

A photograph of a person's hands holding a blue Bible. The Bible has 'HOLY BIBLE' printed on its cover in white capital letters. The person is wearing a dark-colored t-shirt. The background is a wooden surface. The text 'The Christian Faith & The Christian Works' is overlaid in white, serif font on the right side of the image.

# The Christian Faith & The Christian Works

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## **Christian Faith and Christian Works**

*"For by grace we are all saved through faith" and not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, Not of works lest any man should boast." Eph 2:8-9*

*"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men teaching s that denying ungodliness, and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. "Titus 2:11-12*

*"For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory but not before God.*

*For what doth the scripture say, Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*

*Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of Grace, but of debt. but to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly his faith is counted for righteousness." Romans 4:2-5.*

*"What doth it profit my bethren, though a man says he hath faith and have not works? can faith save him?"*

*Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? and the scripture was fulfilled which says "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God" James 2:14,21-23*

**T**here are many who get confused trying to reconcile the teaching of Paul and James on faith and works. Is justification by faith or by works? Is salvation by faith or by works?

The "faith alone" theology not properly understood has led many into heresy, and many into turning the grace of God into a license for sin.

On the surface of the foregoing scriptures, one would easily see that there is an assertion that one is justified by faith and not by works, and again an apparent contradiction that one cannot be thus justified. For instance, Abraham is said to have been justified by faith in which it is said "not of works lest he should have something to boast of", but he is again mentioned in James to have been justified not without works. How is it that from Abraham's justification or better yet from the exposition of his justification before God, we have so apparent a contradiction that drives many into believing that apostle Paul and apostle James disagreed on the matter of justification and salvation, thinking Paul taught faith without work, whereas apostle Paul taught on faith without the works of the law (law of Moses).

*"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus*

*Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."* Gal 2:16

Paul did not teach justification or salvation that rules out works of faith, nor could he have taught salvation by faith that should not be worked out ( Phil 2:12), for Christ works in whoever he saves both to will and to do God's good pleasure (Phil 2:13). If this were not the case, then Paul would be teaching a dead faith (James 2:17). Let's realize that Paul explained that the grace by which we are saved through faith is the same Grace that teaches denial of ungodliness and worldly lust, and a sober, righteous and godly living in this present world. How can one be said to be in that Grace by faith if he does not live soberly, righteously, and godly; or how can one be said to live soberly, righteously, and godly without sober, righteous, and godly works to show? (James 2:18)

Even so, the apostle James was not teaching justification or salvation partly by faith and partly by works, as in they doing their part one after the other: one fulfilling what is lacking in the other. Such teaching runs contrary to scripture truth, as it is to say that we are saved partly by Jesus and partly by Christ: Jesus fulfilling what is lacking in Christ and Christ fulfilling what is lacking in Jesus, or to say that Jesus saves us halfway and Christ completes it. Just as Jesus is not separate from Christ, so the Christian faith is not separate from the Christian works.

James in his teaching was correcting those who were trying to separate faith from works. Separating work from faith produces dead faith, and dead faith is no faith at all. Dead faith cannot effect anything, nor can it save, for dead faith is actually no faith, just as having a dead bodyguard is actually having no bodyguard at all. And in as much as faith without works is dead faith, so works without faith are dead works, works that amount to nothing before God.

The Christian faith and the Christian works are one thing and cannot be separated! Just as the savior is manifested in and by Jesus Christ, one undivided person, so salvation is manifested when faith is in works and works are in faith, as Jesus is in Christ and Christ is in Jesus.

We can't be talking about the Christian faith without talking about Christian works, for they are inseparably one thing. For instance, you can't separate life from life operations. Life operations prove that life is present. A table is non-living because it can't manifest life operations, i.e. ability to move on its own, breathe, feed, respond to stimuli, grow, pass out waste products, reproduce and die. The absence of life operations is the absence of life. Living works prove living faith, and "no work" proves "no faith. How can you be justified by faith without works when no work proves no faith?

Abraham had no *works of his own* that could justify him before God, but Abraham's belief in God could not be a dead one: it manifested accordingly in his work of faith ( offering his son), and so the scripture that Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness was fulfilled.

It is vain for one to think that his own good works would do something for him and Christ do the rest, just as much as it is for someone to think that his own faith would do something for him while Christ would do the rest. This is because all such reliance on self-faith and self works run contrary to the truth of saving faith and saving works.

In Romans 4:2, the scripture says Abraham was not justified by works, else he would have had something to boast of, yet the scripture says in James 2:14 that Abraham was justified by works in offering up Isaac. Now by what works were Abraham not justified (which he never even had)? Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us: "by grace ye are saved through faith and not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast." Not of work means not of self works, your own good works. The works that justify are what the Bible calls: works of faith: for when God's word mix with God's given Faith, works are produced \_works by which a person is justified (Heb 4:2). When the word of God came to Abraham, it mixed with God's given faith in Abraham (not Abraham's own faith), and Abraham acted accordingly, making him the friend of God (James 2:23). Own

faith and own works in which one can glory are but dead faith and dead works\_ let no flesh glory before God (1 Corinthians 1:29).

