

# You Either Have It, or You Don't

## Ephesians 2:8-9 - Shadrach Means

Media Reference Number **GS 768** Date: 10-08-2023 2<sup>nd</sup> Service

**Key Words:** Salvation

Today, we are looking at the topic of salvation. Specifically, because there is much confusion about the relationship between faith and works, we will examine how a person is saved and if anything is necessary to keep it.

On the topic of salvation, I would like to put forth.

You either have it, or you don't!  
Salvation isn't bought, earned, or kept!

Works don't earn or keep salvation!  
Works are the response to being saved!

*“God our Father has made all things depend on faith so that whoever has faith will have everything, and whoever does not have faith will have nothing.”*

Martin Luther

### **Intro - It begins with an offer.**

**John 3:16-17** <sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

- Salvation began in the heart of God because of His love.
- It is a love that has been demonstrated.
  - **Romans 5:8** “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- *By default, we are ALL born sinners.*
  - **Romans 3:23-25** <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>being justified (declared not guilty) freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God set forth as a propitiation (the sacrifice that satisfies) by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness,”
  - **Romans 5:12** “...just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

- **1 Corinthians 15:21-22** <sup>21</sup> For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”
- *Separated from God by our sin.*
  - **Isaiah 59:2** “But your iniquities have separated you from your God.”
- *Therefore, God did for us what we could not do for ourselves.*
  - **Romans 8:3** “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son.”
  - **Acts 13:38-39** “...let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; <sup>39</sup> and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

## **Intro - That offer requires it be received.**

**Ephesians 2:8-9** <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

- *The offer of Grace –*
  - Unmerited Favor
    - **Ephesians 2:7** “...that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”
      - We cannot earn God’s love! It is a free gift!
- *Received by Faith –*
  - “*Faith, however, is not a quality, a virtue, or a faculty. It is not something man can produce. It is simply a trustful response that is itself evoked by the Holy Spirit.*

*Lest faith should be in any way misinterpreted as man’s contribution to his own salvation, Paul immediately adds a rider to explain that nothing is of our own doing but everything is in the gift of God. Does “and this” (kai touto) connect with “faith,” with “saved,” or with the entire clause? Probably the latter interpretation is preferable. Hence Barclay translates: “The whole process comes from nothing that we have done or could do.” The element of “givenness” applies to faith as well as to grace, for faith is a direct outcome of hearing the saving message (Rom 10:17).”* <sup>1</sup> Wood, A. S. (1981). *Ephesians*. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians through Philemon* (Vol. 11, p. 36). Zondervan Publishing House.

- *Gift of God –*
  - *It is the gift of grace received by faith.*

- **Romans 4:16** “Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace...”
  - In the same way, you use your hands to receive a birthday gift, you receive God’s gift by believing (faith).
- **Acts 16:30-31** “...what must I do to be saved?” <sup>31</sup> So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved...”
- **Acts 17:30-31** “<sup>30</sup> Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”
- **Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
  - Do you earn the gifts you receive on your birthday?
  - Or do you receive them?
- *Why did God offer this gift?*
  - Because God IS love!
    - **1 John 4:8** “God is love.”
      - *“But God has two kinds of attributes: those that He possesses of Himself (intrinsic attributes, such as life, love, holiness), and those by which He relates to His creation, especially to man (relative attributes). For example, by nature God is truth; but when He relates to man, God’s truth becomes faithfulness. God is by nature holy; and when He relates that holiness to man, it becomes justice.”* Weirsbe
  - Because “*God is Love*” He extended His love to whoever will receive it.
    - **John 3:17-18** “<sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. <sup>18</sup> “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”
    - **John 5:24** “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

*You Either have it or you don't.*

## **1. So, what are you trying to do?**

**Galatians 3:1-3** “<sup>1</sup> O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? <sup>2</sup> This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—<sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?”

- *You cannot earn salvation, so why would you try to keep it?*
  - *You can't lose it! Because you didn't earn it!*
  - *If you can lose it by sinning, it would mean you can keep it by your works.*
    - **Ephesians 2:8-9** “<sup>8</sup>...it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works.”
    - **Titus 3:4-5** “<sup>4</sup> But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, <sup>5</sup> not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.”
    - **1 Peter 1:3-5** “<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are kept by the power of God through [faith] for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”
  - *You cannot lose your salvation because you either have it or don't!*
    - **Ephesians 1:13-14** “<sup>13</sup> In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.”
      - Could Hebrews 6 be talking about losing your salvation?
        - **Hebrews 6:4-6** “<sup>4</sup> For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup> and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, <sup>6</sup> if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.”
          - If this passage teaches that you can lose your salvation, you could never get it back.
            - As Christians, we still commit sin.
              - **1 John 1:8-9** “<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us

