

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Faith is a work?

Faith is a work? - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/11/12 15:22

I read this passage today and i wondered what the Lord meant, i will post the verses and my thoughts.

John 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. (Joh 6:27 KJV)

Here i think we see what we should put our effort on, our time and energy, devout our strength to labour for the life Jesus gives us, He gives it and we labour to receive it to make the most out of the grace he has given us as a gift.

John 6:28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? (Joh 6:28 KJV)

and here i think is a question worth considering, its kind of other questions we find in scripture, but its interesting i thought, what must i do, to work Gods work? I think we see in the verse before that it all comes from him, he is the giver.... and i must work, but my real question is what the Lord Jesus says in the next verse. He answers like this.

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. (Joh 6:29 KJV)

Now since english can be a bit unspecified sometimes :-) i looked in swedish translation and it says a bit different, and my knowledge in greek is limited. But the "work of God" here in swedish seems to imply that it is the human working so to speak, so that "faith" is a work in itself.

what i am saying is when we are saying you are saved by faith, then we are saved by works (depending on definition) since faith is a kind of work, something we do. Even tho it originates from Him. Maybe i am confusing you all?

Not aiming at a debate on salvation faith vs works since i am convinced scripture clearly shows we are saved by faith, but.... faith is a work in it self. Even tho it is given by God.

Anyone has any thoughts on this passage that can shed some further light?

Re: Faith is a work? - posted by Heydave (), on: 2009/11/12 16:23

Hi hmmhmm,

I understand that the words FAITH and FAITHFULNESS are essentially the same and can be used interchangeably. That said, it would mean faith is trusting God. Regarding salvation this means trusting what God says about sin and trusting Jesus as our salvation from sin.

James tells us that true faith cannot be separated from works. Faith ALWAYS ACTS on what it is believing. To say you have faith and not act on what you profess to believe is non-faith (or dead faith). So in a sense faith is always a work in that it will be shown by what we do.

So in other words faith is not some feeling, or force, or something intellectual, but it is how we live our life. It is the 'substance' of what we hope (hope is that which we know God has said).

Do know if that helps any?

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2009/11/12 18:15

Faith is a work of God that is received as a gift. "Faith comes," Paul says, "...by hearing the word of God." So, faith can not be said to be a work of man, rather, it is a work of God that depends on the creative power found within the proclaimed word.

Re: faith and works - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/11/12 20:26

IÂ'm really glad that you pointed this verse out (to me anyway!) because IÂ've been seeking God on some things and this helps me to be more focusedÂ....

John 6:28 Then said they unto him, **What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?** (Joh 6:28 KJV)

This is Â"myÂ" understanding about faith and works (it's not written in stone). . . we receive a Â'measure of faithÂ' when we come to believe and of course, we canÂ't believe unless weÂ've heard but we all receive a measure whatever God deems the measure to be. What we do with that measure after we receive it is up to us. Like the parable of the talent.

Therefore, we can die with that same measure or we can work to cultivate more faith! I believe this is in line with your statement: *faith is a work in itself. Even tho it is given by God.*

Thanks again for this thought and "faith" provoking topic! God bless you!

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/11/12 23:08

Understanding of this concept that 'Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness' came to me one day. Simply put God spoke, Abraham believed God and acted on it. Romans 3:4. Otherwise he was a good man, but not good enough before God. What made him pleasing to God was his obedience to Him! After studying Romans I have come to the conclusion that this faith and obedience are interchangeable in many ways.

My understanding..

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2009/11/12 23:24

hi, by faith noah built an ark to the saving of his family... by faith abram left his home in search for a city...all faith requires obedience to that which God speaks to you to do...repent...give up your control and give your life to Christ... present your body as a living sacrifice...walk in the spirit... all by faith. jimp

Re: , on: 2009/11/13 1:52

Quote:
-----by KingJimmy on 2009/11/12 15:15:37 Faith is a work of God that is received as a gift. "Faith comes," Paul says, "...by hearing the word of God." So, faith cannot be said to be a work of man, rather, it is a work of God that depends on the creative power found within the proclaimed word.

If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema.

If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, let him be anathema.

