

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

The Gospel Power is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

**Anderson
church of Christ**
5900 Highway 207
Anderson, Alabama

Visit Us On The Web
Anderson-church.org

Men Priviledged To Serve:
Sunday, December 26th:

Bible Classes

Song Leader

..... Ronnie Phillips

Bible Reading (Isaiah 51:1-7)

..... Curtis Mosley

Prayer

..... Andrew Gatlin

Morning Worship

Song Leader

..... Ronnie Phillips

Prayer

..... Ray Tucker

Lord's Supper

Presiding Jimmy Glass

Assisting Jerry Dickey

Serving Steph en Stewart

..... James McConnell

..... Brad Hammond

..... Ethan Pressnell

Closing Prayer

..... Larry White

Evening Worship

Song Leader

..... Phil Pressnell

Bible Reading (Isaiah 51:8-17)

..... Mike Rogers

Prayer

..... Eddie J. Hammond

Lord's Supper

..... Jimmy Glass

..... Jerry Dickey

Closing Prayer

..... Mark McIntyre

Volume XI

December 26, 2004

No. 51

What Must I Do?

Robert F. Turner

Is this a legitimate question, in keeping with the divine scheme of redemption, having a divine answer? The infidel says, "Do nothing, there is no salvation." The universalist says, "Nothing, all will be saved anyhow." True Calvinists reply, "Nothing, only the elect will be saved, unconditionally." And currently, well-meaning advocates of "Grace" have so far accepted Calvinistic or faith-only concepts as to equate all "doing" with "human righteousness — in effect saying, "Do nothing." All efforts to divorce saving faith from "doing" make for a confused jumble of terms, and lead to an unscriptural theology.

Calvinism which has permeated most denominations and popular commentaries, begins with a concept of God which can not tolerate true free will on the part of man. That man could act so as to alter his destiny, could implement or affect his salvation, is unthinkable. This philosophy is back of classic statements re. grace, imputation of Christ's righteousness, and labeling all obedience as "trying to lift yourself by your boot-straps." I believe some of our brethren, in a commendable desire to give glory to God for our salvation, have adopted Calvinistic terminology and thought.

Christ is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). He will take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:8). We may write books explaining that this "doing" is an expression of faith— and I'll buy that— but the fact remains that we must "do" something. Our "doing" will be imperfect, and therefore can not justify (make free from guilt) on a legalistic basis.

It will not “merit” (by virtue of incompleteness) a “free from guilt” appraisal. But one can not deny the need for obedience without ignoring many plain scriptures.

There is a big difference in works as the expression of faith in our Savior, and works as the means of redemption. When Paul contrasted “works” and “grace” (Romans 4:2-5) the context makes “works” refer to a system of law, demanding perfect obedience or freedom from sin (Romans 3:19-ff. Galatians 3:10-ff). If one should live a guilt-free life, his “doing” would be the means of his justification (declared guilt-free). But none of us live such lives (Romans 3:23). Having sinned, no doing can be the means of satisfying the Justice of God against whom we have sinned. Justice demands the penalty for sin, and the means of our redemption is Jesus Christ, who died in our stead (Isaiah 53; Romans 5:6-9). There is little excuse for a careful student to confuse the meritorious “works” of Romans 4 with acts of obedience which manifest our trust in the blood of the Christ.

As we have said, back of the denial of “human implementation” is the rejection of free will. If we seriously consider the implications of man as a free agent we can see consistency in a scheme of redemption which provides the means of justification on a universal scale, but makes the application of Christ’s blood depend upon the individual’s response to the gospel invitation. The gospel which God gave, is carefully suited to the man which God made.

One thing man must do in order to be saved is to truly believe — place trust — in Jesus Christ. This is something man does — it springs from the human heart in response to evidence (Romans 10:13-17). It affects his destiny. Jesus said, “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). Here is choice, with differing destinies. Some seek to avoid the “human” aspects of faith by saying it is a “natural response” to grace, but this begs the question. Is it human behavior, human response? It is unless — unless — we are ready to accept the Calvinistic concept that faith

is a gift of God. I will be pained but not surprised to hear this (or derivatives of it) among brethren who are now toying with Calvinistic concepts of redemption.

Now, is this faith acceptable in the absence of overt demonstration? I know God can see the heart — I know He is a Just God — but at what point does God say He will forgive sins? Is there scriptural reason to believe we are forgiven of past sins before we do His bidding, or when we obey Him? John 12:42-ff. records, “Many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” But we are told, this was not a trusting faith. How do we know it wasn’t? Because it did not manifest itself — and that is the very point Jesus makes. “he that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” We have no assurance of justification or of acceptable judgment except as we heed and conform to the message of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit gave us specific answers to the query, “What Must I Do to be Saved?” and we are foolish who allow theological speculations about “faith” to lead us away from these simple answers.

