

Righteousness By Faith

Galatians 5:4-6

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FOCAL Read Responsively Galatians 5:4-6 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. {5} **For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.** {6} For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; **but faith which worketh by love.**

It is the obvious that usually confounds us.

When I was an electronic technician in the U.S. Air Force the first thing I was taught was to always check the obvious. Young and inexperienced technicians will always look for a complex problem when the real problem is much simpler. I remember one well educated pilot writing up an on board system because it wouldn't turn on. The actual writeup was, "**System will not work in the o-f-f position.**"

Before we laugh at this man we need to all recognize that we have overlooked the obvious. We've looked for our sunglasses when they were sitting on top of our heads. We've run out of gas even though the gas gage has been sitting below the "E" for several days. A husband got mad at his wife because she drove her car till the engine seized up. When he checked the car he found that it was out of oil. When he asked her, "**Didn't you see the oil light come on?**" she said, "**Yes, but I thought if it was a problem there would have been a bell or an alarm go off**".

Just today I was mowing my grass when the mower suddenly stopped. I got off and checked the gas. There

was plenty of gas. Just before I pulled off the spark plug I happened to notice that the throttle was all the way off. When I passed under a low hanging branch it must have hit the throttle, turning the mower off.

Engines don't run well without gas.

One of the obvious truths that we must never neglect is that Jesus Christ came to this earth for a reason. If we could have been good enough to get to God in our own power then there would have been no need for Jesus to suffer and die as He did.

People have a problem with this truth because we like to think that we're good and perhaps deserving of the love of God. What saves a person? **Faith that worketh by love.** Faith in the finished work of Christ. Faith in the sacrificial love of God for you. We are not saved by works, nor by laws, but by **faith which worketh by love.**

1. The Source Of Saving Faith Is IN JESUS CHRIST

FOCAL Galatians 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither **circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.**

What is the Source of saving faith?

The most commonly given answer is that salvation is a work that we must do. Some glory in **circumcision**, in a rite or a ritual that they have performed. Others glory in **uncircumcision**, and proudly profess that they are *non-*

denominational. They are not part of a large religious sect, or even part of (here they speak with a shudder) *organized religion.* Yet the Scripture is clear that **in Christ Jesus neither circumcision - the works of my hands - nor uncircumcision - a lack of works matters.** They do not **avail any thing.** This is contrary to what the world – and many churches – believe. When people talk about **Adolf Hitler** or **Joseph Stalin** they believe that these men went to hell because of their works. When people talk about **Mother Teresa** or **Adrian Rogers** they think they went to Heaven because of their works. Dear friends, works can damn you, but they cannot save you. **Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love!**

What is **saving faith**? If you were driving down the road and a flag man waved you to a stop and told you “the bridge is out ahead – do not proceed”, if you had faith in that flagman you would turn around and take the detour he recommended. **Faith is trusting in Someone other than yourself.** Faith is trusting yourselves to Jesus, to be in Jesus Christ.

ILLUSTRATE So many people try to get IN the wrong thing. I have seen these **tiny cars and trucks that are given to little children** around Christmas or for their birthdays. Some of these tiny plastic vehicles are pedaled by the child, whereas others are self propelled. These things are delightful for the child that has them. They have a car or a truck just like "big people have", and I've seen little kids ride these things about for hours. Some of these little vehicles look good. They look exactly like the real thing, only tinier. But though they look good, they

are only good for children to play with. You could not take a child's car and get in it to go even to Jackson, Tennessee. You couldn't go cross country in a child's motorized truck. The tiny vehicle wouldn't take it, nor could you take it, going down the road with your knees up around your ears. Let a child ride these things, but put me in something that will hold me.

Dear friends, if you will go to Heaven, you cannot get there in anything but Jesus Christ.

