

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

FAITH AND WORKS GO TOGETHER LIKE HAND AND GLOVE

Romans 3:30-31 “. . . there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.”

God is the one, same God of Jew and Gentile. God declares the Jew without sin based upon the faith He gave them through His covenant promise to Abraham and the Gentiles through His covenant promise through the Gospel. For Jew and Gentile faith is what is essential. For both their faith receives the forgiveness of their sins and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ. (Read Galatians 3:15 through 4:7 where St. Paul discusses God's law and His promises) “For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.” (Galatians 5:10)

The Torah, given by God to the Jews through the pen of Moses is not nullified by the faith God has given to Jews and the Gentiles. Doing the prescribed works of the Torah flow out and are a natural outgrowth of the faith God gives. James writes, “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” (James 2:14-17) The Apology to the Augsburg Confession states, “. . . good works must . . . follow faith. We do not overthrow the law, , Paul says, (Romans 3:31), but uphold it; for when we have received the Holy Spirit by faith, the keeping of the law necessarily follows, by which love, patience, chastity, and other fruits of the Spirit gradually increase.” (Ap XX 15)

You cannot keep God's law without the faith you have received by the work of the Holy Spirit. In Luther's explanation to the Third Article he explains, “. . .the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.” Your faith and the works that it produces go together like a hand and glove.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, work faith in my heart and through it create in my heart works that give glory to You, Jesus, and my heavenly Father. Amen.

Fruitful trees, The Spirit's sowing, May we ripen and increase,
Fruit to life eternal growing, Rich in love and joy and peace.

Laden branches freely bearing Gifts the Giver loves to bless;
Here is fruit that grows by sharing, Patience, kindness, gentleness.

Rooted deep in Christ our Master, Christ our pattern and our goal,
Teach us, as the years fly faster, Goodness, faith, and self-control.

Fruitful trees, the Spirit's tending, May we grow till harvest cease;
Till we taste, in life unending, Heaven's love and joy and peace.
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