

# Mormonism 10

by Gordon Fraser

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*The sermon argues that salvation is a gift from God through faith, contrasting this with the works-based beliefs of Mormonism.*

**Duration:** 41:00

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 15:1

**Topics:** "Christian Apologetics", "Salvation By Faith"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of believing in the gospel according to Christian beliefs. He highlights the need to trust in God's word and not be swayed by other religions. The speaker also discusses the concept of good works and the foundation of faith in Jesus Christ. He references passages from the Bible, such as 1 Corinthians and Ephesians, to support his points and explain the process of salvation from sin through grace and faith.

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## Transcript

This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. That's paramount, that's the thing. This chapter of Ephesians, for by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. Now why that last statement, lest any man should boast? Simply this, God is not indebted to us so that he has to accept our works for salvation. Putting works before salvation is just adding to the production of dead works.

Now the Thessalonian Christians are said to have turned from dead works to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his son from heaven. That is the process. What are dead works? They are the works of the flesh, they are the works of everyone who has not come to the point of accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior.

When we accept Christ as our Savior, a change comes. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus. After that point, the Holy Spirit of God is dwelling within us, and according to 2 Corinthians 5, we have become new creatures.

This is the point that we want to make. It isn't a progressive development in grace from a point of ignorance to a point of knowledge, or from a point of doing nothing to a point of doing works. Then finally

when we achieve enough, we are saved.

That is the Mormon position, as we have read to you from their own writings. It is a progressive thing. God says, No, you are already dead.

You are dead in sins. 3 Romans, the chapter that convicts everyone. No good thing from man in the life before he knows Jesus Christ as Savior.

This is the thing we have to keep reminding them. There is nothing that could be considered as good works before we have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the work of God that ye believe in him whom he has sent.

That is the point where the transaction is completed. Here in Ephesians, by grace you are saved through faith, that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God.

You don't work for a gift, you accept a gift. Not of works, lest man should boast, lest any man should boast. In other words, God isn't going to have us going around saying, Well, I did so much, and he did the rest.

The Mormons will show you a verse of scripture in the Book of Mormon, in 3 Nephi, I believe it is, 2 Nephi. We are saved by grace, I get this, after all that we can do. In other words, the works are the thing.

We have to provide these good works. Then, if there is anything left to make up for, my friend in Laramie, Wyoming said, We have a verse of scripture in the Book of Mormon, and he turned to it, and I helped him find it because I knew where it was, and he said, We are saved by grace, after all that we can do. And I said, Have you always done everything that you could do? Well, no.

He said, None of us are perfect. I said, Do you expect from now on that you will be able to do everything that would be required of you, all that you could do? Well, maybe not. I said, Then you are in a fix, because there is no salvation.

You are lost. Besides, the person who wrote that in the Book of Nephi certainly must have been peeking at Ephesians 2, 8 and 9 to make that paraphrase. And he admitted that we do have some problems with the Book of Mormon.

I said, You certainly do. That's one of them. The writer of the Book of Mormon very obviously had a copy of the King James Version in his hands, because they quote from it so copiously.

Twenty-two full chapters of the Book of Isaiah and other portions, including the Sermon on the Mount, are in the Book of Mormon in the language of the King James Version. Not paraphrased, but quoted exactly. The Book of Mormon claims to have been completed in 421 A.D. The King James Version wasn't done until 1611 A.D. How the writer of the Book of Mormon managed to get twenty-two chapters of the King James Version into the Book of Mormon is a mystery that so far nobody has been able to explain.

There are other problems that they bring up to us besides this matter of good works for salvation. That is the main one that we have to disabuse their minds of this. First of all, they are not Christians as they are.

They become Christians when they accept Jesus Christ as Savior. This is what we claim, and this is what we insist upon. That salvation is something that comes to us as a gift, because of the Lord Jesus Christ having done everything that was necessary for salvation.

Now, where do good works come in? At this point, they will try to divert you and will take you to the Epistle of James. The Epistle of James is one of their favorite books. Joseph Smith, as a young boy, claims that he read in the Book of James that if any man lack wisdom, he shall ask of God.

