

## 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

P.O. Box 447  
201 W. Chestnut Street  
Rogers, AR 72757  
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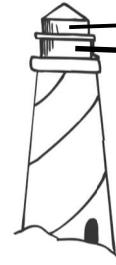
**Keep the faith – but  
not from others!**

## 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**

November 28, 2021

## Justification by Works and Baptism

by Matt Bassford

At the end of Romans 3 and the beginning of Romans 4, we encounter the most famous of Paul's teachings: justification by faith in Jesus. Throughout the context, he contrasts it with justification by works. Abraham was not justified by works, nor was David, nor can we be.

From this magnificent spiritual truth, a host of false doctrines have sprung. In particular, many have argued that justification by works means doing **anything**, and justi-

fication by faith means doing **nothing**. Thus, the argument continues, baptism cannot save us because it's a work. Instead, we should seek salvation by praying to Jesus and acknowledging our need to Him.

There are several Scriptural problems with this claim, but one of the most prominent is its misunderstanding of works in the context of Romans. Paul doesn't use 'works' to mean doing anything right. He uses it to mean doing **everything** right. >

## FAMILY NEWS

### PRAYER LIST –

*Preachers we support:* Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.  
*Sick:* Gary Fletcher, Tony Tolbert, Rai Starr, Diane Willis & Gerald Robertson  
*Shut-ins:* Betty Jo Young, Margaret Abel, Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Etta Frazelle, Mary Lou Lewis *Military:* Logan Dickey, Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS** – Tonight we are scheduled for the monthly Q&A lesson. Thanks to all who contributed questions to this effort!

**SENTENCE SERMON** – Elevate your Master, and become smaller in your own esteem, until, like the morning star, you fade away before the rising Son!

This, indeed, is the point of the first three chapters of the book. The Gentiles can't justify themselves by works because they are sinners. The Jews, even though they have the Law and seek to follow it, are sinners too. They can't justify themselves by works either. Thus, Paul concludes in Romans 3:20 that **no one** can be justified in God's sight by the works of the Law.

In all human history, only one man was baptized as part of justifying himself by works. That one was Jesus (Mt 3:13-15). John at first refused to baptize Jesus because he recognized that the Holy One was more righteous than he was. Jesus replied, however, "Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness." God's prophet commanded baptism, so Jesus obeyed the command though He had no need of forgiveness.

Jesus was justified by His obedience, but this only happened

because He lived a life of unbroken obedience. Should anyone have the temerity to call Him to account, He could assert His right to spend eternity with God because of His moral perfection. **That** is justification by works.

However, none of the rest of us seek baptism because we are fulfilling all righteousness. On the contrary, we seek it because we **haven't** fulfilled all righteousness. We aren't spiritual successes like Jesus. We are failures, and we know it. Our only hope lies in His power to cleanse and redeem, and through baptism, we call on His name, appealing to Him to wash away our sins.

Our baptism isn't part of justification by works. It's not asking for what we deserve. God forbid that I should ever get what I deserve! Instead, we seek justification by faith apart from works through baptism. >

## Another Perspective

## Filling The Void

"No, Tess, that's why you need a relationship with God," Laura corrected. "Your emptiness isn't going to be filled with anything here on earth. You need a closer relationship with Him. You need to let Him fill in those empty places." "But I go to church, and I've been a Christian since I was young. I suppose I should get more involved, do more things..." "I'm not talking about acts of service or works, although they both have their merit. But don't neglect an honest-to-goodness relationship with your heavenly Father by adding extra church activities." "But I thought fellowship at church was important." "And so it is. Working for the Lord is as well," Laura countered.

*(continued from page 2)*

Baptism actually does what sinner's-prayer advocates think the sinner's prayer does. In baptism, we don't proudly stand before God and present our spiritual credentials. Instead, we humble ourselves before Him and plead for His mercy, the mercy that we so desperately need and that our loving God is so eager to extend. >end<

"But fellowship with God, a real heart-to-heart, one-on-one friendship, is so necessary if you're to eliminate that void in your heart..."

From  
*The Long-Awaited Child*  
by Tracie Peterson

**Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! - I Jn 3:1**