

Merit of Good Works

by Ian Paisley

The Gospel teaches that eternal life is a free gift through Christ, and not a reward for good works, which are the result of a changed heart.

Scripture: Romans 3:20, Romans 4:4, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 2:8, Titus 3:5

Topics: "Good Works", "Justification By Faith"

Description

Ian Paisley preaches about the contrasting views of Popery and the Gospel on the question of Good Works, emphasizing the deep error in the belief that good works alone merit eternal life. He highlights the confusion and fatal consequences of relying on one's works for salvation, pointing out the true doctrine of Rome as opposed to the true gospel that offers forgiveness, justification, and sanctification through Christ without the need for meritorious works. Paisley stresses that while good works are important and will be rewarded, eternal life is a free gift from God, received through faith in Christ's righteousness.

Transcript

The question of Good Works is one of infinite moment. On this subject, Popery and the Gospel teach a very different doctrine: the Pope teaches that "our good works do merit eternal life, as worthy not only by reason of God's covenant and acceptance, but also by reason of the work itself." Such is the view of Bellarmine a Popish author of great distinction; and another of equal eminence, puts the point still more tersely. Vasquez has laid it down that "the good works of just persons are, of themselves, without any covenant or acceptance, acceptance, worldly of the reward of eternal life." The error here is deep and deadly.

Where are the just men to be found to do these works while in a state of condemnation just, and yet the subjects of perdition. Besides, it is here assumed that a man may by some means become just without having eternal life, and, consequently, while in a state of spiritual death; and that, on attaining to that just state, it becomes the ground of his claim to that eternal life. The idea is as confused as it is fatal; it is at utter variance with all correct views, both of the law and of the Gospel. The sane writer has very fairly, clearly, and at length stated the Popish doctrine as follows:

"Seeing the works of just men do merit eternal life, as an equal recompense and reward, there is no need that any other condign merit, such as that of Christ, should interpose, to the end that eternal life might be rendered to them. Wherefore we never pray to God that, by the merits of Christ, the reward of eternal life may be given to our worthy and meritorious works; but that Christ's grace may be given to us, whereby we

may be enabled worthily to merit this reward."

Let us hear the Decrees of the Council of Trent on this subject:

"If any one shall say, that the good works of a man that is justified are in such wise the gifts of God, as that they are not also the good merits of him that is justified; or, that the said justified, by the good works which are performed by him through the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ, whose living member he is, does not truly merit increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of that eternal life, if so be, however, that he depart in grace, and, moreover, an increase of glory; let him be anathema." (Sese. vi. Can. 32)

This is the true doctrine of Rome on this great question. To use commercial language, the whole world is bankrupt, Christ comes to it as the possessor of boundless wealth, and gives to everyone who will receive, that he may go and trade there with to realize capital with which to clear off his obligations.

Now this doctrine is untrue; this gospel is a gospel of death! It dishonors Christ and destroys men. The true gospel comes to man, not only as not just, but as dead in trespasses and sins, and provides forgiveness of all their transgressions; it confers upon them a free and full salvation, comprising both a change of state and a change of character, justification, and sanctification, a title to heaven, and a meetness for it, without money and without price.

Thus, while it thoroughly clears away all past grounds of condemnation, it provides for the future by bestowing upon the penitent believer the perfect righteousness of Christ; that is, he is accounted as righteous for the sake of Christ. Up to this point the Scriptures know nothing of any good works but those of Christ; but none such appear: the mercy the believer has received fills him with love, prompts him to do whatever his Lord has commanded.

The tree is now made good, and good fruits follow, and in their absence there is no proof that the tree has been medicated. Such works, however, are not his title to eternal life. He who does such works, works not for life, but from it. Such works will be, nevertheless, rewarded; but eternal life is the free gift of God, through Christ, and wholly independent of any works of merit whatever. For the ungodly, Christ died, and through his death Scripture everywhere testifies the ungodly are justified.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ian-paisley/merit-of-good-works/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net