If anyone says that nothing besides faith is commanded in the Gospel, that other things are indifferent, neither commanded nor forbidden, but free; or that the ten commandments in no way pertain to Christians, let him be anathema.

If anyone says that a man who is justified and however perfect is not bound to observe the commandments of God and the Church, but only to believe, as if the Gospel were a bare and absolute promise of eternal life without the condition of observing the commandments, let him be anathema.

Re: - posted by IWantAnguish (), on: 2009/11/13 11:13

Faith is not some abstract principle.

Faith is always based on fact.

Based upon the facts you know about God, which He has revealed to you through the work of His son Jesus Christ... The word is revelation.

The outworking of objective truth of God is faith.

Hebrews 11:1

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/11/13 11:51

since many kinda twarped this thread into something it was not meant to, i wanted to say thankyou for all your answers and thoughts.

to haydock:

don't you think anathema should be used in the same context Paul used it? he wrote it to the galatians who were trying to go back and be justified by the law and not by faith.

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2009/11/13 12:07

Greetings

I was reading this, this morning and thought that it kind of fit here.

God bless
maryjane

Faith, and Drawing Near to a Person

After reading and thinking recently about how holiness is a relational issue, intertwined lives, i was thinking about how FAITH is also a relational thing—Jesus isn't asking us to believe in and trust concepts, or words, but a Person, The Word, and it changes everything when i draw near to a PERSON rather than concepts, ideas, or words. The Love of the Person who has made and keeps all His Promises shatters all my fears, and He ALWAYS proves Himself TRUE, in ways beyond my grasp. So what am i saying? Just as holiness is always about a relationship ("set apart FOR ___")—not a simply a lifestyle or action, so also is faith always about a relationship. My ability to grasp ideas and retain concepts and remember and execute ordinances is exceedingly limited and fluctuates daily, but the invitation for me to turn to, cling to, rely on and respond to a PERSON is open forever, and that changes everything because then it's all about Him and not limited by me. My relationship with this reliable, dependable, responsive, protective, determined, committed, fully-capable Person is what sustains me, hourly, and it is in HIM that i so fully BELIEVE, and the more i turn to Him, the more He proves Himself all of those things and more.....Faith is a RELATIONSHIP, with The Man who performs miracles of healing and forgiveness and life in the hearts of all who BELIEVE in Him, and with all those who likewise are Connected to Him. We sustain each other, in His presence. We believe in this One who is our strength and our portion and our righteousness and our peace forever. Rest all your weight on this Person, Jesus, because He cares for you, and discover Him intimately as the end of all your longings and find FAITH alive in your heart because you have been touched by The Living God who daily bears your burdens and hears your cries and never forgets you..... Faith is borne of a RELATIONSHIP.

—Original Message—

How does one find freedom from the power and penalty of sin?

Faith.

Faith is, amongst many things, Believing in God's Character—as GOOD.

Faith is trusting His Vow, His Word, that the pleasure of being near Him FAR exceeds the pleasures of sin!!!

Faith and love result, ALWAYS, in obedience to Him, for that reason. God delivers from sin and death those who Believe ! In the Garden, satan would have had us believe that Father is trying to "cheat" us—and the worm's tactics have not changed.

We choose to Trust Him by rejecting for Him what He has called sin—and never justifying it or blaming Him, or blaming circumstances, or blaming others, or mind-blocking in an attempt to make His Word go away or mean something different.

Faith is Believing HE IS GOOD, and that His Choices and Ways are FAR BETTER THAN SIN and self-service. He is Good. He LONGS "to give good gifts to His Children" and is far wiser than His little ones in knowing what IS good.

THIS, then, is the Victory that overcomes the world: our FAITH. Trusting that He is sufficient, that He is wise, that He is kind and generous. And, Faith is believing that what He says about sin is for our GOOD, not to cheat us. Faith! Trust! And how can we please Him without Faith?!

He IS Good.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2009/11/13 12:42

Quote:

-----dont you think anathema should be used in the same context Paul used it? he wrote it to the galatians who where trying to go back and be justified by the law and not by faith

Amen, which is why it is so very vital to take all your theology from scripture alone. This is the primary reason *sola scriptura* has always been a rejected concept for Rome. It allows papal decree free reign to either anathematize or canonize how ever and whomever she pleases.