And he asked of God, or at least he pretended to, and got his answers. But the answers were not according to the gospel of the scriptures. But they liked the Epistle of James, and you bring up Ephesians 2, 8 and 9, you are saved by grace through faith without works.

And they would say, well, what does it say over in James? It says that faith without works is dead. And was not Abraham justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac? And apparently, if you just don't think of it, you are in the corner. And that's what they attempt to do.

But this is what you want to do whenever you are using a scripture with these people. Who was it written to? Who was it written by? At what time? For what purpose? Considering what goes before and what follows. The orderly way to look at any scripture.

Who was James written to? To the believing Jews that were scattered everywhere. In other words, the presumption to begin with that they are saved people. Well, then how does it say that you are saved by works? How was it that Abraham was justified by works when he offered up his son? Well, James is telling us not how we get saved, but how we behave ourselves as Christians.

If you want to make it very simple, someone gave me a definition or a six-word commentary on the book of James just recently. Don't just stand there, do something. Well, that's exactly what he's talking about.

Now, what is he talking about in Ephesians? He's talking about the matter of being saved from sin, because as we have it there, we are lost, we are part of this world system, we are lost in sins and trespasses, we are dead in trespasses and sins, we walk according to the spirit of disobedience, then he says this is how we get out of it. By grace are you saved through faith. Not of yourselves, this is the gift of God.

In James, for instance, what does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he has faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him? Is he talking about the salvation of the soul? No. He's talking about the vindication of our testimony as Christians. And the word saved can very often be translated delivered or vindicated.

And we can use that with discernment. But he's saying here, for instance, the matter of poverty, ministering to those who are poor. If you say to one of them, depart in peace, be clothed and fed.

There's a little exchange of words in the Islam countries. The beggars will hold out their hand, and they will say, the Lord will provide, and they ask for an alms. And the person who is refusing to give them alms sweeps by and says, the Lord will provide.

And that little exchange goes on in Muslim lands. You see, there's a commentary on this. If we say, what are you doing? You're showing that you are greedy, or you're not sympathetic.

But he says, even so, faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. So you see, what he's talking about here is the behavior of believers, not the matter of being saved from the penalty of our sins. Now take the case of Abraham.

It says, first of all, Abraham believed God was counseling him for righteousness. He was called a friend of God. Later on, here we have James saying, in fact he says both of these statements, but he says that Abraham was saved by, or by works when he offered up his only begotten son.

That was the work. What was the work? Simply that he believed God to the point of being willing to sacrifice his son if God demanded it. Now I know that you fear God, so you have not withheld your son, your only son from me.

So this person insists that whenever this is brought up, that you make the important emphasis, this is not talking about salvation from sin, this is talking for vindication of our Christian life by the demonstration of our good works. There's a little verse that I remember in my mind from way back. I would not work my soul to save, for that my Lord has done.

But I would work like any slave for the love of God's dear son. The works come after salvation. Why? Because we now have the capacity to perform good works.

We have those two natures in us. The old nature which can never produce good works. The old nature can produce dead works or wicked works.

The new nature can produce good works. Why? Because it's the Holy Spirit of God in us that enables us to perform works for him. Not that we are working to perpetuate our salvation, but we are working because we love the one whom we represent.

And this can be a very potent fact in any of our lives. This we want to emphasize when we are dealing with those who think they are justified by works for salvation. It just doesn't work out that way.

At this point I think I'll open it up for questions. We haven't had much time for questions, but tonight I have some questions. I want to give you a couple more little illustrations of how you can deal with these people when you are faced with it.

There are many ways, and you may develop one of your own. Any questions at this point on what we've talked about tonight? While Jesus was in the grave, he went and preached to all of those who were in prison and released them to believe the gospel that the Mormons preached. As a matter of fact, it was the Spirit that went and preached to the spirits in prison, the Holy Spirit, in the days of Noah.

Yes? Pardon? Do you believe in the life after death? Indeed you do. You certainly will. We will be in heaven with the Lord, and we are not unequal.

There is no unequal status in heaven and on earth, because we have all come in by the same route. We have accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior. The unpardonable sin is not murder.