The Jailor was told to “Believe” — and then Paul and Silas preached to him. “Believe” was an incomplete answer in the absence of the “word of the Lord” for there is no reason to think the jailor had even heard of Jesus Christ. When he had been taught he came to the Lord, being baptized. (Acts 16:30-33) On Pentecost, after hearing that Jesus was the Christ of their hope, the Jews asked, “what shall we do?” and were told, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2: 37-41). And Saul, who had heard much of Jesus but rejected His claims, was allowed to see the Lord in glory. He believed, and was penitent (Acts 9:3-11); so Ananias said, “Why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16)

Man must recognize his lost condition and be taught that Jesus Christ died and lives again for his salvation. Denying himself (Matthew 16:24) he must repent of his past, and be buried with Christ in baptism (Romans 6:3-8) whereupon he is freed from past sins, and is expected to live for Christ.

Man's "doing" is not the price of redemption but it is the condition upon which God receives and blesses.

-via *Plain Talk*, Burnet, Texas.



Judgment Is Coming

Phillip Mullins

The old adage that says that "death and taxes" are the only two things that you can be sure of is not complete. There is one more certainty to be added to that list. "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment," (Hebrews 9:27). As sure as you and I will face death, we will also face judgment.

Concerning the resurrection and judgment Jesus said, "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming..." (John 5:28-29). Jesus tells us here that we shouldn't be surprised at this fact but accept it as the inevitable.

What will be judged? Every word we speak (Matthew 12:36), every act we commit for good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10), and even the things about us that are hidden from all other people (Romans 2:16). It will be a judgment on our whole life and character.

One of the greatest lies that people believe is that there is no justice to life. It is true that there are times in life when evil is rewarded and good is punished. Yet, those injustices are temporary. One day the judge of the universe will bring complete justice to the earth. At that time every

person will be held accountable for their life.

Sobering thoughts aren't they? More than that, these are depressing thoughts. For who can stand right before God if all our thoughts, deeds, and words are going to be judged?

Is there any hope that we can face judgment and be found pure and innocent? Yes. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 8:1). God has provided a way for us all to escape the guilt and punishment of our sins. His Son, though innocent and pure, was killed as a sacrifice. His death was payment for our sins. And by believing in Jesus as God's Son and obeying His will as Lord, we can have forgiveness of our sins.

For certain, judgment is coming. If you plan to stand on your own, your fate is doomed and each day that you live should be filled with fear and dread. However, your future doesn't have to be so dark. The Son of God is waiting to grant you forgiveness and peace. He is waiting to give you a future that is bright and joyful. Will you believe and follow Him?

Judgment is coming, what are your plans?

-via *Messages*, Kingsport, Tennessee.

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Jean Ray* is in the ECM hospital in Florence ... *Angie McCrary's father, Buford Shook*, is now home after being in rehabilitation ... *Willie Ridgeway* continues at home and is to go the doctor ... *Cindy Pressnell* has continued to recover from her recent surgery...*Lydia Clemmons* has been sick this past week and has been unable to be at services...*Michelle and Trenton Stewart* were both sick and unable to be at Bible study Wednesday night... *Tisha Thomas* was sick and unable to be at Bible study Wednesday... *Shelia Goode* was sick and unable to be at Bible study Wednesday night... *Virginia Lovell* was sick and unable to be at Bible study

Wednesday night...*Myrtie Williams* is at home ...*Monroe Pressnell's aunt, Mildred Pressnell*, is home and not doing well... *Tisha Thomas' mother, Shelia Johnson*, is taking oral chemo for her multiple myeloma...*Leota Springer's husband, Bob Springer*, continues to receive kidney dialysis ...*Helen Stewart's grandson, Adam Stewart*, is at home now, but is awaiting a kidney transplant ...*Curtis Cooper* has begun taking his chemo treatments ...*Mattie Blanche Word* is at home...Remember *Marcia Cooper's and Brian Word's uncle, Paul McCafferty* is in the Countryside Nursing Home in Lawrenceburg ...*James McConnell's mother, Della Mae McConnell*, continues at home... *Jerry Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson*, continues at home ... *Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter*, is in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

THE END OF THE YEAR: Today is the last Lord's day of the year 2004. It has been a very good year in many aspects for the Anderson church. I hope and trust that as we come to the end of the year that we will remember to take a spiritual inventory of our lives and see how we may serve the Lord in more ways in the coming year. The church here is blessed with three very good elders that have a great concern for the church and with six very good deacons that serve in various capacities for the congregation. I am thankful for each of them and trust that the Lord will bless them and their families. Also, I want to take this opportunity to thank each one of you for your care, concern, encouragement and support you have given during the past year in may work as the evangelist. The Coxes are blessed to be here with you and we thankful to God upon every remembrance of you.

THE RECORD: *For week of December 19th*

Sunday:

Bible Classes 98
 Morning Worship 109
 Evening Worship na

Wednesday:

Bible Classes 71

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
 Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
 Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Michael Clemmons (256) 247-0836
 Scottie Goode (931) 565-3391
 Monroe Pressnell (256) 232-0780

Deacons

Jimmy Glass (256) 247-0571
 Mark McIntyre (256) 233-1953
 Phil Pressnell (256) 232-8509
 Rocky Rose (256) 247-0011
 Larry White (256) 247-0988
 Brian Word (256) 229-5823

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