

# The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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~ All articles are written by Terry Carter unless otherwise stated ~

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## Spiritual Vampires

"22 But **be doers of the word, and not hearers only**, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, **he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror**; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does." **James 1:23-25 (NKJV)**

In this passage, James is discussing people who hear the Word but do not do what it says. He compares hearing the Word to looking into a mirror. Those who do not do the Word, are like those who forget what kind of a man they are after looking into the mirror of God's Word. There are a few lessons for us in this thought.

**First, the Word of God tells us about ourselves.**

It is a mirror that accurately reflects who and what we are. God's Word tells us why we are here, what our nature is, and what our purpose is. It shows us where our flaws are in that it makes us aware of our sins and weaknesses. It tells us that we are something much more than animals and yet much less than God. It informs us that we are made in the image of God but that we have marred that image with sin. It shows

us that we are spiritual beings designed to live forever either with God in Heaven or without Him in hell. It does more than just reflect our flaws; it tells us about the solution to our sin which is offered through the blood of Christ.

There are, however, other mirrors that people look at to learn about themselves. There is the mirror of society and its expectations, family, culture, religion, philosophy, education, psychology, literature, etc. I once read a book about understanding literature that said there is really only one story. That story is all about what it means to be human. While there are many ways to go about this, the author claimed that all literature boils down to an attempt at answering that fundamental question.

Unfortunately, many of these other "mirrors" do not give us a true reflection of ourselves. They are like the funhouse mirrors that distort our image. Some give us an inflated image of ourselves, making us look much better or significant than we really are.

Others give us a diminished image of ourselves, making us seem much worse or insignificant than we are in fact. Some of these mirrors hide our flaws or minimize them creating pride and an enlarged sense of self-esteem. Others exaggerate those flaws and leave us with nothing but despair. Some accurately show us our flaws without offering any solution to our sin problem.

Too many people have a warped sense of who they are because they have spent too much time looking into the wrong mirrors instead of the "perfect law of liberty".

**Second, if we want to be blessed, we need to do more than merely hear the Word.**

That is of no more value than looking into the mirror without making any effort to correct what we saw there. If we want to be blessed in what we do, we need to be doers of the Word, not just hearers only.

If we hear the Word without doing it, we are deceiving ourselves. We probably all know people who look into the mirror but have deceived themselves about what they see there. The person suffering from anorexia sees a person who is overweight while everyone around them understands that they are too thin to be healthy. In contrast to that, a bodybuilder may look in the mirror and see someone who is skinny or underdeveloped while everyone else sees that they are overdeveloped.

Too many people hear God's Word without doing it and deceive themselves into thinking that everything is alright with their spiritual life. They make no changes to their conduct or character. They do not adjust their attitudes or thinking. It's like watching other people working out and convincing yourself that you are in shape as a result. Or they are like "the Fonz" who looked into the mirror and saw

nothing but perfection there, so he put his comb back into his pocket without it being used.

### Finally, there are spiritual vampires.

As everybody knows, a vampire doesn't cast a reflection. When they look in the mirror, they can see everything except themselves. They see the world around them clearly. They see the people around them, but they do not see themselves. When they hear the Word, they see all the shortcomings and flaws of those around them while being completely oblivious to their own.



They are the ones who are self-righteous and judgmental. They have no humility, rather they are full of pride and arrogance. They often see themselves as the ones appointed by God to point out and correct all the flaws of those around them. They end up being critical of everyone except themselves. Remember, they can't see themselves, so they are completely unaware of any flaws of their own. They certainly don't spend any time examining themselves - they are too busy examining everyone else.

They may appear to be alive, but they are really dead. Sometimes whole congregations are in this pitiful state.

"These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. **They are clouds without water**, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, **twice dead, pulled up by the roots;**" **Jude 12 (NKJV)**

"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that **you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.**"' **Revelation 3:1 (NKJV)**

What keeps them going is sucking the blood and life out of the healthy people around them. They cannot live without controversy and complaints. Everyone else lives in fear of how and when they may be attacked by these vampires. They cause people to lose sleep. They suck the joy out of living for those who were once healthy. They keep the congregations where they attend emaciated because whenever there are signs of growth, they drain the life out of everything.

