



## LESSON #20 - THE FAITH OF JESUS

**Revelation 14:12:** *"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."*

Bible versions are about equally divided on the meaning of the expression: "faith of Jesus." Some translate "the faith of Jesus" (His faith) and others "faith in Jesus" (faith in him)." Both translations are equally allowable by the rules of Greek grammar. Which is the correct translation?

**Which of two ditches** would you prefer to fall into: the right ditch or the left ditch?

There is a perfect balance in **Revelation 14:12**:

- There is an emphasis upon the importance of keeping the Commandments of God
- There is an equal emphasis on the need for faith in Jesus.
- Here we must deal with the age old debate over the importance of faith and works and law and grace in the plan of salvation.

### One ditch: Legalism

It is possible to keep the Commandments externally and be lost. This young man did not inherit eternal life even though he claimed to be a commandment keeper.

**Matthew 19: 17-22:** *"So He said to him: "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." <sup>18</sup> He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' <sup>19</sup> 'Honor your father and your mother,' and: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" <sup>20</sup> The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." <sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

Study the parable about the **Pharisee and the Publican**

**Luke 18:9-14:** “Also He spoke this parable to some who **trusted in themselves** that **they were righteous**, and **despised others**:<sup>10</sup> “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.<sup>11</sup> The Pharisee stood and prayed thus **with himself**: ‘God, **I** thank You that **I** am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.<sup>12</sup> **I** fast twice a week; **I** give tithes of all that **I** possess.’<sup>13</sup> And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but **beat his breast**, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’<sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man **went down to his house justified** rather than the other; for everyone who **exalts himself** will be humbled, and he who **humbles himself** will be exalted.”

The older son in the story of the **prodigal son** was a son with a servant’s mentality.

**Luke 15:29-30:** “So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these **many years** I have been **serving you**; **I never transgressed** your commandment at **any time**; and yet you never gave me a young goat that I might make merry with my friends.’<sup>30</sup> But as soon as **this son** of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots you killed the fatted calf for him.’

The workers of the **vineyard in Matthew 20**

**Matthew 20:10-15:** “But when the first came, they **supposed that they would receive more**; and they likewise received each a denarius.<sup>11</sup> And when they had received it, they **complained** against the landowner,<sup>12</sup> saying, ‘These last men have worked **only one hour**, and you made them **equal to us** who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.’<sup>13</sup> But he answered one of them and said, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?’<sup>14</sup> Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you.<sup>15</sup> Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with **my own things**? Or is your eye evil because I am good?’

According to Jesus, the Pharisees did works to be **seen by men** (Matthew 6:1, 5; 23:5) On the other hand, Jesus said that we **should do** good works that could be **seen by men** (Matthew 5:14-16) but these works bring glory to God who is in heaven.

**Matthew 6:1, 2, 5:** “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, **to be seen by them**. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven”<sup>2</sup> Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have **glory from men**. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward...:<sup>5</sup> “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be **seen by men**. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.”

**Matthew 5:16:** “Let your light so shine before men, that they may **see your good works** and **glorify** your Father in heaven.”

The **sun and the moon** serve as a good illustration. When we are linked with the sun we produce light but the **glory is for the sun** because our light is reflected light.

**Matthew 23:25-28:** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. <sup>27</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

### Other end of the spectrum: License

**Galatians 2:16 and 5:4** are favorite texts of **antinomians**. Is Paul saying that **works are worthless** in salvation? Let's read this text and then the context:

**Galatians 2:16:** "...knowing that a man is not justified by the **works of the law** but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the **works of the law**; for by the **works of the law** no flesh shall be justified."

**Galatians 5:4:** "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."

But Paul then in the **same chapter** speaks about the **fruit of the Spirit** and what will keep people out of heaven:

**Galatians 5:16-25** "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. <sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

**Romans 3:28, 31:** "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law . . . <sup>31</sup> Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."

**Romans 5:20-6:2:** "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, <sup>21</sup> so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord... <sup>1</sup> What shall we say

then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> **Certainly not!** How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

**Romans 6:14-16:** "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.<sup>15</sup> What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?"

**Certainly not!** <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?"

**Titus 1:16:** "They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work."

**I John 2:3, 4:** "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.<sup>4</sup> He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

**Matthew 7:21-23:** "Not everyone who says to Me: 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.<sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'<sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

### **The perfect balance between faith and works**

**John 15:8:** "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

**Ephesians 2:8, 9:** "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God<sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast."

**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."

Most people who prefer grace over law and faith over works but there is a passage in **James** (which is part of Scripture) which is equally important and provides balance.