Haydock is cutting and pasting from the Council of Trent, a group of sessions convened by the RCC as a response to the Protestant Reformation. In a nutshell, the council sessions concluded that only the Latin Vulgate was the authorized version of God's Word, and it could only be properly interpreted by a person ordained through Roman Catholic priestcraft. All others were heretics. The Council also outlawed the translation of scripture into laymen's common vernacular - such as English or German or French. This was a cataclysmic "anathema" because the common person could then ascertain the ecclesiastical corruption and diametric opposition to Christlikeness going on - like the selling of indulgences - with dictatorial impunity. Punishment for translation, naturally, was death. William Tyndale discovered this first hand. This was the beginning of Satan's open war against the Word of God, which continues on to this day in other governmentally-oppressed and/or religiously-oppressed countries. The only difference was, 500 years ago the RCC had the hegemony; today it is Communism, Islam, Secular Humanism, etc.

Brother Paul

Re: Faith is a work? - posted by TracyInMD (), on: 2009/11/13 12:57

Howdy. I LOVE this passage (Jn 6:28-9), discovering it last year, although I had read it before of course.

Here are thoughts from a former flesh perfectionist. I worked, worked and worked for Jesus. Nevermind that my attitudes were bad, self-righteous and prideful. I thought that people who weren't as geared into excellence were less helpful to God. I'm not against "excellence", but the more excellent way is spelled out in 1 Cor 13, it would seem. I was an idolater who loved the works of her hands. But I "worked" myself to pieces and now I see how was of no good use to God. That's background.

This scripture is so intriguing. If you want to work, try believing God FIRST. I saw how I was working, but not at all concerned with doing all that Jesus commanded. I was working (this "ministry", that "ministry") but there was no fruit. And in fact, it now seems as if the first 11 years of my walk were a total waste, except that I know that God works all things for good in those who are called according to His purpose. Knowledge of those wasted years has made me passionate about my point: I think most of us are wasting our time in "ministry" that isn't producing fruit. And that ministry is typically ONLY within an organizational chart.

I had big chunks of scripture that I was not obeying, but I was sure "working". Should I not have believed God that I should FIRST obey scripture? I find the more I obey scripture (as the Spirit guides me into all truth and I repent), the more I lose my independence from God. My will is eliminated, I am "emptied out", and it is GOD HIMSELF doing the works. I am in Christ and He is in me.

Just this week I found a couple more scriptures related to this. WORKS as shown in James 2. What was the "work" of Abraham? Did Abraham sit down with a list of offered ministries and say "I choose this"? He just did what God said. Rahab the harlot, did she take a spiritual gifts inventory so that she might properly work for God? I'm not necessarily against ministries, but it seems as if we can ONLY minister in preconceived ways, and those ways don't seem to be bearing fruit.

I've just come to believe that works starts with believing God and doing what is already revealed. The more I apply myself to THAT work, the more works God can do THRU me! The works are more spontaneous and based out of TRUER love. Before, it was manufactured love on my part; I am a disciple, this is what I DO. But now, it is more of who I am that causes me to DO.

Don't know if this was written well, since I don't have much time to write, and it's such a significant issue for me, I'd love to write more!

God bless!!

Re: , on: 2009/11/13 14:13

Quote:

-----don't you think anathema should be used in the same context Paul used it? he wrote it to the galatians who were trying to go back and be justified by the law and not by faith.

You should have wrote that they were "trying to go back and be justified by the WORKS of the law and not by the WORKS of faith. (see Gal. 5:6)

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/11/13 14:16

Quote:

haydock wrote:

Quote:

-----don't you think anathema should be used in the same context Paul used it? he wrote it to the galatians who were trying to go back and be justified by the law and not by faith.

You should have wrote that they were "trying to go back and be justified by the WORKS of the law and not by the WORKS of faith. (see Gal. 5:6)

thank you for pointing that out, its hard sometimes being Swedish means i think in swedish and type in english, including quoting bible verses i sometimes get wrong, but i think no one misunderstood my point. But you did not answer my question?