They know that if they kill their victims, they are no longer of any use to them, so they try to avoid doing too much damage at one time. They prefer to keep coming back for more. Still, they are constantly on the prowl for new victims in case their current ones should falter or find ways to protect themselves from the attacks.

Sometimes they turn others into spiritual vampires too. These poor unfortunate souls become like the ones who bit them. They also begin sucking the life out of others. Pretty soon everybody is biting each other ignoring Paul's warning:

"But if you bite and devour one another, **beware lest you be consumed by one another!**" **Galatians 5:15 (NKJV)**

Sometimes they recruit what is called a "familiar" or even several of them. These "familiars" are not vampires themselves. They can still see their reflection in the mirror. However, they do the bidding of the spiritual vampires. They become their servants, really their slaves.

The spiritual vampire "casts a spell on them" or "hypnotizes them". They can manipulate these "familiars" to aid them in their work of destruction.

Many of these "familiars" are unaware that they are serving as pawns in an evil scheme.

It is difficult to cure these spiritual vampires because they cannot see themselves in the mirror of God's Word. They can hear a wonderfully convicting sermon or lesson and comment that, "A lot of people really needed to hear that". However, it never occurs to them that they needed to hear it, too. Sometimes it takes a "Nathan" to point the finger at them and say, "You are the man".

"Then Nathan said to David, "**You are the man!**" Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.'" **II Samuel 12:7 (NKJV)**

Maybe this article can serve as a wakeup call for some, or even one, spiritual vampire that is terrorizing a community of Christians. If you are constantly pointing out the flaws in the Christians around you, maybe you should look in the mirror of God's Word. When you do that, check to see whether you cast a reflection.

- ▶ Do you see yourself and your own shortcomings, or just the ones in other people?
- ▶ Are you a hearer of the Word and not a doer of it?
- ▶ Have you forgotten what manner of man you are?
- ▶ Does God's Word still cut you to the heart, or is your conscience seared?

Maybe it's time to stop examining everyone else and look at yourself. Or as Jesus put it...

"3 "And **why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?** 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 "Hypocrite! **First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.**" **Matthew 7:3-5 (NKJV)**

## Even Pagans Know Better



In the **I Corinthian** letter, Paul addresses a serious moral issue in the Church. This was a kind of immorality that even the pagans knew was wrong. Even worse, the Church was arrogant about it instead of mourning over it as they should have done.

“1 It is actually reported that there is **sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans**, for a man has his father's wife. **2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?** Let him who has done this be removed from among you.” **I Corinthians 5:1-2 (ESV)**

Unfortunately, we have a similar situation in some so-called ‘Christian groups’ today. Rather than condemning, and mourning over, sexual perversion, they celebrate and encourage it. They are proud of just how “tolerant” they are on these issues.

The issue of transgenderism has been in the news quite a bit lately. Some are rushing to embrace and defend this while others have been afraid to call it what it really is: perversion, sin, and sexual immorality.

I happened to run across the following discussion of this very issue recently.

This was said by a man named Epictetus. He was a Roman stoic

who lived in the late first century and into the early second century A.D.

Some think he may have been familiar with some of the teachings of Christianity, his *Discourses* leaves us with the impression that he never converted. Thus, he qualifies as a “pagan” or “Gentile” as some translations read. Consider what this man said about transgenderism while discussing the proper way to adorn yourself.

