

not been diligent enough. I have not been wise enough. I have not been holy enough. I have not been loving enough. In these and so many other areas, I see no cause for confidence in my own merit, yet I am to be confident.

Such confidence can only come from putting my trust in the grace of the Lord. It is so great that I no longer need to fret over the sufficiency of my own goodness. Whether that goodness be little or much, His grace is sufficient.

So far, I know that I have said little to settle the nerves of my concerned readers! If indeed we rely on the grace of Christ because we can make no meaningful contribution to our own salvation, doesn't that lead to an apathetic, do-nothing faith that is unconcerned with sin because God is just going to slosh a bucket of grace over it?

In the first place, I acknowledge that this is not merely a hypothetical. There are millions, both

in the Lord's church and outside of it, who treat the grace that they imagine they have received as a license to be worldly. Second, however, that question was answered 2000 years ago in Romans chapter 6.

Too often, we go to Romans 6 to find support for our beliefs about baptism but fail to reckon with the argument that the chapter makes. According to Paul, grace does not release us from the need to do anything. Instead, it puts us under obligation. We are freed from sin, but we become slaves of righteousness.

If we truly understand ourselves in this way, the notion of being do-nothing Christians is laughable. Earthly slaves are not known for diligence, but even they will work hard when under the eyes of their masters. And we can never escape the supervision of our Master.

We must consider ourselves as having no self-will left in the

things of the spirit because we have wholly given over that will to Jesus. We don't even have standing to ask how much or how little we should give and whether it will be good enough. We already have signed over everything.

This dovetails with James' discussion of justification by works (Ja 2). Scholars have pitted Paul and James against each other for centuries. However, they should have noted that James didn't merely cite Abraham, one of the most illustrious figures of the Old Testament, as an example of justification by works. He also cited Rahab.

I've watched Bible classes struggle with Rahab for years. How could God exalt a prostitute who helped the Israelites by lying??? However, that's not a difficulty with the text. It's the point of the text. We only become confused when we refuse to class ourselves with Rahab.

Rahab did not justify herself by being good enough. She justified

herself through the action that is inseparable from genuine faith. Instead of continuing to destruction with the people of Jericho, she cast her lot with God's people.

It is the same with us. If her service was tainted by lying, how much more is ours tainted by envy, pride, carelessness, indifference, and lack of love! All of us are in the business of offering blemished sacrifices. Nonetheless, like Rahab, we serve anyway. We have cast our lot with the people of God and are justified in His sight.

The grace of the Bible is not a blank check that allows us to sin. It is a demand that we put to death the old man of sin. None of us will ever succeed in so doing. None of us will ever come close. However, our souls do not depend on our success or failure. The same grace that asks for everything offers everything, so we may rest our hope not on ourselves but on the salvation available only in Christ.

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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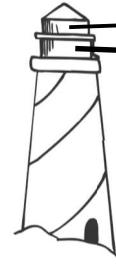
Tragedies – they can make
you bitter or better.

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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Salvation by Grace

by Matt Bassford

Recently, I have become an even louder proponent of grace, indeed of the naked necessity of grace, than I ever was before. I can tell from the comments I've been getting on social media that this has made some good brethren nervous. They reply with variations of, "Yes, but you have to do something." In light of this, I thought it would be useful to explain my thoughts more fully.

Every day, I am confronted with the reality that in the next couple of

years, I will die. The Bible tells me that I should be confident in the face of death, that I should contemplate the end of my life with hope rather than fear or despair. If so, that hope can have only one basis, and I am not it. I know myself too well. I believe that I am a better man than I have ever been before, but I also see more clearly the immense gap between my righteousness and the righteousness of Christ. If I have to be good enough, I assuredly have not been. I have >

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

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

Sick: G&K Fletcher, Tony Tolbert, Diane Willis, J&M Swim, Jean Marshall

Shut-ins: Betty Jo Young, Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Mary Lou Lewis

Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

SAM & HAYDEN – With the King's out of town today, we look forward to having Sam and Hayden covering the adult class and both sermons.

SENTENCE SERMON – The Law condemns the best of us while grace saves the worst of us.