No, it is attributing to the Holy Ghost the works of Satan. That is the only life we can spend. The only thing we can do once we are saved is to either be negative and do nothing, or else work for the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we die, if we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, we are immediately in his presence. If we are not, we are shut out from his presence. Those who are unbelievers, who reject the grace of God, there is no salvation for them.

It is a good point to discuss. I am very aware of this, and I know your point and I know your thinking, and it is a very valid point. I am sure a conversation will be very valuable on this.

The only thing we have in scripture is to go to hell, a hell prepared for the devil and his angels, but also for those who receive not the gospel. At this point I want to bring up one little point here. Very often when we are in discussions with Mormon people, we will come to an unsatisfactory conclusion.

They say, Well, we'll see you at the great white throne, and there it will be decided who is right. I always tell them I won't be at the great white throne, because I have already passed out of death into life. My judgment is passed.

So the only ones that are at the great white throne are those who will be eternally, this is the passing of sentence, this is to try to see whether they are saved or not, this is the passing of sentence, and the evidence is presented there. The fact that their names are not written in the book of life, and the fact that their sins accuse them. There is only one thing, and that is eternal judgment.

So no one will depart a saved person from the great white throne. Yes, the dead, the living, that's the Christian doctrine. Now what we are doing in these theories, we are making a distinction between what Christians believe and what Mormons believe.

We ask the question, is Mormonism Christian? The Christian belief is simply this, that those who are saved, who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, are saved for eternity. Those who reject him are doomed for eternity, and there is no alternative. In the Christian faith there is no alternative to either salvation or damnation.

It all depends upon what I do with the person of Jesus Christ, whether I accept him or not. Let's look, for instance, in John's gospel. In the 16th, 17th, and 18th verses, put these verses together when you are reading them.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. That's an absolute statement. No question of it.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Now, he that believeth on him is not condemned. But he that believeth not is condemned already.

Why? Because he is a great sinner? No. Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. So it isn't a matter of how much evil we have done, or how vile our evil is, whether it be murder or the theft of a stick of gum.

It doesn't matter. We are condemned for not believing the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Why? Because we are all in exactly the same boat, and the word says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

That's an absolute statement. So the Christian position is simply this. That if we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are saved, period.

And the condemnation for those who will not believe is that they haven't believed in the only begotten Son of God. It doesn't matter how much sinners there are. God doesn't send us to hell because we are sinners.

He sends us to hell because we do not accept his offer of mercy. It's as simple as that. So, we want to understand what we are talking about.

Are we talking about Christianity or are we talking about communism? They are two separate subjects. Yes? Yes. That's rather easy to do.

There are many people who will make a confession and submit to baptism, and they aren't saved at all. If they say, for instance, we believe Jesus is the Christ, and that's all that's required in certain groups. That isn't a Christian statement.

It's acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord, and accepting his offer of mercy. Let's look, for instance, over in 2 Corinthians 5. In the 15th verse, speaking of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, he died for all. He died for all, period.

When the Lord Jesus Christ assumed the debt of sin of the human race, he made provision so that anyone could come and believe. In other words, it's unto all. But Paul says it's upon all them that believe.

In other words, it's up to us to elect to be saved by accepting Jesus Christ as Savior. When we do that, it says here, therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Not someone reformed or not reconditioned, but new, because we died with Christ.

Now if we live, we live unto God. Why? Because he has reconciled us to God. He has made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God unto him.

There is much of profession that does not go to the point where the person has repented of their sins, or has come to the point of repentance. It's two different things. We realize we are sinners, we come to God, and we accept his provision for our salvation.

We may have been little sinners, we may have been great sinners, but the same salvation is for all. Among the apostles, for instance, many of them were just very honorable people. I'm thinking of Nathanael, for instance, the one who just adhered to the marriage law, who was a murderer.

They both were saved. They both became new creatures in Christ Jesus, and the past is wiped out. That's the point.

At salvation, the past is wiped out. God will not remember our sins as far as the East is from the West, so far as he removed our transgressions from us. As new creatures, we have a power to perform in a new life.