*“Are you a man or a woman? ‘Man.’ adorn yourself then as a man, not a woman.”*

He goes on to discuss what a monstrosity it is when a woman looks like a man, or a man tries to look like a woman as follows:

*“...she is a monster and is exhibited at Rome among monsters...in a man it is monstrous not to have hair...he is a monster [who has removed his body hair to look like a woman]...what shall we do with him?*

*Where shall we exhibit him and under what name shall we show him? ‘I will exhibit to you a man who chooses to be a woman rather than a man.’ What a terrible sight!*

*There is no man who will not wonder at such a notice...Man what fault do you find with your nature? Was it fit that nature should make all human creatures women and what advantage in that case would you have had in being adorned [as a woman]?*

*For whom would you have adorned yourself, if all human creatures were women? Whom do you wish to please? The women? Please them as a man...Is this your business? Were you born for this purpose, that dissolute women should delight in you?”*

He has more to say about this than I have quoted here but you get the idea. He sees this type of a thing as illogical, against your very nature, a monstrosity, and a terrible sight. Even this pagan knew better than the

so-called ‘enlightened people’ of today.

Earlier in this discussion, Epictetus addressed the problem of offending the one to whom he is speaking on this topic. He said, *“And how cruel it is to you to leave you uncorrected.”*

He considered that, *“If at any time afterward you shall acquire sense, you will with good reason blame me [for not speaking up in correction of this error]”.*

He ends this by claiming that this was a message, not from him, but from God.

*“Do not so, I entreat you by the gods [he believed in more than one god], young man: but when you have once heard these words, go away and say to yourself. ‘Epictetus has not said this to me; for how could he? But some propitious god [polytheism again] through him...Come then let us obey God, that we may not be subject to his anger...And now the gods [polytheism once more] say this to you and send the messenger...to warn you not to pervert that which is well arranged, nor to busy yourself about it, but to allow a man to be a man and a woman to be a woman...”*

He even refers to Socrates who was also a pagan as giving the following instructions:

*“How with the body?’ Leave it as it is by nature. Another has looked after these things: Entrust them to him. ‘What then, must a man be uncleaned?’ Certainly not: but what you are and are by nature, cleanse this. A man should be cleanly as a man, a woman as a woman, a child as a child.”*

Scripture makes it clear that this is wickedness.

**“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,” I Corinthians 6:9 (KJV)**

**Note:** The English word “homosexual” was not invented until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, older translations do not contain the word.

The KJV renders it “abusers of themselves with mankind” as does the ASV. Interestingly, the RSV renders it “sexual perverts” which is how people used to refer to it before that was considered politically incorrect.

In **I Corinthians 6:9**, the KJV, ASV, and YLT translate the Greek word, “*malakos*” as “effeminate”.

Darby translates it as, “those who make women of themselves”.

The same word is normally translated “soft” in **Matt. 11:8** and **Luke 7:25** where it refers to those in “soft” or “delicate” clothes.

The Living Oracles translates it “effeminately dressed” in **Matthew** and **Luke** and “catamites” in **I Corinthians**.

Even the pagans understand how wrong this perversion is and how necessary it is to correct those involved in this error.

Even the pagans knew that this would bring God’s wrath upon us. They understood that it was against nature itself.

Can we do any less than to declare God’s truth on this issue and call those involved in it to repentance?

This pagan was not afraid to do so, why should we fear?



**“You CANNOT be Serious...”**

## The Lord is My Shepherd



“The Lord is my Shepherd,” so begins what is probably the most famous and well-known Psalm. It has been used at funerals so much that many people who have never picked up a Bible or attended a Church service know these words.

This Psalm tells us of many things that the Lord does for His sheep. It is useful to consider these things, but we also see three things the psalmist says he will do (or not do) because the Lord is his Shepherd. Anyone who claims the Lord as their Shepherd ought to have the same mindset David has in this Psalm.

### “I Shall Not Want”

This is not just optimistic thinking or “mind over matter”. There is a real basis for this determination. It is because of what the Lord does as Shepherd that the psalmist can say this.

The Lord makes His sheep lie down in green pastures. That is, He provides for the needs of His sheep, and they rest in the very source of that provision.

The Lord leads His sheep beside the still waters. That is, He takes them to where they can be refreshed in safety. There is no risk in quenching their thirst. There is calm where the Lord leads.

The Lord leads in the paths of righteousness. That is, He directs His sheep to walk in the way that is good and right. He does so for His Name’s sake. His reputation is at

stake if His sheep wander from the right paths.

