

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

WORKER OR BELIEVER – PART I

Romans 4:4-5 “Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.”

There are two pictures St. Paul gives in Romans 4:4-5 as to how people are credited as righteous before God. The first way is the way in which human beings, by their Old Adam attempt to balance their spiritual ledger sheet with God. In Romans 3:23 Paul says that all people sin and their sins cause their spiritual ledger sheet to be unbalanced. Their debits are far greater than their deposits.

Romans 4:4 says to anyone who would attempt to correct their unbalanced spiritual ledger sheet by doing good toward God and their neighbor, living an exceptional moral life, engaging in devout spiritual activities such as worship and prayers and avoiding at all costs immoral, ungodly activities their spiritual ledger sheet will always be unbalanced. No person can do enough good to make themselves right with God because the Bible says, “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.” (James 2:10) James then states in 3:2, “we all stumble.”

St. Paul, in examining his life recognized that the harder he tried to balance his spiritual ledger sheet with God the more imbalanced it became. With this reality he exclaimed, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?” (Romans 7:24) King David, who wanted to do everything to the glory of God, was humbled when Nathan pointed out to him his terrible sins.

Romans 4:4, “Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation.” What is your obligation to God? If you believe it is doing as many good things as you possibly can and avoiding committing sins, then your spiritual ledger balance will never be balanced. Your obligation to God will never be met. Your payment of your good works will never be able to pay off your debits. You will fall short of the glory of God.

What then is the answer? Read tomorrow's devotion . . .

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I with St. Paul must say as I look at my spiritual ledger, “O wretched man (woman) that I am. . .

Lord, to You I make confession: I have sinned and gone astray,
I have multiplied transgression, Chosen for myself my way.
Led by You to see my errors, Lord, I tremble at Your terrors.

Yet, though conscience' voice appall me, Father, I will seek Your face; Though
Your child I dare not call me, Yet receive me in Your grace.
Do not for my sins forsake me; Let Your wrath not overtake me.

For Your Son has suffered for me, Giv'n Himself to rescue me,
Died to save me and restore me, Reconciled and set me free.
Jesus' cross alone can vanquish These dark fears ad soothe this anguish.

Lord, on You I cast my burden— Sink it in the deepest sea!
Let me know Your gracious pardon, Cleanse me from iniquity.
Let Your Spirit leave me never; Make me only Yours forever.
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