Not In Your Parents We cannot get to Heaven because of our parents. The Pharisees were fond of speaking of "**our father Abraham**" (John 8:53). They put their hopes and dreams on their heritage. "**We are not born of fornication. We have one Father, even God**" (John 8:41). This is what they claimed. They claimed that they were children of God, but their hope was in Israel, in being of the line of Abraham, in being great ritualists. But the Pharisees missed the most important thing. **They were not IN CHRIST JESUS.**

Not In Ceremonies Dear friends, the hope of salvation does not rest in *infant baptism, immersion, masses, sacraments, confirmations, or ceremonies*. The hope of salvation does not rest in *the blood of bulls and of sheep*. The hope of salvation does not rest on *trusting in the Law of Moses or the Law of man*. Our hope is to **rest IN CHRIST JESUS**. We must have **faith in Christ Jesus**. What does it mean to have faith in Christ Jesus? It means to have absolute trust.

ILLUSTRATE More Than Dog's Faith Some people have faith in Christ like my dog has faith in me. The other day I put a piece of chicken down in the dog's dish for him to eat. He came, looked at it, licked at it a couple of times, and then walked away. Since he played with it he moved it out of his dish, so I reached down to pick it up and put it back in the dish. Quick as a wink the dog snarled, growled, and ran to where he stood over his food. The dog didn't earn or deserve that chicken. I gave it to him because I loved him. And I certainly wasn't going to take it away once I gave it to him. But some Christians view their salvation like that dog views a piece of chicken. They feel that they need to guard that which they never earned nor deserved. Dear friends, if you are saved then you are saved because God loves you. You are saved because God reached down and said, "Take My hand", and you took His hand. You are saved, not because you earned or deserved it, but because you allowed God to put you **in Christ Jesus**.

God cannot save you if you do not believe. You must believe that you are a sinner in need of salvation. Like Isaiah **you need to realize that you are a person of unclean lips, and that you dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips (Isaiah 6:5)**. Like Peter, **who had fished all night and yet received not one bite**, you need to let the net of your life down where Jesus says. You need to deny pride and let Him fill your life with blessing. You need to say "**Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord**" (Luke 5:8). You need to be broken like the Apostle Paul was broken on the Damascus Road. God cannot fill a vessel that is already full! You must be emptied before He can fill you. You

must be naked before you can be clothed from on high. The shell must come off of the nut before it can be eaten. Your cry needs to change from "Look at me, Lord, and see how good I am " to what the Psalmist said,

Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: {24} And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Hell will be filled with good people. Dear friends, **the Son must make you free if you will be free indeed (John 8:36).**

What did the Apostle Paul say was the source of his salvation? Was it that he was a great Jew? Did Paul say "I am saved because I am circumcised?" No, not at all. The Apostle said:

Philippians 3:3-9 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. {4} Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: {5} Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; {6} Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. {7} But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. {8} Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ

Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, {9} And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Paul said "I have no confidence in the flesh. I have no confidence in my circumcision. I was of the stock of Israel, I was of the tribe of Benjamin, I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews and a blameless Pharisee. I count ALL THINGS - every ritual, every family tie, everything that I used to hold dear - as DUNG. I have surrendered everything and now only trust IN CHRIST."

How may a person be saved? Only by being IN CHRIST. We must trust to His Grace. We must believe what God has said. There is nothing that we can give God, but there is everything that God can give us. If you will cast yourself upon the Lord you will find that

1 Timothy 1:14 ... And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

God's Grace is sufficient to save the chiefest of sinners, but it cannot save those who will not trust to God. When the Roman Governor Felix

Acts 24:24-25 sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. {25} And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment

to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

Felix trembled, but would not believe. He told Paul I will wait for a more convenient season to believe - and in waiting never believed, dying in his sins. King Agrippa said to Paul:

Acts 26:28-29 "In {such} a short time you think to make me a Christian!" {29} And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am..."^{RSV}

There is no work that you can do to become a Christian, and there is no Law that you can follow to become a Child of God *or retain your citizenship in Heaven.*

You must be born again! You must *cast yourself on the mercy of God*, believing that Christ gave Himself for you.