### “I Will Fear No Evil”

David can say this even when walking through the valley of the shadow of death. Our Lord has defeated death in His own resurrection from the dead. Fear of death is a bondage from which our Lord has released us.

“14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that **through death He might destroy him who had the power of death**, that is, the devil, 15 **and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.**” **Hebrews 2:14-15 (NKJV)**

But David gives more reasons than this why he can say that he will fear no evil.

The Lord is with His sheep. When we understand that there is nothing in life or death that we must face alone we can have that same confidence. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us.

“5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, **“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”**” **Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV)**

The rod and staff of the Shepherd is a comfort to His sheep. The Shepherd is able to defend His sheep and rescue them if necessary. He is our shield and defense.

**“You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word.” Psalms 119:114 (NKJV)**

“He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; **His truth shall be your shield and buckler.**” **Psalms 91:4 (NKJV)**

The Shepherd takes such good care of the sheep that they can safely eat

in the presence of their enemies. They have nothing to fear when the Shepherd is with them. They can eat in peace despite the presence of enemies.

The Shepherd anoints the head of His sheep with oil. The Lord treats us as honored guests at His table.

**“You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil.” Luke 7:46 (NKJV)**

The cup of the Lord's sheep runs over. He doesn't just provide the bare minimum that we need. Instead, He provides more blessings than we can hold. He provides all we need and more.

### ***“I Will Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever”***

Given all the blessings that the sheep enjoy with such a Shepherd, the psalmist is determined to never leave His house. His reasons for this commitment go beyond what has been already said.

From all that he had previously stated in the Psalm, he rightly concludes that goodness and mercy will follow him all the days of his life. With a Shepherd like this, why would anyone ever want to leave His house? That is where we find goodness and mercy. Outside there is only danger and destruction, want and fear.

We as Christians have the Lord as our Shepherd. He does everything for us that He did for David.

Are we committed like David that:

1. I shall not want?
2. I shall not fear?
3. I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever?

I'm glad to have left “want” and “fear” behind when I became one of the Lord's sheep. I don't ever want to go back to that again. The best part is that I never need to go back. I can dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Amen!!



## **Grace vs. Mercy**

--By Shane Capps

What are the two most famous Scriptures in the New Testament?

The favorite Scripture for Christianity today is **John 3:16** which says, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

It is true - this is a great verse but that is where the Scripture ends for most.

People that enjoy quoting this verse fail to know and understand **verses 1-8, verse 22**, as well as **verse 36**. **John 3:16** fits within the context of events that are going on.

The favorite Scripture for the world today is **Matthew 7:1** which says, “Do not judge lest you be judged.”

The world fails to know or understand that there is a **verse 2** and following.

The text doesn't teach that Christians shouldn't judge, but it teaches that Christians should use right judgment when they do judge.

We need to be the “People of the Book” meaning we know the Scriptures. Not just **John 3:16**, or **Matthew 7:1**, but we study the whole Bible. We shouldn't only study the topics in which we are interested. We shouldn't study only our favorite books of the Bible. We shouldn't study our pet doctrines that we think are the most important. We need to study all the topics of the Bible. We need to study all the different books of the Bible. We need to study all the different doctrines, or teachings of the Bible.

There are some topics that we stay away from within the Christian Church/Church of Christ. We tend to stay away from the topics of:

1. The Holy Spirit.
2. Holiness.
3. **Grace**.

For this article we will focus on the topic of “**Grace**.” That is a topic that the denominational world focuses on more than any other topic. You would think they would get it right. That's what is sad. They get the topic of grace wrong. It has led them down the wrong road. The denominational world does not understand what real New Testament grace is. Because of this, they stay out of the grace of God.

If you have the wrong definition of a word, then you will have the wrong meaning of the word. This is what has happened in the denominational world. For the Christian Church/Church of Christ, we don't talk about the topic at all.

### **What Most call “Grace” is Really “Mercy”!**

Let's find out and see what the Bible has to say on this topic (from a book of the Bible) on this doctrine.