**James 2:14-26:** "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can [this kind of] faith save [we are dealing with salvation here] him?<sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,<sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?<sup>17</sup> Thus also faith by itself [faith alone; Martin Luther called James the Epistle of Straw and said that he would rather not have it in the Bible], if it does not have works, is dead.<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works [works reveal whether faith is

**authentic or just a sham].** <sup>19</sup> *You believe [same word as faith] that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble!* <sup>20</sup> *But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith **without works is dead**?* <sup>21</sup> *Was not Abraham our father justified by works [he showed his faith by his willingness to act upon it] when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?* <sup>22</sup> *Do you see that faith was working together [the imperfect denotes continual action] with his works, and by works faith was made perfect [complete]?* <sup>23</sup> *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.* <sup>24</sup> *You see then that a man is **justified by works, and not by faith only [alone]**.* <sup>25</sup> *Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?* <sup>26</sup> *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."*

Paul faced those (his enemies) who say they are saved or justified by works and not by faith.

Paul's emphasis falls on **how we are saved** and the emphasis of James is on how **truly saved people will live**.

James: Those who say that they are saved or justified by faith and not by works.

Paul uses the example of Abraham at the beginning of his life and James uses him at the end.

Those to whom Paul writes to need to hear about God's grace. Those to whom James writes to need to hear about the law.

The definition of works by Paul and James is different. For Paul, works are negative because they are performed to earn salvation but for James, works are good because they are performed as the fruit of salvation.

Paul actually **agreed** with James on this issue. **After saying** that those who seek to be **justified by the law** have fallen from grace, he says that **faith needs to work by love**.

**Galatians 5:6:** *"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but **faith working** through love."*

What is **more important**: The **body** or the **breath**? The fact is that both of them must **be together** in order to be effective.

Faith and works are **two sides of one coin**.

**Works** are the **visible manifestation** of faith.

We shall be **saved by grace through faith** but we shall be **judged by works** because works reveal **if faith is genuine**.

**Romans 4:5-8:** “But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,<sup>6</sup> just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:<sup>7</sup> “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;<sup>8</sup> Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.”

Paul is saying **how a person is saved** while James is saying how a truly **saved person lives**.

Paul is dealing with the **root** of salvation and James is dealing with the **fruit** of salvation.

The Jews in Christ’s time were so legalistic regarding Sabbath observance that Christians in later times were turned off and decided to do away with the Sabbath as they saw it. Christians **throw out the Sabbath** because they think that the Sabbath of the Jews is the Sabbath of the Lord.

**Faith** is the inward motivation for works and **works** are the outward manifestation of faith. You cannot have one without the other.

**Titus 2:11-14** has the **perfect balance** of **faith and works** in the writings of Paul. The gospel teaches us to renounce the world: <sup>11</sup>“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

Notice the balance between faith and works.

**Titus 3:4-8:** “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared <sup>5</sup> not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. <sup>8</sup> This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works...”

Man is not saved by **faith alone** or by **works alone** or by a **combination** of faith plus works but by a **genuine faith that works**.

In **Revelation 2, 3** you have the expression “I know your works” 12 times.

“It is essential to have faith in Jesus, and to believe you are saved through Him; but there is danger in taking the position that many do take in saying, “I am saved.” Many have said: “You must do good works, and you will live”; but apart from Christ no one can do good works. Many



at the present day say, "Believe, only believe, and live." Faith and works go together, believing and doing are blended." Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 373

Leaven grows from inside out

"The third angel's message is the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but the faith of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand. I cannot find language to express this subject in its fullness. "The faith of Jesus." It is talked of, but not understood. What constitutes the faith of Jesus that belongs to the third angel's message? Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that He might become our sin-pardoning Savior. He was treated as we deserve to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins that we might take His righteousness. And faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus. Selected Messages, volume 3, p. 172

"This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Savior, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. . . This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure." Evangelism, pp. 190, 191

**Jeremiah 31:31-33:** "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—<sup>32</sup> not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. <sup>33</sup> But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

End time Babylon is characterized by **two counterfeit extremes** in the relationship between the law and the gospel:

"A prayerful study of the Bible would show Protestants the real character of the papacy and would cause them to abhor and to shun it; but many are so wise in their own conceit that they feel no need of humbly seeking God that they may be led into the truth. Although priding themselves on their enlightenment, they are ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. They must have some means of quieting their consciences, and they seek that which is least spiritual and humiliating. What they desire is a method of forgetting God which shall pass as a method of remembering Him. The papacy is well adapted to meet the wants of all these. It is prepared for two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world--those who would be saved by their merits [need the emphasis of Paul], and those who would be saved in their sins [need the emphasis of James]. Here is the secret of its power." The Great Controversy, p. 572