2. The Love Of God Operates In The True Believer

FOCAL Galatians 5:4-5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. {6} For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

RSV Revised Standard Version of the Scripture, used here for clarity

Notice once more our text. "We THROUGH THE SPIRIT WAIT".

ILLUSTRATE When I was in the military we spent a lot of time *waiting*. We'd hurry to get to our duty station, then we'd *wait*. We had a saying, "Hurry up and wait". Why do we wait? Why does the Doctor schedule your appointment at 10:00 am, but not see you until noon? Why does the airline require you to check in 3 hours prior to your boarding? Why *wait*? Among humanity we wait for a variety of reasons. We *wait at Walmart* because – though they have 99 registers – they only open 4 or 5 (somebody explain that to me). We *wait* at the airport because they want to make more money, so they generally overbook the flights. They want to make sure every seat is filled. We wait in the doctor's office because he had to take a little longer with the person ahead of you. Frankly I don't mind that! I don't want the surgeon to look at his watch while he's working on me and say "Well, that's close enough for *government work* – *I've got another appointment*".

LIFE is God's waiting room. What are we waiting on? **We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.** God is forming Christ in us. He is making us to be like Jesus, and using us to reach the world for Him.

If you have been born again by faith in Christ, the God works in you! The Christ - saved by love - also *possesses faith which worketh by love*. Here we see the

difference between the *true* believer and the *false* believer, the difference between *the wheat* and *the tare*.

Real saving faith plants itself in Christ. Once it plants itself in Christ it **worketh by love**.

Pharisee – Pride The Pharisee **worketh by pride**. When the Pharisee gave to the poor they

Matthew 6:2 ... sound{ed} a trumpet before {themselves} ... that they may have glory of men...

They literally *toted their own horn*. When the Pharisees prayed

Matthew 6:5 .. they love{d} to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men ...

They were driven by pride, and did what they did to be seen of men. They did not have **faith which worketh by love**. They were not indwelt by God - Who is love - and thus their works were self seeking.

Pagan – Power Consider also **Herod** who did many mighty works. Herod rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem. He believed in John the Baptist, and did many good things for the people of Israel, but he did not have **faith which worketh by love**. Herod murdered John. **Herod had faith which worketh by fear**. He never had saving faith

Pretender – Piggishness Consider also **Judas Iscariot**. This man did not have faith which worketh by love, but **he worketh by greed**. Greed was his driving force. Judas walked with Jesus, and sat at the feet of Jesus, but the Scripture says of him that:

John 12:6 {he did not care} for the poor he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

True saving faith will always produce in its members love. **Faith which worketh by love**. As C.H. Spurgeon once said:

"When faith has anything to do she walks to the field with love at her side. The two graces are inseparable. Like Mary and Martha they are sisters, and abide in one house. Faith, like Mary, sits at Jesus' feet, and hears His words, and then love diligently goes about the house and rejoices to honor the Divine Lord. Faith is light, while love is heat, and in every beam of grace from the Sun of Righteousness you will find a measure of each. True faith in God cannot exist without love to Him, nor sincere love without faith; they are united, like Siamese twins, and when you meet the one the other is sure to be present".¹

It is **faith that worketh by love** that is in the heart of every Christian. If a person tries to earn his way to God then he often gets prideful, even self righteous. Such people boast in themselves. That is not the way of the Christian.

¹ from his sermon "Faith Working By Love"

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We - **THROUGH THE SPIRIT** wait for the hope of righteousness **BY FAITH**. We know that we are sinners, deserving only of hell, but Christ saved us. What saith the Scripture?

Galatians 2:20-21 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. {21} I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

I should have been crucified, but I was not. **I am crucified with Christ** - not because the nails of punishment were driven into me, nor because I hung naked and ashamed between two thieves. **I am crucified with Christ** - because the life which I now live in the flesh I live **BY THE FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD**. My hope is in Him. My hope for salvation is in Him. My hope for sanctification is in Him. My hope for eternity is in Him. **He loved me, and gave Himself for me - in my place**. Therefore I have **faith which worketh by love**. **He is altogether lovely**. We love Him because He first loved us!