How we live as a Christian is by walking through life by grace. Our main text will be... **Ephesians 2:8-10**.

For me, I have faith in the Lord. What is faith? **Hebrews 11:1** says, “Now faith is the assurance (substance) of things hoped for, the conviction (evidence) of things not seen.”

How did I get it? **Romans 10:17** says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

My faith is based on assurance, substance, real hope, conviction, and evidence. God hasn't spoken out audibly to me. He has shown Himself in creation, the Bible, history, archeology, in the lives of His people.

To be real honest, for me the Bible is enough to show me what God has done for me through His Son Jesus Christ. It is because of faith that I believe what God has said in His word. Faith has moved me to confess Him as my Lord. Faith has moved me to repent of my sins. It was faith that

moved me to be baptized into Christ for the remission of my sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. It was faith that caused me to want to become a Christian.

It is more than that!

- ~ It is faith that keeps me in the Bible reading and studying it every day.
- ~ It is faith that keeps me praying to the Lord who hears me every day.
- ~ It is faith that keeps me faithful by coming to church on the first day of the week.
- ~ It is faith that led me to Bible college, to be trained as a preacher/evangelist, to have been in full time ministry all these 24 years.
- ~ It is faith in Christ that keeps me going within the Christian life!

I serve the Lord not to get saved, but because I am saved. I got saved when I confessed, repented, and was baptized into Christ. I got saved when I obeyed the Gospel.

By the Lord's grace, I have continued the Christian walk ever since. **Revelation 2:10c** says, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

### Salvation is Not by Works of the Law. Ephesians 2:8-9

You can't earn the Lord's salvation. Jesus already paid the price.

- ~ He died on the cross for our sins.
- ~ He was laid in a tomb; dead for three days.
- ~ On the third day He was raised back to life.

This is the Gospel. This is why it is "Good News". **1 Corinthians 15:1-4** Jesus now offers salvation to everyone. Right now! It is offered right now!!! It is your free will choice. What

will you do with the offer of salvation right now?

Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is promised to no man. Today and right now is all we have.

This is the Lord's mercy, His great mercy... not grace, but mercy!!! Just because Jesus offers salvation (it is offered to everyone, no matter whom) it doesn't mean everyone will be saved. It is a free will choice.

Everyone Has a Choice:

- ~ Some will reject it.  
Due to that choice, they will go to hell.
- ~ Some will accept it.  
If they will live a faithful Christian life, they will go to Heaven.

It is God's **mercy** that salvation is offered to everyone. It is God's **grace** that man can come to Him and accept Him.

His mercy is free without responsibility. His grace is free, but we do have a responsibility to obey the Gospel.

This is not a work, because God did the work. It is up to man to come to God! It is a free gift, but we have to unwrap the gift.

It doesn't mean we earn it. It doesn't mean we are doing a "work" in unwrapping the gift. God did the work by getting the gift and wrapping the gift. To say it another way...

**Mercy** is the fact that Jesus died for everyone, and salvation is now offered!

**Grace** is the fact that you can come into that salvation when you repent and are baptized, but not everyone is going to be saved.

The denominational world doesn't understand this. It is because they don't understand what the words "mercy" and "grace" mean. It is because they don't understand what Paul means by "works".

**Ephesians 2:8** says, For by grace ("*charis*") you have been saved through faith ("*pistis*"); and that not of yourself, it is the gift of God; Side note: Paul repeats **Ephesians 2:5**.

This letter was written to the Church at Ephesus. They were already saved. They were already New Testament Christians. They were part of the Church. They came to God's grace through faith. They were given God's great mercy because salvation was offered to them. They accepted God's grace when they obeyed the Gospel. **Ephesians 4:5** Their faith led them into God's grace.

**Ephesians 2:9** says, "Not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

Work is the Greek word "*ergon*." It means "business." The denominational world doesn't understand what Paul means by "works". That's why Martin Luther could not harmonize Paul writings and the book of **James** together. He didn't like the book of **James** and called it "an Epistle of straw".

