

Be Not Deceived

By Pastor Art Watkins

Part One

Salvation

The biggest deception about salvation today is the false belief that salvation is earned by works and kept and maintained by works.

(1) There are millions of people who are deceived into believing they can gain salvation by the works they do in this life. It is one of the most common deceptions in the world today. More people are deceived by this error than any other.

Most people believe God keeps a record of their works. They believe that when they die God will compare their good works with their bad works and if their good works outnumber the bad, God will allow them into heaven.

To them God is the great Santa clause in the sky who knows who is naughty and nice and the nice ones he saves and the naughty ones he damns.

This lie is believed by people of all walks of life; rich and poor, religious and non religious, educated and uneducated. In witnessing I have had countless people tell me that when they die they “quote”; hope their good works will outweigh their bad works so that God will let them into heaven.

First, if you are not saved all of your works are bad including those you think are good. Read what God says about all men, Jew and gentile.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Romans 3:9-12.

God put all men to a test to see if any there was any good or righteous and this was the verdict; The verdict was: There is none righteous, no, not one; none that doeth good, no, not one; none that understandeth; none that seeketh after God; all have gone out of the way.

We failed the test. We made a big fat zero. What was the test? Keeping the moral commandments of the Law. God tests and measures men by his law and not by other men. You may look around and see a bad man or woman and say I am not as bad as they are; but God does not test and measure us by other people. He measures us by his law. Paul wrote this about his test and how he failed it in Romans 7.

In verses 9-11 he said: ***For I was alive without the law once: (he thought he was) but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.***

What he is saying is that when he took an honest look into the law and measured himself by the law and tested his so called righteousness by the law, the law was like a mirror for it revealed what a sinner he really was. He said: ***I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.***

Paul was a sinner before he took an honest look into the law; he just couldn't see it. It was there all the time and when he looked into the law sin came alive to him and it slew him; it slew any self righteousness he had. It slew all the so called works that Paul thought was good

A lot of people think they are beautiful because they never look in a mirror. A lot of people think they are good and righteous because they have never taken an honest look into the law. How about you? Take a good look at the law of God and see how you measure up.

(1) Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

(2) Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.

(3) Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

(4) Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

(5) Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

(6) Thou shalt not kill.

(7) Thou shalt not commit adultery.

(8) Thou shalt not steal.

(9) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

(10) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

*The 9th commandment says: *thou shalt not lie*. Let me ask you this question and be truthful: Have you always told the truth, the whole truth

and nothing but the truth? If not, what does that make you? Doesn't that make you a liar?

*The 10th commandment says: *Thou shalt not covet*. Have you ever coveted or lusted after something that belonged to someone else? If so what does that make you? An idolater for covetousness is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

*The 8th commandment says: *Thou shalt not steal*. Be truthful, have you ever taken something that did not belong to you regardless of its value? If so, what does that make you? A thief.

*The 3rd commandment says: *Thou shalt not take God's name in vain*. Have you ever used God's name in a way that does not honor him? If so, what does that make you? A blasphemer.

*Have you ever looked upon someone with lust? Jesus said that if you do that makes you an adulterer. (Matthew 5:28)

If you said yes to these questions then you have just admitted that you are a liar, thief, idolater, blasphemer and an adulterer.

If this isn't bad enough, God says that if you break just one of his commandments, you are guilty of breaking all 10 of them. James 2:10 says: ***For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*** Breaking one law makes us guilty of breaking all of God's Laws.

This means we are guilty of the sins of: Hatred, Idolatry, Blasphemy, Disobedience, Rebellion, Murder, Adultery, Lying, Stealing, and Covetousness. These are the sins we are guilty of. These are the charges God brings against us. This is why the Bible says there is none righteous no not one. It's because we have broken all of his laws and commandments. The evidence against us is overwhelming and the verdict is guilty and the sentence is death and hell. This is why you cannot possibly gain salvation by the works you do in this life because you and all your works are bad.

Second, if you could get saved by works Christ died in vain. Galatians 2:21 says: ***I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.***

This verse plainly says that if a person could obtain righteousness or salvation by works, such as the works of the law or any work that men call good works today, the cross of Christ was vain and void and useless. Why would God subject his Son to the horrible death of the cross if we could gain salvation by the works we do in this life?

Third, no one can be saved by grace and works at the same time.

Romans 11:6 says: ***And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.***

Salvation today is by grace and if it is by grace it cannot be by works. Grace and works cancel each other out. They are based upon two different and opposing principals. When it comes to salvation your works, good or bad, do not count. They have no part in gaining or keeping salvation today. The one and only thing you can possibly do to be saved today is to believe what God says about you and then believe what his Son did for you. And if you get saved it will be by pure mercy and grace of God when you consider the fact we are guilty of every sin his law condemns.