Re: , on: 2009/11/13 14:18

Quote:

-----Amen, which is why it is so very vital to take all your theology from scripture alone.

Please watch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=klfESuF5uQ>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEsMjB00oek>

Re: , on: 2009/11/13 14:23

hmmhmm,

Great, since that is qualified I'd love to answer.

It is being used in the same context. The word "anathema" does not have to be used to speak to only one isolated heretical point of view. It is used for any and all of them. This word has the sense of condemnation or judgement. When the Church writes "let him be anathema", they are pronouncing an agreement with God's judgment upon the offender. A faithful under-shepherds, they are clearly repeating this judgment as a warning to all.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2009/11/13 14:29

Quote:

-----hi, by faith noah built an ark to the saving of his family... by faith abram left his home in search for a city...all faith requires obedience to that which God speaks to you to do...repent...give up your control and give your life to Christ... present your body as a living sacrifice...walk in the spirit... all by faith.

You got it! :-) Simple, isn't it?

ginnyrose

Re: Faith is a Work? - posted by twayneb (), on: 2009/11/13 16:02

HmmmHmmm: I can share something God showed me on this topic.

James 2:17-18 give a relationship between faith and works. Although it may not appear to on the surface, so does Romans 5:3-5.

God has not given us the measure of faith for no reason. Faith has a goal. God has intended that we believe Him and walk in His ability, His power, His anointing rather than in our own ability and strength. Anything God asks us to do requires that we put faith in Him and do something. James says, my faith is made evident to you by the works you see me doing. I have taken a step of faith when I have obeyed God and begun to do the things He has asked me to do.

God is always faithful. He always comes through. Romans 5:3-5 is very interesting if you look at each of the words used in the greek language. Basically it reads like this (my own paraphrase): Trials put our endurance (our faith) to work like

When a man puts a team of horses to work. Our endurance (faith) brings about proof of God's faithfulness. That proof brings about further confidence that what God says He will do, He WILL do so I can believe Him in bigger and bigger things. Check it out in the greek and see if you don't come to a similar understanding.

Romans 16:25-26 shows that the mystery of Christ in us, of salvation, that was spoken of by the prophets has now been made manifest to us for the obedience of faith. We receive Christ and are born again through an action of faith. We repent, turn from sin, turn to Christ. Why? Why would we think that would do anything? Through faith! As we have received Christ (through faith) so we are to walk in Him. Rooted, established, and built up in Him. We walk by faith just as we were born again by faith. That faith is manifest by actions of obedience to Him. If I have faith in Him, the proof of that faith will be the fact that I obey Him in whatever He shows me to do, even if it seems to me to be so totally beyond my own ability that I am in great fear to do it.

In this sense, faith is inextricably linked to works.

God bless you brother.

Travis

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2009/11/13 22:42

I heard a nice saying somewhere. Unfortunately, I can't recall who said it. But the preacher said something to this extent: You are justified by faith, but your works justify your faith.

I believe this is quite a fitting summary to James 2. James completely affirms the writings of the apostle Paul, that by no works of the law will a man be justified in the sight of God.

Indeed: "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law." (Romans 3:28)

Indeed: "...we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand;" (Romans 5:2)

Indeed: "This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ...So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?" (Galatians 3:2-3, 5)

We are justified by faith and our salvation is maintained by faith. You begin in faith and end in faith. The works we do justify our faith as being real. If you have saving faith, you have a faith that works, and can be tangibly demonstrated. But the works we do have nothing to do with our being justified before God. They are simply the seal of our faith. As Romans 5:19 makes abundantly clear, the only obedience that merited our salvation is the obedience of Jesus Christ: "...even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."

It's "the obedience of the One" that matters before God when it concerns us.

Re: SOLA FIDE - posted by savannah, on: 2009/11/14 6:56

"...Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 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 a work is no more work..." Rom 11:3

Romans 4:1,2 What shall we then say that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.

