

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

FAITH NOT WORKS

Romans 9:30-32 "What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works."

". . . righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe." (Romans 3:22) The message of the Holy Scriptures consistently says, "righteousness is given through faith." There are two important points in these brief words. The first is righteousness is a gift. You do not earn it! It is not something you on your own can go out and find. It is purely yours by God's grace.

The second important point of this verse is "righteousness" becomes yours through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast." Not by your good works, effort, wisdom, intellect, ancestry but by God's gracious gift of faith in Jesus you receive His forgiveness of your sins, eternal life, and salvation.

Trusting in your works leaves you with nothing but uncertainty. Are you doing enough? Are the works you are doing the right ones? Do you need to do more than you are currently doing? Am I associating with the right people? The questions are endless. There is no calculator capable of telling you when you have done enough.

Worse yet, as you examine your life honestly through the microscope of God's Ten Commandments, you know that for any good you have done there are also the many, many sins you have committed. As St. Paul said of himself, "O wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7)

The faith that God gives you out of His grace is all you need have. The Gospel is so comforting that says "whoever believes shall not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Faith in Jesus alone is what saves. Unbelief condemns!

Prayer: Your Gospel Word, O Lord, assures me of Your forgiveness and of my righteousness through Jesus Christ. Send Your Spirit to call me by the Gospel to faith in Him. Amen.

Not what these hands have done Can save this guilty soul;
Not what this toiling flesh has borne Can make my spirit whole.

Not what I feel or do Can give me peace with God;
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears Can ease my awful load.

Thy work alone, O Christ, Can ease this weight of sin;
Thy blood alone, O Lamb of God, Can give me peace within.

Thy love to me, O God, Not mine, O Lord, to Thee,
Can rid me of this dark unrest And set my spirit free.

Thy grace alone, O God, To me can pardon speak;
Thy power alone, O Son of God, Can this sore bondage break.

I bless the Christ of God, I rest on love divine,
And with unfaltering lip and heart I call this Savior mine.
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