Those who God saves by grace through faith without works are kept saved the same way. If you could not get saved by works, what makes you think you can keep yourself saved by works? God saves sinners by grace lest any man should boast. If you could gain salvation by works you could boast about it and you would. If you could keep yourself saved by works you could boast about also and you would. But, that is not going happen, because in true salvation by grace; those who God saves by grace are kept saved by grace, lest any man boast about gaining or keeping salvation by works.

Service

Many Christians are deceived into believing that everything is free under grace and that all Christians will receive the same rewards and crowns in the resurrection regardless of our service to him in this life.

One Bible teacher says; *"That being in Christ and identified with Christ automatically entitles you to every blessing and promise under grace as a free gift."*

Another Bible teacher says; *Grace is a free gift system ... A SYSTEM OF UNCONDITIONAL BLESSING.... Under grace, blessings are fully given as a free gift....Grace is not against good works! It simply DOES NOT BLESS ON THE BASIS OF GOOD WORKS.'*

What these two men teach is that under grace God gives us *all things freely* and all blessings under grace are *unconditional and free*. They are not earned by service, but are gifts and gifts are free. I am quoting these two men because this is typical of what many preachers and Christians in America believe about service under grace. They assume that if we are

under grace, God must give us all things freely and unconditionally, otherwise they assume it is not grace. The mistake that many of the brethren make is assuming that because salvation is free, *everything* is free. But that is not true. In the New Testament there are a number of blessings that have conditions attached to them and if you don't meet the conditions you will not receive them. They are earned by faithful service to the Lord.

A REWARD THAT IS CONDITIONAL

In 1 Corinthians 3:13-14 Paul writing about the judgment seat of Christ said; ***Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.***

A reward is promised in these verses, but like all rewards it has a condition attached to it. Verse 14 says; *IF any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

God will try every man's work at the judgment seat of Christ and IF a man's works make it through the fire he will receive a reward. This reward is not free for it is conditional upon our work and service to him in this life. The apostle of the gentiles who preached the gospel and doctrines of grace till the day he died, plainly says that rewards given out at the judgment seat of Christ are conditional upon the works we do in this life. They are based upon our service to the Lord in this life.

A HARVEST THAT IS CONDITIONAL

In 2 Corinthians 9:6 Paul writing concerning giving said; ***But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.***

In writing about giving under grace, Paul compares it with the law of sowing and reaping. What a man sows the same he will reap. All Christians under grace will not reap the same harvest of blessings. Those who give sparingly will reap sparingly. Those who give bountifully will reap bountifully. The point is; bountiful blessings are conditional upon bountiful giving. Only those who give bountifully (in relation to their income) will reap bountifully.

AN ACCEPTANCE THAT IS CONDITIONAL

In Colossians 1:22-23 Paul wrote that Christ would: ***present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: IF ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of***

the gospel. If these verses mean what they say, being presented holy and unblameable and unprovable in God's sight when Christ comes again is a conditional promise. The condition is in verse 23 which says; *IF ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.*

AN INHERITANCE THAT IS CONDITIONAL

In Colossians 3:23-24 Paul wrote; ***And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.***

The inheritance in this verse is called a reward. Rewards are earned by works. In this verse the reward of the inheritance will be given to those who serve the Lord Christ. It is not free for it is conditional upon service. If you fail to serve the Lord Christ you will not receive the reward of the inheritance.

A REIGN THAT IS CONDITIONAL

In 2 Timothy 3:12 Paul wrote; ***All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.***

In 2 Tim.2:11-12 he said; ***For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.***

Those who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, but *IF we suffer, we shall also reign with him.* Reigning with Christ is conditional upon suffering with Christ. The suffering that God will reward is the suffering you endure for Christ's sake in this world. Read carefully 2 Timothy 1:8, 2:9, 3:11, 4:14-17. No amount of scripture juggling can get around this fact: to reign with Christ you must suffer for Christ. Living with Christ in verse 11 is free, but reigning with Christ in verse 12 isn't.

A CROWN THAT IS CONDITIONAL

In 2 Timothy 4:8 Paul said: ***Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but all them also that love his appearing.***

The crown of righteousness will be given only to those who love Christ's appearing. All Christians do not love Christ's appearing for some are moved away from it (Col.1:24) some fear his appearing, and some like Demas (2 Timothy 4:10) love this world more than his appearing.

A CALLING THAT IS CONDITIONAL

In 2 Timothy 2:20-21 God said: ***But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.***

Just being saved and identified with Christ and living under grace does not automatically make you a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use. Only those who purge themselves from the vessels of dishonor and depart from iniquity are. God does not call or use just anybody under grace. He uses those who obey the "IF" of verse 21.

Contrary to what many believers think, God does indeed bless on the basis of works and service under grace. These are just some examples of blessings and promises that are all earned by works and service. Any man who says that ALL blessings and promises are free and unconditional under grace is deceiving the saints.