When we see empty profession, later on we see no works that equate with such a profession. The new life brings activity in the believer. In Galatians chapter 2, I have been crucified with Christ, the apostle Paul says.

Judicially executed. I was crucified with Christ. When Paul looked back at Calvary, he saw himself hanging there as one who was being crucified.

Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. In the life which I now live in the place I live, by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

So after conversion, there is a vital power within us that wasn't there before. And this manifests itself as the outflow of this conversion. This is very pertinent.

In the 3rd chapter of 1 Corinthians, he is talking here about this very thing, about whether we are producing carnal works or fleshly works, or whether we are producing good works. He says, I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for you weren't able to hear it, neither are you now able, for you are yet carnal. He goes on and condemns them for that.

Then, the 10th verse, according to the grace of God which is given unto me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

That is the foundation. Now if any man build on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. Now, if any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, yet he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. He is saved regardless of whether his works are burned up or not. Now this is the works, he is speaking of the works that we perform after we have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior.

Now, you can take the likeness of two individuals. One is a very prominent person who has done a great deal for the Lord, and yet his life is the same as the one who hasn't done much for the Lord. There are two people, one has achieved a great deal.

All their works will be burned regardless, and tested by the fire. Now the gold, silver and precious stones will remain. The wood, hay and stubble will be burned regardless.

No credit for that. But rewards are given, of course, to those who have received, or who have performed works that survive the fire. It isn't that they are going to be saved or lost, they are saved, it says.

No it isn't. We will be all equals as far as salvation is concerned, as far as the presence of the Lord is concerned. Works for God.

There are rewards that we probably can't understand, such as were given, let's say, back in those days, he is speaking in the frame of reference of the culture in which they lived. The men who performed athletic feats were given rewards. And those who didn't achieve had the rewards withdrawn.

But their position is not changed. Our position in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ is not changed. We are still saved.

That's what he says here. The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abides which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss. But he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. We've often had it put this way.

The one who has spent his life for the Lord Jesus Christ in the word and so forth, he will have a greater capacity to enjoy these things than one who has just as it were gotten saved, yet so as by fire. But as far as their salvation is concerned, they are equal. There is no difference.

One isn't more saved than the other. They are all saved equally. There is one other verse that I want to bring to you, and we are coming to a close now.

1 Corinthians 15. This has to do with a subject that is very prominent in Mormon activities, and that is the baptism for the dead. This is performed constantly.

For anyone who can produce the genealogy of his ancestors, he can be baptized as a proxy for that one in the temple. He can be baptized, or we can send the name in, and someone will be baptized for them. Now, obviously there is no such thing in scripture as baptism for the dead.

We have this one verse that is always used as the verse to commend this sort of thing. 2 Corinthians 15. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead die not at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead? This is speaking of those who in that time, not Christians but others, pagan people, who performed this ritual for the dead.

Why did they do it? Because they believed in a life after death. That's all. He is using it as an illustration.

He is not discussing baptism for the dead here at all. He is talking about the resurrection throughout this chapter. Incidentally, we have the gospel defined here in the first verse of this chapter.

I declare unto you the gospel. What is the gospel? Which I preached unto you, which also you received, and wherein you stand, and by which ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye believed as having believed a fable. For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

He was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. That's the definition of the gospel. It has to do with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And since he was raised from the dead, the only one who has ever been raised from the dead to remain resurrected, the only one, the Lord Jesus Christ, the fact that he was raised from the dead and appeared to them publicly, certifies our salvation. He died for our sins. Not that he had to die, because he had no sin.

But he died for our sins, that we might be saved. We said we'd close at 9 o'clock. We haven't finished all the material we wanted to discuss, but we at least may know what the gospel is according to what Christians believe.

This is something that is stated in absolutes in the scriptures. Folks say, well, they only say it once. Well, how many times does God have to speak before we believe it? Let's close with a word of prayer.

Then any discussions later on can continue as long as is necessary. Shall we pray? Brother Jeb Rawley, will you close with a word of prayer? Father, we thank you for thy word. We always welcome, and that's why we're here.

Yes, I knew that.

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