When James speaks of "works", he is speaking of the works we do within the Christian life. They are not "works" we do to get saved. They are "works" we do because we are saved.

The whole book of **James** is about what the Christian life looks like, or what we should be doing because we are Christians.

Normally when Paul writes about "works", he speaks of works of the Law.

For example, in the book of **Galatians**, Paul is dealing with the Judaizers who said that to remain a Christian one must obey the Law of Moses. In fact, it is Paul's terminology for the books of **Romans** and **Galatians**.

You can also see this in **Romans 4:2-9**. **Galatians 3:11** says, "Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; 'The righteous man shall live by faith'." Paul is quoting **Habakkuk 2:4**.

The Pharisees thought they were saved by obeying the Law. That's where their pride was. **Matthew 23.**

God's grace does not come through works of the Law. If it did, we would be earning our salvation.

No, we are saved by God's grace. That doesn't mean that we don't have to obey the Gospel to get into that grace. That's where the denominational world gets lost and can't put it together.

The denominational world says that baptism does not have a part of the Plan of Salvation. Why? They said by a person being baptized they are doing a work to get into salvation. That's simply not true, and if you think about it, it doesn't make sense.

For Example...

- ~ **If I believe** and put my faith in the Lord, that's something I do. It's not a work, but it's something I do!
- ~ **If I confess** Jesus as my Lord, that's something I do. It's not a work, but it's something I do!
- ~ **If I repent of my sins**, that's something I do. It's not a work, but it's something I do!
- ~ **If I am baptized into Christ** for the remission of my sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, that is not something I do, but it is something that is done to me.

**Baptism is a work!** The question is, who is doing the work?

**Colossians 2:12** says, "Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."

See!!! Baptism is a work. **It is the working of God.** When we are baptized, we are obeying the Gospel.

Because we have obeyed and been baptized, God forgives our sins and gives us the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

We are the ones who:

- \* Have faith.
- \* Believe
- \* Confess
- \* And repent

It is God, by His grace, that saves us when we are baptized into His Name. We are not saved by works of the Law, but by the grace of God.

Grace means we have the responsibility to come to the Lord. We have been shown favor!!!

### **Salvation is Through Jesus Whom We Serve Ephesians 2:10**

It has been clear to see...

Mercy is for everyone no matter what because today is the day of salvation.

Grace is for everyone no matter what because today they can come to Jesus for salvation.

Both are free. God's mercy should lead us to His grace.

Now if I am a Christian... I have His salvation. I have His grace. I can now live the Christian life. How are we faithful and obedient? By living the Christian life. By serving as a Christian. Not to **get** saved, but because we **are** saved.

Paul now moves into what we are to be doing as a Christian.

In **Ephesians 2:8-9** he is speaking of works of the Law like in the book of **Romans** and **Galatians**.

In **Ephesians 2:10** he sounds like James in his book speaking about works that a Christian is called to do.

**Verse 10** is not how to get saved, but what we do as Christians because we are saved. We want to make this clear because the denominational world and her pastors do not understand this at all.

**Verse 10** says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared

beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Because we are now a Christian, we are God's workmanship.

Workmanship means "what is made." We are made to serve the Lord. We are saved to serve.

We are saved by the grace of Jesus Christ. Why? So we can do good works. Not works of the Law but works of service.

Because we are saved by God's grace, we do have a responsibility to serve the Lord.

- ~ We are called to be faithful.
- ~ We are called to be obedient.
- ~ We are called to run a race.
- ~ We are called to live out Christianity.

Christianity is a lifestyle, not just a title. Christianity is not just something we are, but something we do. Paul sounds like James in **verse 10**. The point of the book of **James** is simple.

You say you're a Christian, then what do you do since you are a Christian? If you can't answer that question, you are not a Christian.

A Christian is one who is more than a baptized believer.

- ~ A Christian serves the Lord.
- ~ A Christian has service to the Lord.
- ~ A Christian has a ministry to the Lord's people.
- ~ A Christian takes the gospel to the lost.
- ~ A Christian is one who can be seen and heard.

