

ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday

Bible Class 9:30
Morning Assembly 10:30
Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

RADIO PROGRAM

The Bible Speaks



Sunday 9:00-9:30a.m.
KURM 790AM

Downtown Church of Christ

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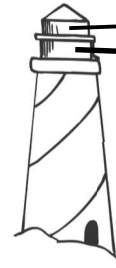
Your words are a window
to your heart.

ELDERS:

Otis Hardin
Perry Johnson
Ken Parker
Alan Revier
GW Walsh

DEACONS:

TJ Burleson
Scott Hale
Joel Heiligenthal
Jason Hill
Chris Johnson
Brock McKeel
Randy Potter
Tim Roberts
Randy Shell



DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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ROGERS, ARKANSAS

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FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.

Sick: Gary Fletcher, James Swim, Rai Starr, Diane Willis, & Etta Frazelle.

Shut-ins: Betty Jo Young, Margaret Abel, Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, and
Mary Lou Lewis *Military:* Logan Dickey, Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

WEDNESDAY NIGHT CLASS – This Wednesday night the auditorium class will begin a new study, Judging Biblically – a timely topic for our age!

SENTENCE SERMON – A person's character, like a fence, is not made stronger with whitewash.

Do Works REALLY Matter?

What is the relationship between 'works' and salvation? The Calvinist will say, "There is none" – and then quote Ephesians 2:8-9 "By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast". In the minds of many, that is the end of the discussion. As one writer put it, "The Bible contains abundant evidence of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone" (www.gotquestions.org).

And while we do not question the sincerity of those who hold such a

position, we do question their understanding of the 'works' which the Bible sometimes condemns.

It is sadly true that many people today believe their own goodness will earn them favor in God's sight. They think like the Pharisee of Luke 18:11-12, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and I give tithes of all that I get."

Such 'works' are seen by many as the ticket to heaven. For example, the Quran teaches, "Those whose

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balance (of good deeds) is heavy, they will be successful. But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls; in hell will they abide” (23:102-103). The reincarnation religions (such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, etc.) all teach a perfected state achieved by a series of well-lived lives. And even many who profess to be Christians believe deep down that Granny (and others like her) will go to heaven because, as they say, she was ‘a good person’.

The Bible does, indeed, teach the futility of earning our salvation via such ‘works’. In fact, it refers to all such efforts as ‘boasting’ (“not of works, **lest any should boast**”, Ep 2:9, and “if Abraham was justified by works **he has something to boast about**”, Ro 4:2). This depiction of works as something ‘boastful’ is critical to a proper understanding of the works Paul condemns. Truly, any attempt to impress God with our goodness is doomed to failure. “There is none righteous, no not one” (Ro 3:10) — not even Granny.

The Calvinist, on the other hand, offers us only two options: 1) It’s **all** on God, or 2) It’s **all** on us. That’s called a false dichotomy, and **both extremes are wrong!**

The Bible teaches a third option — a different **attitude** toward works. “When you have done all you were commanded say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’” Even in those passages so often quoted to disparage works, works are actually **encouraged**: ‘we are created for good works’ (Ep 2:10), and ‘walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham’ (Ro 4:12).

The Calvinist responds, “Well, of course. Once we are saved, we **should** do good works” — to which we all agree. But that’s not the question. The question is not ‘should we?’, but ‘must we?’. Is it **necessary** to walk the walk in order to be saved? Is it **necessary** to repent of sins, and change our lives — as Jesus put it, “Unless you repent, you will perish” (Lu 13:3)? Or is that just an optional ‘if you want to’ thing? God’s word is not



ambiguous in providing us with an answer.

Note just a couple of passages: “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for **if you do these things** you will never stumble; for **so an entrance will be supplied to you** abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pe 1:10-11). And John makes the same point, “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But **if we walk in the light** as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin**” (1 Jn 1:6-7).

These passages do **not** teach that we can earn our salvation. Even as they walk the walk, Christians will stumble and will continue to need God’s grace and forgiveness in Christ. Such passages teach a humble and **obedient** response to God’s grace. Such a response contributes nothing toward im-

pressing God with our goodness (any more than baptism impresses God with our goodness). Such a life provides **no** grounds for boasting before God. **But neither do these passages teach a cheap ‘do as you please’ grace.** Those who teach it that way give a license to sin to those who want to do so — to their own destruction (2 Th 1:8).

What God’s word **does** set forth are simple **conditions** which must be met: faith in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world, repentance from our past sins (coupled with the fruits of repentance), burial in water, and then walking in the light as God is in the light. This conditional nature of forgiveness offers no grounds for boasting; but it **does** test the humility of one’s heart.

Even as we meet these simple conditions, the only ‘boasting’ we can do is like Paul’s: “God forbid that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ” (Ga 6:14). I believe Paul had it right.

- *WKing*