**Faith that Works**

What does it take to be saved? “He that believes…

* Romans 10:13 “Whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."
* Romans 10:9 If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
* Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

### [John 3:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A16&version=ESV) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

But is it just believing or having Faith that saves us? For if it is just believing in God then wouldn’t the enemy also be saved but we know it was his actions (Pride) that caused him to be cast out of heaven.

James 2:19-20 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe and tremble!  But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

So, this brings us to a very important question are good deeds required or is just having faith enough to get you by

This is perhaps the most important question in all of Christian theology. This was the question that started the Reformation. It created the split between the Protestant churches and Catholic Church.

* **Is salvation by faith alone, or by faith plus works?**

Am I saved just by believing in Jesus, or do I also have to do certain things to earn my salvation

The bible may seem somewhat confused on this subject

Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8–9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Romans 11:6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace

But James write in James 2:26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

James 2:17–18 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

James 2:24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

So Paul seems to write that faith alone saves us and James writes faith without works is dead

It is easy to understand how someone could get confused by this. Many people like to attach themselves to Paul’s verses so they can go on with unchanged lives, after accepting Christ, and feel that they are saved. Others use James’s verses to believe they need to earn their salvation.

To truly understand what is going on here we need to step back and understand where Paul and James are coming from when writing these verses.

So if we look at the context in which Paul is writing we see that Paul is talking to the new gentile Churches that were being told by Jews that they needed to follow the Jewish traditions and Laws like circumcision and following the commandments to be saved. So Paul was emphasizing that we are saved through grace and not by following the old covenant requirements of the LAW.

Romans 3:28 For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from **works of the law.**

Galatians 2:16 yet we know that a person is not justified[a] by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by **works of the law**, because by **works of the law** no one will be justified.

The saved by grace position is supported by the story of Criminal on The Cross next to Jesus:

Luke 23:39-43 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+23%3A39-43&version=ESV#fen-ESV-25964a)] saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!”  But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”  And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

This man had no time to do any works but was promised to be in heaven just for showing he had faith. So we know we are saved through Grace.

Again we need to look at the context in which James is writing. James is writing to “religious” people who know the lord and are doing nothing but relying on Jesus to save them. We also see that the works James is talking about is not the Jewish LAW but good deeds done to help others

James 2:14-17 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Jesus said in Matthew

Matthew 25:41-43 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,  I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’

So we can conclude it is definitely more than just works that saves us.

So James was not saying that justification is by faith plus works, but rather that a person who is truly justified by faith will have good works to show their faith.

Jesus backs this up by telling us

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Jesus even goes on to say

Matthew 7:19  Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Even Paul write agrees

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.

**🡪So if you have no works maybe that shows that you have no real faith**

In the end all your good works do not go without reward as we see here

Matthew 6:19-21 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Revelation 22:12  “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.

Now if we look at James 2:21-22 We see that Faith comes first but is completed by Works

James 2:21-22 Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

We also need to understand sin has consequences and just because you except Christ and are saved it does not give you a fee pass from your actions. Paul wrote:

Galatians 6:7 'Don't be deceived. God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.

When we ignore the will of God and intentionally go the other way, there will be consequences as a direct result. Jesus Himself said:

Luke 6:46 'Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and don't do the things which I say?'**.**

* **So the big question am I save by Faith or Works? Answer: Nether!**

Remember Ephesians 2:8–9 For **by grace you have been saved** through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

So the bottom line is:

* Paul is primarily focused on how we become Christians whereas James is focused on what it means to live as a Christian.
* Once you accept Christ as your lord and savior you are saved by God’s grace
* Because we all fall short of the Glory of God (Romans 3:23) we should be truly grateful for this grace and show our gratitude through our Works
* Once you are saved your old self dies and Christ lives in you (Galatians 2:20) and then you become a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17 ) so our actions should reflect Christ. We should follow Christ example
* Truth test:
  + Am I a Christian?
    - Have you met Jesus?
    - If “Yes” How has it changed your life?
* You can’t meet Jesus without him changing your life

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: never the less I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.