

Oaks-West church of Christ

Sunday Worship Service: 10:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m. • Bible Study: 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.

Services are live-streamed to our website: oakswestchurchofchrist.com

JULY 14, 2024

Works is Fundamental

by Ken Weliever

Concordia University has posted on their web page a piece by a pre-seminary student Adriana Thompson entitled "What are the Five Solas of the Protestant Reformation?"

In researching the former Augustinian Catholic monk, Martin Luther, who protested the teachings of the Catholic Church, Thompson concluded from his work and those other reformers there emerged five major doctrines essential to salvation.

These are identified with Latin phrases as the "five solas."

Sola Gratia—"Grace alone."

Sola Fide—"Faith alone."

Sola Christus—"Christ alone."

Sola Scriptura—"Scripture alone."

Sola Deo Gloria—"To the glory of God alone."

In a summary statement Thompson wrote, "The five solas state that Christians are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, as revealed by Scripture alone, to the glory of God alone."

While these "five solas" are fundamental to our faith, what about works? Where does works fit into the equation? This further raises the old debate among religious folks about the relationship between faith and works.

While some say works is not at all fundamental to our salvation, the inspired writer James wrote, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so

faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26).

In the James text, He offers Abraham, often touted as the "Father of Faith," as an example of the importance of works.

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (Jas. 2:21-24).

I once read that this text so perplexed Martin Luther and his theology of "salvation by faith alone" that he called James' letter "an epistle of straw" and left it out of the canon of New Testament books.

Luther and more modern critics pit Paul and James against one another. Paul argues that Abraham was justified by faith (Rom. 4) by quoting Genesis 15:6. James rhetorically asks, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? (Jas. 2:21). Some scholars see this, as one of my former college Bible teachers, Edgar Syrgley once called it, "a seemingly apparent contradiction."

Who's right? Who's wrong? Is there really a contradiction? No. The answer is that faith works.

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends. We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.

Important Dates

Summer Series - Bulverde church of Christ is having their summer lesson series each Thursday evening at 7:00 p.m.

Song Practice - July 14 at 4:15 p.m.

Singing - Cedar Park August 9

Gospel Meeting - San Marcos, August 16-18

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.

Genesis 12 records God's call to Abraham, He was instructed to leave his father's house and his homeland, and go into a land that God would show him. The Bible says, "And he went out, not knowing where he was going" (Heb. 11:8).

Why? Abraham had faith in God.

More incredibly, God promised to bless him. Make his name great. Produce from his descendants a great name. Give them a land. And from his seed would come One who would bless the entire world. What makes this so amazing is that at this point Abraham is unknown, obscure and childless. Oh, and he is 75 years old. It would be 25 years before Isaac was born.

No wonder Abraham is identified with the moniker "the father of faith."

But Abraham didn't just believe. He did. Hebrews 11:8 says, "By faith Abraham obeyed..." This text tells us that his faith worked.

Abraham went. Abraham dwelt. Abraham waited. Abraham offered.

Suppose Abraham said, "God, I believe you can do all of this, but I'm not going anywhere. This is my home. I'm staying. But I believe you can fulfill all these promises." Would that have pleased God? Would his refusal to go where God commanded him be an expression of faith?

What if Abraham refused to offer Isaac? What if he decided to sacrifice a dog instead? Would that have been sufficient? Would God have been satisfied? Could his protection of and love for Isaac supersede God's command? Would such dissent and defiance demonstrate his faith?

There's no contradiction between Paul and James. One complements the other. Faith is active, not passive. Faith is not mere mental assent. Faith issues itself in physical effort. Faith is energetic. Enthusiastic. And on the go. Faith works.

As one writer expressed it, "Paul and James are in perfect harmony in their teaching on this matter. Both make it clear that faith and obedience are not in opposition to each other. They are two sides of the same coin in God's plan for the salvation of man."

Hebrews 11 illustrates this fact with other great Believers.

By faith...

Abel offered. Enoch walked. Noah built. Isaac blessed. Moses forsook. Joshua marched.

And the list goes on of named and unnamed spiritual heroes and heroines who put their faith into practice.

What about salvation by the "five solas"?

James leaves no doubt. He says, "talk is cheap." No one is fed or clothed by words alone. Works are required. From Abraham to Rahab to even the demonic world, all proclaim that "faith without works is dead."

Works. The works of God's righteousness are indeed fundamental to our faith.

{used with permission from thepreachersword.com}

Prayer Requests

Jack Wilson is still struggling with pain and limited mobility.

Dinah Williams continues to have mobility issues and has been ill recently.

Don Simmons is at home and still on constant oxygen.

Debbie McMurray is doing well but will require regular testing.

Terry Behrns is recovering at his sister's home

Jay Parker's father has cancer and they have been traveling to help him.

Jimmy Stinnett is struggling from his leukemia and is under treatment.

Syble Hargrove has had some falls and is on pain medications.

Multiple members have covid or have been exposed to covid this past week.

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

"praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints," (Ephesians 6:18)

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord's body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord's will.

We are not a part of any larger organization - we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

Evangelist

Darrell Trammel
Darrell@oakswestchurchofChrist.com

Elders

George Gresham
Darrell Trammel

Deacons

Jim Turner
Clay Hallmark

Contact Us

Address:
P.O. Box 675
Burnet, TX 78611
Call: (512) 756-4493
E-Mail:
oakswestchurch@gmail.com
Website:
oakswestchurchofchrist.com