

St. Paul Lutheran Church

Sunday Morning Bible Class

Formula of Concord Series

Article 4 – Good Works

The Questions at Issue:

- First: A) Good works are necessary to salvation and it is impossible to be saved without them.
B) Good works are detrimental to salvation.
C) Good works are necessary.

- Second: A) Words like "necessary" and "free" should not be used in connection with good works
B) Good works are not optional for regenerated persons, who are obligated to render such obedience.

Why It Matters

- 1) An incorrect understanding about good works is a constant threat to the gospel.

Romans 11:6 And if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

- 2) The role that good works play in connection with *justification* differs dramatically from their role in *sanctification*.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

What the Bible Teaches

^{NKJ} **Romans 4:5** But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.

^{NKJ} **Galatians 2:16** "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.

^{NKJ} **Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

^{NKJ} **Titus 3:5** not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

^{NKJ} **Romans 13:3-4** For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴ For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who practices evil.

^{NKJ} **1 Timothy 6:17-18** Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share.

- 1) Like fruit from a good tree, good works certainly and absolutely follow genuine faith.
- 2) Only a dead faith produces no good works ("Whatever is not of faith is sin").
- 3) Good works should be completely excluded from any discussion of salvation and justification.
- 4) All men – especially believers – are obligated to do good works.
- 5) "Justify" means "to declare not guilty" or "to pronounce free from sin."
- 6) When used in this context, words like "necessary," "ought," and "must" are in no way contrary to sound doctrine.
- 7) However when applied to believers, the words "necessity" and "necessary" are to be understood as involving not coercion or force, but the willing obedience of believers who render such service spontaneously and willingly according to the new man.
- 8) It is not left to the regenerated person's option or opinion to do or not do good.
- 9) Because of the sinful flesh, such spontaneous and willing service is never perfect in the child of God.
- 10) Good works are testimonies of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They play no role in our justification and cannot preserve us in the faith.

What the Bible Rejects

- 1) We reject that good works are necessary to salvation.
- 2) We reject the notion that no man has been justified without or in the absence of good works.
- 3) We reject the rather absurd notion that good works are detrimental to salvation.
- 4) Any notion that only divine gifts dwell in the Christian, rather than God himself.
- 5) The idea that Christians need never be exhorted to carry out good works.
- 6) The error that the law should never be preached to Christians.
- 7) The false teaching that faith can continue to exist in the heart of those who shun good and persist in sin.