TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader / Opening Prayer by: Don Taylor
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Daniel Balch

#712 Jesus Is coming Soon
#555 Seek Ye First

Scripture Reading by: Pierce Balch
#376 He Paid a Debt

Communion Devotional by: Don Lynn
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#957 This World is Not My Home
Sermon: "The Chosen: Little James
Mark 3:16-19

#909 There's a Fountain Free
Get Right Church
Closing Prayer by: Kelly McCain

Robert Ward's group will meet at the building
today at 5:00 p.m.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

May 25, 2025

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Baptism and Salvation by Works

Over the last couple of weeks, we have studied objections to the understanding of baptism we have delineated in this space. We first considered the contention that it undermines salvation by faith. We saw that this is based on a misunderstanding of biblical faith. Faith is more than just mental assent; it requires faithfulness. Obedience, then, is the common theme for answering such objections.

Last week, we explored another concern some raise, that an emphasis on baptism subverts salvation by grace. Salvation does, indeed, come through the cross of Christ by God's grace: he offers us something we cannot offer ourselves, But as we saw exemplified throughout Scripture, grace does not mean that there are no conditions attached. We must respond with a penitent faith, culminating in baptism. Then God gives us his blessings—not because of how great we are, but due to his gracious promise.

Let's examine one final difficulty proposed by some, raised by the very same passage in **Ephesians** that related to salvation by grace last week, but here focused on the final clause.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. **(Eph 2:8-9)**

Salvation by Works?
The argument runs that Paul said we are not saved by works. Baptism is a work. Therefore, baptism is not connected with salvation. That is a valid syllogism; logically, it is true—*if* the premises are true.

It is just here that a glaring problem jumps out, though: where does Scripture say baptism is a work? If anything, it makes clear that baptism is NOT the type of work Paul had in mind.

Paul says we are not saved by works. But Peter says we are saved by baptism **(1 Pet 3:21).** If we are not saved by works, but we are saved by baptism, then baptism not a work.

Or look at **Titus 3:5**: *He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.* What is that washing? It is baptism. This is Paul writing to Titus, mind you. He states we were not saved by works, but by God's mercy in baptism.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Steve Lunceford has cancer and not doing well.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen, Oscar Cantu, Jennifer Stelly, Steve Ward, Geri Cryer, Gloria McKelroy, Scott Overton, Rickey Lucas, Debbie Lynn, Kim Berka

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific, Mani Pagidopali in India

Upcoming Activities

No Elders, Minister meeting this week.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, June 3rd at 8:00 a.m.

VBS is Saturday, June 28th from 9-2 p.m.

Camp Red Oak Springs

Calling all of our youth: make your plans to attend Session 5 of Camp Red Oak Springs in Newton, June 29-July 5.
Parents, if you're worried about sending your younger kids off, it's only about an hour away, and they can go for just part of the week. Plus, our own Brooks McKelroy IV will be working this session and will be happy to keep in touch with you. Brooks is also willing to answer any questions/concerns you may have if you have never been involved in this before--he has for many years.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	Bryant Perkins
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
is the weekly bulletin of the Liberty Church of Christ 3201 North Main, Liberty Texas 77575
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Defining "Work"

More to the point, what is Paul taking about when he says not saved by works? The context of **Ephesians 2** helps us to better understand. In **v. 1-5,** Paul refers to the many sins in people's lives before salvation. But then he makes it clear that, *God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved*—**(Eph 2:4-5).**

The point is that we cannot earn our way to heaven. The only reason we have salvation is because God gives it to us.

We are talking here about what we normally call meritorious works. Imagine you spend the rest of your life doing good for others: you give all of your money to the poor; you constantly help when you see someone in need; you go out and teach people the gospel. Would all of those good deeds earn you a ticket to heaven? Not even close!

We are sinners; we can never deserve heaven. Paul wrote we cannot be saved by our own good deeds, our works of merit. But he never said there are no God-given requirements for salvation.

Baptism is Not a Work

Baptism is absolutely not a work in this sense; there is nothing inherently meritorious about it. In fact, baptism is literally always in the passive in Scripture. That is, it is not something you do at all; it is, rather, something that is done to you.

Further, if we define "work" so broadly as to include any human activity, then faith itself is a work! Jesus called it the *work of God* in fact, to believe in him **(Jn 6:29).**

It seems many fear emphasizing baptism would imply that a person is saving themselves. Let's be clear, then: we absolutely do not save ourselves in baptism. God is the one doing the saving. Scripture never says that baptism is a work of trying to save ourselves. In fact, it is doing just the opposite, calling on name of the Lord, appealing to God. We are not saved by our works, but are saved at the point of baptism.

Conclusion

There are probably other objections to consider, but these past few articles have touched the main ones. I think it is good for us to make an effort to understand why some do not attach the same significance to baptism as we historically have in churches of Christ. I believe that we have seen these objections do not really stand up under scrutiny. But we should also always be sure that we approach this in humility and love rather than with condescension or contentiousness.

Bryant Perkins