our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- If Hebrews 6 is teaching we can lose salvation, we could never get it back. None of us would be going to heaven.
- *I think Hebrews 6 is describing what John writes about.*
  - **1 John 2:19** “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”
- *Foolish Galatians – “In Galatians, the word is anoētos which, quite differently, suggests the actions of one who can think but fails to use his powers of perception.”* <sup>1</sup> Boice, J. M. (1976). *Galatians*. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians* (Vol. 10, p. 453). Zondervan Publishing House.
  - *They were being foolish because they believed they could be perfected in the flesh by keeping the law.*
    - **REMEMBER: What God started in us, He will complete.**
      - **Philippians 1:6** “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”
- *Bewitched* – to deceive a person by devious or crafty ways.
  - They were deceived into believing they could be more righteous and closer to God if they kept the law.
    - Could God love you any more than He already does?
- *Hearing of Faith* –
  - *“Faith consists not of working, but by receiving” JFB Commentary*
    - **Galatians 2:16** <sup>16</sup> “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”
    - **John 6:63** “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.”
- *Start to Finish* –
  - **Galatians 2:20** “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

## **2. So, what is the right view of works?**

**James 2:14-18** <sup>14</sup> “What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be

warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? <sup>17</sup> Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. <sup>18</sup> But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

- ***Faith without works is dead!***

- **James 2:26** “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”
  - Works are the evidence that true biblical faith has been exercised.
- **Matthew 7:21** “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”

John Calvin wrote,

“It is faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies can never be alone.”

<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 354). Victor Books.

### **3. So, rest in what He did!**

**Galatians 3:5-9** <sup>5</sup> Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? <sup>6</sup> just as Abraham *“believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”*

<sup>7</sup> Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”*

<sup>9</sup> So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.”

- ***Hearing of Faith –***

- **Hebrews 11:1** “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”
  - ***Faith*** – can also be translated ‘to trust’ or ‘have confidence in.’
  - ***Substance*** – is that which provides the basis for trust and reliance.
    - In this case, God provides the basis for the trust, His Son!

- ***Abraham –***

- Paul quotes Genesis 15:6, “Abraham believed (trusted) God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”
- There are three kinds of Righteousness the bible speaks about.

- 1. Self-Righteousness –***

- a. Self-righteous people are usually very legalistic. They tend to think that they have the ability in themselves alone to please God by their works.

- i. **Philippians 3:8-9** “I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but

that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”

1. This was the case of the Galatians. They had turned from trusting Christ for their righteousness to trusting in their ability to keep the law.

b. *Imputed Righteousness* –

i. *Impute* – Charge to his account or to put to one’s account.

1. The righteousness of Christ is put in our account.
2. Our sin isn’t kept in our account.

a. **1 Peter 3:18** “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God”

b. **2 Corinthians 5:21** “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

- ii. This was Paul’s point. We are righteous because of Christ!
- iii. Salvation is entirely based on what Christ did NOT what I do or don’t do.

2. *Practical Righteousness* –

a. **Romans 8:4** “that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

i. This righteousness is then accomplished through walking in the Spirit.

1. We don’t become sinless, but we do sin less!
2. God sees us as sinless based on Christ.

ii. Moment-by-moment choices.

1. Choosing to walk in the Spirit vs. the Flesh!

a. **Galatians 5:7-26**

- **Romans 4:1-8** “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? “*Abraham believed God, and it was* accounted to him for righteousness.” <sup>4</sup> Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. <sup>5</sup> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, <sup>6</sup> just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: <sup>7</sup> “*Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;* <sup>8</sup> *Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.*”

iii. **James 2:23-24** “And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “*Abraham believed God, and it was* accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. <sup>24</sup> You

see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”

1. *Justified* – to demonstrate that something is morally right.
  - a. *Just-if-ie'd* never sinned
    - i. God cannot and will not acquit the wicked!
      - **Nahum 1:3** “The LORD *is* slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*.”
        - *Acquit* – to leave unpunished.
- iv. **Romans 3:23-26** “<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, <sup>26</sup> to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”
  1. *Justifier* – to put someone at right relationship with another.
    - We are put in right relationship (made just) with God the Father through Jesus Christ (the Justifier).

*Let's live how Paul wrote to the church in Galatia!*

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**Galatians 2:19-20** “<sup>19</sup> For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. <sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh *I live by faith in the Son of God*, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”