The Christian life is a life walked with the Lord. The word "walk" was the same word used back in **Ephesians 2:2**. Before we were a Christian we walked like the world, for Satan, and for ourselves. Now we walk like a Christian, for the Lord, and for others.

**Verse 2** is the destructive path and **verse 10** is the productive path.

We are the Lord's workmanship! We were created in Christ Jesus. Why? We are to do good works. Why? God prepared beforehand that is what Christians should be doing. Why? That we would walk in this lifestyle. As a Christian I am a new creation. **2 Corinthians 5:17** I have a new life. I have a new lifestyle. I have a new way of doing things.

The fact that I am His workmanship means... there is work to do. These are the fruits of my salvation. Not the root, but the fruit. **John 15:5**

Do you live a life as a Christian that brings glory to our Lord?

Do you think you are only saved by grace to have no responsibility at all to the Lord?

Do you think you are only saved by grace to do nothing?

Do you think you don't have to:

- ~ Go to church?
- ~ Serve?
- ~ Be a part of a ministry?

If that's how you live as a Christian, you don't understand what biblical grace is. You have made grace cheap and worthless.

Grace is not cheap. Jesus had to go to the cross so He could offer it.

Do we need mercy? Yes, you better believe it.

Do we need God's grace? Yes, you better believe it.

God has done His part, but it's up to us what we do with God's grace.



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## Parallels between Joshua and Acts

**Chapter 4 of Hebrews** shows us that Canaan is a type of the Christian rest and blessings in Christ.

This causes us to consider our lives as Christians in light of the Book of **Joshua**.

1. The struggles we face in our Christian lives are parallel to the struggles Israel faced in Canaan.
2. They had an enemy to fight, and we have an enemy to fight.
3. They had land to conquer, and we have the world to conquer - spiritually for the Lord.
4. They enjoyed blessings in Canaan, we enjoy blessings in Christ.
5. They experienced triumph in Canaan, we experience triumph in Christ.
6. They had rest in Canaan, we have rest in Christ.

This also causes us to consider parallels between the Church in the Book of **Acts** and the nation of Israel in the Book of **Joshua**.

1. In Both Cases:
  - × The great lawgiver has died although the body cannot be found, **Deuteronomy 34:5-6, Luke 23:46, 24:51**.
  - × The assistant(s) of the lawgiver have been given authority to continue leading the people of God, **Numbers, 27:18-23, Luke 22:29-30**.
  - × God had promised to be with the leader(s) as He was with the lawgiver, **Joshua 1:5, 9, Matthew 28:20**
  - × The leader(s) were empowered by the Spirit to carry on their work, **Numbers**

**27:18, John 20:22, Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8, 2:1-4.**

- × They were to go forth to conquer the land, **Joshua 1:2-4, Matthew 28:18-20**.
2. For Joshua and Israel, it was the land of Canaan.
  3. For the apostles and the Church, it is all nations.
  4. Israel conquered with the sword; the Church conquers with the Gospel.
  5. Israel fought physical battles; the Church fights spiritual ones.
  6. In Both Cases:
    - × The Lord's directive is an outline of the book, **Joshua 1:2-7, Acts 1:8**.
    - × Things began with worship, **Joshua 5:2-10, Acts 1:14**.
    - × There was initial success, **Joshua 6:21, Acts 2:41**.
    - × People heard about their victories, **Joshua 6:37, Acts 2:47, 5:13**.
    - × There was greed among them causing theft from God, **Joshua 7:11, Acts 5:1-4**.
    - × This sin resulted in the death of the guilty, **Joshua 7:25-26, Acts 5:5-10**.
    - × They go out and carry out the Lord's commands, **Joshua 6-12, Acts 2-28**.

Very likely there are more parallels that could be added here.

Israel conquered the land of Canaan; the Church is still making disciples of all nations. Therefore, the end of **Acts** is different than the end of **Joshua**.

However, a great apostasy has happened in the Church which parallels what happened to Israel in the time of the Judges.