ILLUSTRATE QUESTIONS A woman once wanted to know whether to join a local Church or not. In order to determine whether that Church was right she set up an interview with the pastor. She asked, "**What type of Bible do you use? How do you preach? Do you use notes, or do you preach without notes? Do you have fellowship meals at the Church? Are women allowed to teach Bible classes - or pray - in the Church?**" Question after question she asked, but never did she ask the right question. The right question is, "**Pastor, do you love Jesus? Do the members of this Church love Jesus?**" If those question are answered with an emphatic "yes", then all other things will fall into place.

The **faith which worketh by love** will not dally with sin. The **faith which worketh by love** will recognize and confess sin before God. The Christian - when he discovers sin in himself - is ashamed of what he has done, and runs from sin as readily as he would run from a snake. The Christian does not *try* to love, but loves as naturally as a fish breathes water. The Scripture says:

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Saving faith abides, and it abides along side of hope and love. The Christian does not fear hell. The unbeliever *should* fear hell, for it is a place of torment. The rich man told Abraham:

Luke 16:27-28 ... I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send {Lazarus} to my father's house: {28} For I have five brethren; that he may testify

unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

Oh, how terrible the black flame of hell! It is an awful thing, the Bible says, to be in such a place.

Hebrews 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

FAITH and the BLIND The key that opens Heaven's Gate is **faith which worketh by love**. Two blind men chased after Jesus, saying **“Thou Son of David, have mercy on us”**. Jesus kept walking. They pursued Him all the way to His destination, and burst into the house where He was. **“Thou Son of David, have mercy on us”**. Jesus asked them **“Do you believe that I am able to do this?”** They responded, **“Yes, Lord”**. Jesus said, **“According to your faith be it unto you”**. Listen Beloved, **“According to your FAITH”**.

Salvation and preservation is not according to your **fate**, nor according to your **fortune**, nor according to your **fame**. It is not according to your **friends** nor according to your **feelings**. It is **according to your faith IN CHRIST JESUS**.

Vance Havner said, **“If you trust Him much you shall realize much. The resources are there. If you make small drafts on the bank of Heaven don't be surprised if you're always ragged and down at the heel, rattling a few spiritual pennies while others are rich with God's gold. “The same Lord is rich unto all that call**

upon Him” (Romans 10:12).

The Christian has no need to fear hell. **Faith worketh by love**. Love abides!

The Born Again WORKETH BY LOVE Love is **faith's furnace**. I have worked in jobs where I have seen people - because they hated the job - come to work late, or at least, not a minute before they were to be there. These people usually backed their cars into the parking space so they could make the quickest getaway. The law of the company demanded that they be at work at a certain time, that they work a certain way, and that they be paid a certain wage. This is not the case with the Christian. For us, **faith worketh by love**. We do not work for God because we fear damnation. We work for God because we love Him. We love Him because He gave Himself for us. What does the Scripture say?

1 John 4:14-19 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. {15} Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. {16} And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. {17} Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. {18} There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. {19} We love him, because he first loved us.

God loved us before we loved God. The believer in Christ does not fear hell. Has He not promised **"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"** (Hebrews 13:5)? Has He not said, **"Lo, I am with you, even until the end of the age"** (Matthew 28:20)? Where ever the Christian goes, the Savior goes. We are not saved by our works but by His works.

Ephesians 1:4-6 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: {5} Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, {6} To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

God has foreordained that only means of salvation is **in Christ**. He has **predestined** everyone who calls upon the Name of Jesus for salvation to **the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to Himself**. We are **accepted**, not because we are lovely, but because Christ is lovely. **God hath made us accepted in the Beloved.**

Our destiny is not of works, but of faith. **Do not fall from Grace**. Do not believe that you can be saved by keeping the Law. **The only ladder that will reach God is Grace**. God must work in you.

Isaiah 55:6-7 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: {7} Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his

thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

May God touch your hearts with His Word!

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