The Dangers Of Teaching False Doctrine About Rewards Under Grace

The false teaching that everything is free under grace and rewards are not conditional upon our service to the Lord in this life promotes a life of apathy, carelessness, laziness, fruitlessness and carnality. It also steals blessings and rewards from the believer. If a believer is led to believe everything is free under grace he will fail to do the works necessary to gain the rewards, crowns, and blessings mentioned afore.

If everything is free under grace, as some teach, this means that carnal backslidden Christians who never served God will have the same rewards and crowns as the apostles and prophets and the martyrs who gave their life in service for the Lord. It would mean a man like Demas who forsook Paul will have as many rewards and crowns in the resurrection as Paul. Be not deceived; Demas will not be rewarded as Paul at the judgment seat of Christ. He will walk away empty handed.

Another deception about service is that a believer cannot lose any blessing or promise under grace

If all blessings and promises are free and unconditional, then it only stands to reason that you could not lose any blessing or promise under grace. This is what many Christians and preachers believe. They assume that grace

secures everything like salvation. But what does Paul the Apostle of grace say about the issue? Did he teach men that everything is secure and you cannot lose anything under grace? According to the scriptures there are many blessings, rewards, and promises that are not free and have conditions attached to them. If they are conditional upon works and service then they are not secure like salvation. This is why the apostles in their epistles warn us that we can suffer the loss of blessings and rewards under grace. God rewards faithful service to him and he penalizes a lack of service.

LOSS OF REWARD

In 1 Corinthians 3:13-14 Paul writing about the judgment seat of Christ said; ***Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.***

A reward is promised in these verses, but like all rewards it has a condition attached to it. Verse 14 says; *IF any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

But that is not the end of the story because he goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 3:15: ***If any man's work shall be burned, HE SHALL SUFFER LOSS; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.***

The fact a man can suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ shows you two things: Everything isn't free under grace and everything isn't secure under grace. God will reward good works at the Judgment Seat of Christ and he will penalize bad works too.

LOSS OF INHERITANCE

In Colossians 3:23-24 Paul wrote; ***And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.***

The inheritance in this verse is called a reward. Rewards are earned by works. In this verse the reward of the inheritance will be given to those who serve the Lord Christ. It is not free, for it is conditional upon our service to the Lord in this life. But this is not all Paul says about this reward. In the next verse he says: ***But he that doeth wrong SHALL RECEIVE FOR THE WRONG WHICH HE HATH DONE: and there is no respect of persons.*** Doing wrong in verse 25 is the opposite of doing right. Doing right in the context is serving the Lord Christ in verse 24. Those who do right by

-serving the Lord gain something. Those who do wrong by failing to serve the Lord lose something. The ones who serve the Lord will receive the reward of the inheritance. The ones who fail to serve the Lord will suffer the loss of the reward of the inheritance.

This inheritance is a reward and as a reward it is earned by works and service. If you fail to do the work or service required to receive it, you will be denied this reward. (Col.2:18)

Here is a sobering thought; those who win the reward of the inheritance will enjoy it forever. It is an eternal reward. But those who suffer the loss of this reward will suffer that loss eternally. It will be an eternal loss.

LOSS OF A REIGN

In 2 Timothy 3:12 Paul wrote; ***All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.***

In 2 Tim.2:11-12 he said; ***For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.***

Those who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, but *IF we suffer, we shall also reign with him.* Reigning with Christ is conditional upon suffering with Christ. The suffering that God will reward is the suffering you endure for Christ's sake in this world.

But I quoted half on verse 12 for the last half says: ***If we deny him, HE ALSO WILL DENY US.***

When it comes to suffering in the last days many Christians will deny the Lord as Peter did to save their own neck. Those who do so will be denied the privilege of reigning throughout eternity with Christ. They will live with Christ because they died with Christ. Eternal life is free and guaranteed, but *reigning with Christ is conditional upon suffering.* If you deny the Lord to avoid suffering he will deny you a reign.

Contrary to what many believers believe God does bless and reward on the basis of works and our service to him in this life. There are many blessings and promises that are not free under grace. They are earned by works and service. And contrary to what many people believe many blessings and promises can be lost under grace. Writing about the reward in 1 Corinthians 3 Paul said: ***If any man's work shall be burned, HE SHALL SUFFER LOSS.*** Believers under grace can suffer loss and this is an eternal loss. If you lose this reward you cannot regain it. You will not have another chance to go back and win it.

Be not deceived about service: There are certain blessings and promises that are gained by works and can be lost for failing to do the works necessary to gain them. Salvation is free and secure but many blessings and promises are not.

IT'S UP TO YOU

There are blessings and rewards that can be won or lost under grace. It all depends upon the choices you make in this life. If you want to spend your life in the pursuit of fun, wealth, prosperity, popularity, recreation, ease, entertainment and developing a following, go ahead, but don't expect to receive the reward of 1 Corinthians 3:14, or the inheritance of Colossians 3:24, or the privilege of reigning with Christ of 2 Timothy 2:12 and many other blessings.