

# The Simple Truth

## Scripture

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." (John 5:24 NKJV)

## Commentary

Those who understand the deceptive nature of the devil and the flesh often spend a good deal of energy trying to secure other people's understanding about salvation. Faith and repentance are described as two sides to one coin. "Faith without works is dead" is quoted from the Book of James (James 2:20). A great emphasis is placed on having a fruit-producing faith, and rightly so as this is the only faith that saves.

However, we must remember that baptism and fruit production is not meritorious but evidential. As Jesus told Nicodemus, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8 NKJV) We can see the evidence of a changed life, but it is the Spirit that rustles the leaves. The simple truth is we are saved by grace through faith and not of works (Eph. 2:8-9).

Undoubtedly, there will be some who read this devotion and say I am opening the door for those in the easy-believe-ism camp to hope in a lifeless, intellectual decision. I suppose that camp might take some delight in what I feel needs to be addressed, but my purpose is to warn those in the Lordship camp to guard against works righteousness.

A pendulum swings back and forth, but it is only centered after it has come to rest. We often swing the theological pendulum to our own detriment. If we always live at the right apex of the swing, we run the risk of losing track of center.

In this case, center, is understanding that salvation comes through faith. We who love to quote the reformers sometimes forget that one of their main tenets was sola fide, faith alone. This error creeps in when we emphasize works so much that we start to have faith in works instead of Christ. When this happens, we are close to becoming a Pharisee.

One of the great struggles with salvation is the desire to do something to take hold of it. Our flesh wants to jump through some hoop or say some incantation. However, Paul makes it clear the work has been done, and we must take it by faith.

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ [is] the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, The man who does those things shall live by them. But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down [from above]) or, 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, 'whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.'" (Romans 10:1-11 NKJV)

Therefore, be careful not to forget the grounds for your justification, faith in Christ and His atoning work. Yes there must be good fruit, but fruit is evidence of a changed heart, and not the genesis of it. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,” (Titus 3:5 NKJV)

### **Prayer**

Father: Thank you for loving us. Without your grace we all would suffer your righteous wrath. May we never take your love for granted! Continue to lead us into the good works you have prepared for us that we might always serve from a grateful heart, amen.