The word 'Christian faith means believing in Jesus. However, what is there to believe in this Jesus? It is about <sup>1</sup> believing what he claims to be \_ he claims to be the son of God; <sup>2</sup>believing what he did \_he died for the remission of sins, he resurrected, and ascended, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead; <sup>3</sup>believing in and submitting to his lordship; <sup>4</sup>believing in and following his teachings. This is the faith. This is the faith that justifies.

Justification by own works is throwing away all this that Christ has done and just taking up some good works by which one can save oneself independent of God. This is but futile.

No one can be saved neglecting all that Christ has done. Christ is the only way to the Father. He is the sacrifice of God for sin. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the life, so he that must live, must live by his faith, or else he is in condemnation (John3:18), in sin (John 16:8-9), and in death(John 3:15;17:3;1John 5;12;13). No one can be saved without heeding and following his teaching (act 11:13-14,1 tim4:16, James1:21).

Think of Abraham being justified by a dead faith. What power is in a dead faith? Every living faith has an action to it. Belief



causes you to do or say. It is this consequent doing or saying that is called work of faith. When this is in place, we called it working faith, a living faith, a saving faith. So Abraham had saving faith. Apostle Paul knew that. What he meant was that Abraham had no works which could justify or save him outside or before his encounter with and believing in the God who spoke to him, for justification is by faith in God. Abraham in believing God did what God told him and was justified thereby, not by any prior works of any law whatsoever. This Apostle Paul meant, and Apostle James clarified using Paul's own example. Some people have deceived themselves into thinking that justification by faith means having to do nothing. But justification by faith means obeying God rather than seeking your own goodness in yourself through any works whatsoever by which you can boast of your inherent worthiness. That is self-righteousness. Self-righteousness is vain. God in his word has said that the heart of man is desperately wicked (Jer 17:9), and Jesus revealed that no man, in himself, is good except God (Matt 19:27).

Furthermore, understand that to believe itself is an action. Believe is a transitive verb. When people asked Jesus what to do that they may work the work of God, he told them that the work of God is to believe in him who he has sent (Jn 6:29). When Peter was asked what to do so they could be saved, he said they should *repent and be baptized* (Act 2:38). Paul told the jailer to

*believe* (Act 16:31 ). He taught the gentiles to turn unto God and *do the works meet for repentance* (Acts 26:20 )." With the heart one believes, with the mouth *confession is made* unto salvation"(Rom 10:10 ). "He that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be saved"(Mk 16:16)." Whoever shall *call* upon the name of the Lord shall be saved(Rom 10:13)." "He that shall *endure* to the end shall be saved"(Matt 10:22). "He is able to save them to the uttermost that *come* unto God by him" (Heb:25). "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey* him" (Heb 5:9)." Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine, *continue in them*, for in doing this thou shall both save thyself and they that hear thee"(1Tim 4:16). In all of these instances, we see that the italicized are corresponding actions to be done either mental or physical in order to be saved. Works of faith are actions of faith that can't be separated from faith. This obviously proves that no real faith without works! The Christian faith and Christian works are inseparable. No Christian works, no Christian faith. The Christian's faith manifests in Christian works; the Christian's works are done in Christian faith!

Moreso, what apostle Paul was showing was that people can be saved without the law of Moses, or like Abraham without their prior good works.

We must realise that true Christian works are the works of true Christian faith. Without good works, a professing Christian is

unfruitful (Titus 3:14), and the unfruitful vine will be cut off (John 15:2), for if true faith were in his heart, the Lord would work in him both to will and to do his good pleasure (Phill 2:13). How can it be that he believes in God but will not do God's good pleasure? That would not be better than Satan's belief that there is one God, which has no saving effect on him (James 2:19). Such vain hypocrisy is as self-deceiving as one who claims to love God but does not love his neighbor (1Jn 4:20-21), or claims to love God and yet loves the things of this world (1John 2:15).

Where the misconception of many lies is there where they believe that apostle Paul's statement of faith alone means faith as signifying a single power of the mind. That is as flawed as to think that when Paul said "I have determined to know nothing among you but Christ and him crucified" he inferred that all knowledge, whether of the birth, life, resurrection, and ascension of Christ was rejected by him as quite useless and unprofitable. Obviously, by the cross alone, he meant the whole process, doctrine, and precept of the crucified Christ, in other words, the whole gospel religion. So it is also when he said 'faith alone', for where the whole Christian joy, hope, comfort, and salvation is ascribed to any one thing, that things stand for the whole religion of the gospel which is *the faith of Christ*. When Paul said, I am not ashamed of *the cross of Christ*, for it is the power of God unto salvation, he also meant what Jesus meant when

he said "who has not denied my faith, "i.e the gospel religion of Christ.

In sum, we are saved by faith alone, just like we are saved by the cross alone, means we are saved by believing God through the revealed faith (gospel religion) of Christ. Faith in Christ is the whole believing, following, and obeying Christ, not just a one-time single mental power. Abraham trust God's word and obeyed God. This is what is meant by Abraham believed God, and this Apostle James explained.