Galatians 3:7-9 Know ye therefore, that they who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Luke 23:39-43 Then one of the evildoers who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this Man did nothing wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come in Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

"Go you on with the commandments, and I will go on with the promises. Make the law your rule of walk, and I will pray God to perform his promise in me, for God hath said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." Thus you go on by the law, and I by the gospel. Do you perform your duty, and I will plead my privileges. Act thou as an industrious servant; and, by God's grace, I will act as an affectionate son. Be thou obedient to the law, and I will pray for grace for obedience to the faith. Live thou in the fear of thy master, and I will endeavour to honour my heavenly Father.

Make the law thy only rule of action, and act accordingly; and I will depend upon God to work in me both to will and to do of his own good pleasure; yea, to fulfill all the good pleasure of his will in me, and the work of faith with power.

Make the law your only rule of conversation. Speak of the commandments "when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates; that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children; in the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers to give them as the days of heaven upon the earth," And I will pray God to create the fruit of my lips; to give me a mouth and wisdom that all my enemies shall not be able to gainsay or resist; and that it may not be me that speaks, but that the Spirit of my heavenly Father may speak in me; and then my conversation will be with power, and my words seasoned with salt, ministering grace. Thus runs the promise, and the excellency and the power is of God; and, if God perform his promise to me He will have all the glory; and, if thou perform thy task, thou hast whereof to glory, but not before God, whatever thou dost before men.

Let the ministers of the letter bind all the grievous burdens upon your shoulders that you can possibly bear, and I will cast my burdens on the Lord who has promised to sustain me. Be thou careful to observe all the grievousness which they prescribe, and I will cast all my care upon him that careth for me. Walk thou by sight, and I by faith; walk thou in the letter, and I in the Spirit. Look thou to the commandments, and I will look to Jesus....

Most men will proclaim their own goodness, but a faithful man who can find? Men who are unacquainted with the power of godliness must enforce the letter, for that is all their stock. With the letter, a great noise, and a fair shew in the flesh, they deceive the simple. The mystery of faith is a puzzling thing to an unexperienced heart and an unenlightened head: when they attempt this they only betray their ignorance...

If thou cleave to the letter of the law, and make that thy rule of life, walk, actions, and conversation; then thy obedience will be the obedience of the law, not of faith; they will be thy fruits, not the fruits of the Spirit. By the law you work, by the gospel God works in me. You produce fruit in obedience to the letter; in Christ is my fruit found. You work by the law, by the gospel God works all my works in me. By the law you must make a new heart, and a new spirit; by the gospel God creates me anew in Christ Jesus. By the law you must love God; by the gospel God's love is shed abroad in my heart. By the law you must wash you, and make you clean; by the gospel God cleanses me from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit. Thus God works by the gospel, and by the law you work: by the one self is denied, and Christ is all in all; by the other, self is exalted, and you are all in all. One of these agents must give way: grace must be grace, and works no more work; or works must be all, and grace nothing at all...

"I do not frustrate the grace of God; for, if righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain." And as righteousness did not come by the law, so neither did holiness, life, or sanctification come by the law. Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, life, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and he doth sanctify and cleanse his church, and present it without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."

(W. Huntington)

Grace, triumphant in the throne,
Scorns a rival, reigns alone!
Come, and bow beneath her sway,
Cast your idol-works away;
Works of man, when made his plea,
Never shall accepted be;

Fruits of pride, (vain glorious worm!)
Are the best he can perform.

Self, the god his soul adores,
Influences all his powers;
Jesus is a slighted name,
Self-advancement all his aim;
But when God the Judge shall come.
To pronounce the final doom,
Then for rocks and hills to hide
All his works and all his pride!

Still the boasting heart replies,
What! the worthy and the wise,
Friends to temperance and peace,
Have not these a righteousness?
Banish every vain pretence
Built on human excellence;
Perish ev'ry thing in man,
But the grace that never can.

William Cowper

Deut. 29:2-4 And Moses called to all Israel, and said to them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land; The great temptations which thy eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: Yet the LORD hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, to this day.

Isa. 6:8-10 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Mark 4:9-12 And he said to them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was alone, they that were about him, with the twelve, asked of him the parable. And he said to them, To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but to them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

Believe God. Faith is a gift!