and SPIRIT of God, come to a fullness of birth in him, his obedience, his works, his will, his love, are that which they are, and do that which they do on earth, to the glory, and by the same Spirit of God, as angels do in heaven. This is the new creature that is justified by faith and works. Suppose faith to be not from Christ, or works not from Christ, and then they are both of them but works of the flesh. But add Christ to faith, and Christ to works, and then they are but one and the same power of God to salvation, and all difference between faith and works is lost, and nothing remaineth, but "Christ in us the hope of glory." But your friend forgetting, or not knowing, that no works, are called salvation works, or pleaded for as such, but those that Christ worketh in us, considers, and confounds all works as own works, and selfish works, and so condemns Christian works, and the necessity of them, upon no other ground, but because own works, which proceed from self, are false, vain, and unprofitable to our salvation. Whereas our blessed Lord, has in the plainest manner distinguished them

from one another, and shown us, when and how works are good and godly, and works of salvation, justification, and sanctification. "When thou dost thine alms," saith he, 'do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, to be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.'" Here you see what an own work is, and why it has no salvation-goodness in it, it is because it is done only to trumpet forth its own glory. Now where anything like this trumpet goes along, either with that which we call faith, or works, though it should have ever so heavenly an appearance, it has only the nature, and can have only the reward of vainglorious alms. God said to a holy prophet of old, "Cry aloud, and spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet." Here is one kind of a religious trumpet. The Pharisees were learned men, and full of religious zeal, and they also had their religious trumpet, which our Lord condemned. Therefore zeal and trumpeting, are not good, and things to be trusted to, because they pretend religion, but may be as different from one another, as a Pharisee is from a holy prophet. This ought to be well considered by all, who set a trumpet to their mouths in God's cause; for if all that was alive in the trumpeting prophet, be not alive in them, they will begin too soon, and run before they are sent by God, to preach of the true life, and the true death, to a world ignorant, and careless about them. Again, our Lord saith, "when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray, standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Very [*sic*] I say unto you, they have their reward," and can have no better reward, because he that thus prays, makes prayers an own work of own glory, and therefore they are but an abomination before God. But now, will you from hence tell the world, that alms and prayers are soul-destroying things, or at best but mere filthy rags, that signify nothing to him that uses them, because such alms and prayers are said to be so by Christ?

For has not Christ in this very place taught you the direct contrary, and said as much of the salvation-power of good works, as he has said of the nothingness of Pharisaical works? "When thou dost thine alms," saith he, "let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth." And again, "When thou