

Purchased for Good Works

Titus 2:14

These days it is easy to lose sight of why God gives us salvation through His Son. We live in a selfish culture that believes that God should cater to our own will and fulfill our own pleasures. We forget that our salvation in Christ is meant to make us acceptable for serving God, and not the other way around. Thus, if we want to retain our salvation when the Judgment Day comes, we must remember why it is that we have been purchased by the blood of Christ.

Paul helps us with this in Titus 2:14, saying that Jesus Christ “*gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*”

Purify For Himself His Own Special People

God had a reason for sending His Son. According Eph. 2:10, we are His workmanship, created for good works. “Workmanship” means “product, what has been made” (Vine’s). Christians are the result of God’s work through Christ.

Thus, God created us in Christ Jesus for the express purpose of serving Him through good works. “*But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life*” (Rom. 6:22). Before Christ we were unworthy, but through Christ our good works are accepted. Consider the following passages:

- 2 Cor. 9:8: The purpose for God’s grace is to make us sufficient that we may have an abundance of good works.
- Col. 1:9-10: Our purpose in learning about God is to that we may learn how to be pleasing to Him in every good work.
- 2 Tim. 2:21: The purpose for overcoming sin is so that we may be prepared for every good work.
- 2 Tim. 3:16-17: The purpose for the Scriptures is to equip God’s people for every good work.
- Titus 3:8: True faith in God is one that maintains good works.

What we learn from these passages is that good works are the result of righteousness, not the source of righteousness. God expects us to be “*fruitful in every good work,*” not because He wants us to earn our salvation, but because that is why He made us clean. While we were in sin, our work was contrary to God. Whatever good works we did outside of Christ could not be accepted by God because we were defiled. But Jesus, with His blood, cleanses us from sin thereby making us acceptable to God. When we do good works we are not earning our salvation, but merely doing that which we were created in Christ to do.

If indeed we have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, then we must consider it our life’s purpose is to bear fruit for God through good works. That is why Jesus said in [Luke 17:10](#), “*...when you have done all of those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have what was our duty to do.’*” When we are doing every good work, it is not that God owes us anything, but we are simply doing what we are supposed to do.

Seeing our need to do good works, the following question should be brought to mind.

What Are “Good Works”?

When many people think of good works their mind is automatically drawn to the charitable organizations that exist in the world. But Christians need to understand that “good works” are not defined by the world nor by cultural values. For in every culture there exists a different standard for good works. In our culture there is a great emphasis on giving money to charitable organizations, many of which (though not all) support sinful practices such as abortions and homosexuality. In the denominational world social wellbeing is given greater importance than spiritual wellbeing (they seek to feed the belly and not the soul).

But we who seek to follow Christ must understand that we cannot learn the good works of God through the wisdom and values of the world (1 Cor. 1:21). Therefore, we must avoid the tendency to define good works by our own preconceived ideas of what is good.

The good works of the world ignore God, while **the good works in Christ are defined by the will of God**. In Eph. 2:10 we are told that the works which we were created to fulfill were defined even before we were created. In Heb. 13:20-21 we learn that through the blood of Jesus Christ we are made complete for every good work. Notice the definition of “good works” in this passage, *“to make you complete in every good work **do to His will.**”* God alone is good (Mark 10:18). Thus, only that which comes from God is good. We cannot know what is good without first knowing the will of God. Therefore the Hebrew writer says that when we are doing the good works of God He is *“working in you what is well pleasing **in His sight** through Jesus Christ.”*

In 2 Tim. 3:16-17 Paul reminded Timothy that the Scriptures are able to make the man of God *“complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* All the good works that God wants us to do are revealed in the Scriptures. Likewise, according to Col. 1:9-10, in order for us to be fruitful in every good work we must first seek a full knowledge of the will of God.

Therefore, the only way to learn about the good works of God is to study the Scriptures, to seek a knowledge and understanding of the will of God. As Paul said in Eph. 5:17, *“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”*

In the Scriptures we learn that the good works of God consist of both physical and spiritual works: Heb. 13:15: The fruit of our lips (praise to God, giving thanks). Gal. 5:22-23: Fruit of the Spirit consists of spiritual characteristics. Phil. 4:16-17: The fruit of supporting the gospel. Heb. 13:16: Sharing with those who have need. 2 Cor. 9:1: Ministering to the needs of the saints. Gal. 6:10: Taking every opportunity to do good to all, especially to those of the household of faith: common courtesy, helping every need. Titus 3:14: *“And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.”*

Essential Nature of Good Works

“Religion” refers to an outward or external show of piety. In our culture the religion of many Christians consists of nothing more than keeping traditions and weekly rituals which really have no true meaning because “piety” that consists of nothing more than ceremony and tradition is useless to God. As James said in James 1:26-27, such religion is useless because it does not bear fruit. Therefore, concerning individual responsibility, James teaches us the meaning of *“pure and undefiled religion”*; that it works to help those who need the most help (such as widows and orphans).

The point that James makes in 1:27 is the same one that Jesus made on many occasions. He often stressed the importance of good works and bearing fruit: Matt. 5:13: Tasteless salt (Christian that does not bear fruit) is good for nothing. Matt. 5:14-16: Light is not for hiding (we are lamps, lit by Christ). Our light shines by our good works, but if we have no good works we have no purpose in Christ. Matt. 7:19: *“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and*

thrown in the fire.” Mark 4:19: The unfruitful seed is one that has been choked by the cares of the world (allowing busy schedules and worldly desire deter us from serving God). Luke 12:22-27: Though we may lay up physical treasures, if we do not bear fruit to God then we have no life with Him.

Finally, in His *Parable of the Vine and the Branches* in John 15:1-8, Jesus taught that He is the Vine and God’s people are the branches. As branches we are joined to Christ for the express purpose of bearing fruit. If we are in Christ, then we must bear fruit; it is why He purchased us. If we think that we belong to Christ, but are not bearing fruit through good works, then understand that we will be cut off where we will wither and die and be thrown into the fire (vs. 6). But if our heart is right then we will bear fruit in Christ and our fruit will be precious in the sight of God.

Conclusion

For many of us, we need to rethink our purpose as Christians. We were purchased so that we may fill our lives with good works and bear fruit for God in righteousness. But if we are not bearing fruit, the blood of Christ cannot help us. Let us therefore bring to mind the instructions given to Titus in Titus 3:14, “*And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.*”

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