

## **BC 24 Part 2–Sanctification (成圣) and Good Works**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You are justified, **not by faith**, but by grace through faith. I hope you have memorized that now. After you are justified, God sanctifies you through faith. There is no place for your works in your salvation. So today we will examine what exactly good works are, why good works can't save you, and why you would want to do them.

Our headings are:

The **Definition of Good Works**

The **Limitation of Good Works**

The **Motivation to Good Works**

Our goals: That you **will be reminded that nothing you do merited** 行善积德 **anything you gain in Jesus Christ**, but that you will endeavor 努力, out of thankfulness to God, to do truly good works for the good of others and for the glory of God.

Therefore we do good works, but not to merit by them (for what can we merit?); nay, we are indebted [owe] to God for the good works we do, and not He to us, **since it is He who works in us both to will and to work**, for his good pleasure. Let us therefore attend to what is written: When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do. **In the meantime we do not deny that God rewards good works, but it is through His grace that He crowns His gifts.**

Moreover, though we do good works, **we do not found our salvation upon them**; for we can do no work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus, then, we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences would be continually vexed **if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior.**

因此我们行善事，不能算作我们的功德，不是的，我们所作的善事乃是出于神，并不是出于我们 10，“因为你们立志行事，都是神在你们心里运行，为要成就他的美意 11。”因此，我们当留心圣经上的话，这样，“你们作完了一切所吩咐的，只当说，我们是无用的仆人，所作的本是我们应份作的 12。”同时，我们不否认神赏赐我们的善行，但那是他的恩典 13。

况且，虽然我们作善事，但我们并不靠善行得救 14；因为按肉体说我们毫无善行，也应受刑罚的 15；虽然我们能完成这工作，仍有罪的瑕疵，足以被神拒绝。这样，如果我们不是靠赖我们救主受苦受死的功劳，我们只有常在疑惑中飘来飘去，毫无把握，我们微弱的良心要不断地忧伤 16。（Translated by Rev. Charles Chao D.D.）

### **Definition of Good Works**

#### **1. Good works, for them to be called good works, must proceed from faith – faith in Jesus Christ.**

Romans 14:23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; **for whatever is not from faith is sin.**（若有疑心而吃的，就必有罪；因为他吃，不是出于信心；凡不出于信心的都是罪。）

**This means 2 things.**

**a. If you don't trust in Jesus, your works are unacceptable.** Even the most splendid thing you will ever do...saving someone's life, performing life-saving cancer surgery...rescuing a baby from a burning building...giving wise counsel (建议)...if you don't believe in Jesus, it is not a good work. In fact, God will be angry with you for trying to please him without faith...and your attempt at good works will be condemned.

**b. If you don't have full persuasion (说服力) or conviction (信念) that the work you do is the right thing to do, even if it is a good work, and you still do it, it is sin.** Example: If you think that spanking your child is sin, though it isn't, and you still do, then that means you are a hypocrite, violating your conscience. So a good work becomes sinful. Others might call your work good because they see the outward actions, but God doesn't.

#### **2. Good works, for them to be called good works, must be according to the law of God.**

Matthew 5:19-20 - "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Everyone knows that we must obey all 10 laws, but the Pharisees 法利赛人 only pretended as if they were faithful to the 10 Laws. And in our customer friendly society, we are trained to be nice because it is good for business and because we want people to think we are nice. But no work is considered to be good **if it were not done according to the true spirit of the 10 Laws – which is love for God and love for your neighbor.** Further, you may not even break the smallest, seemingly most insignificant law, or your work would not be considered good. On the other hand,

God will greatly bless those who **obey the spirit of his 10 laws and teach others to do so.**

**3. Good works, for them to be called good works, must be done to please God.** This command covers every area of life.

1Corinthians 10:31 - Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1Peter 2:12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, **by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.** (你们在外邦人中, 应当品行端正, 叫那些毁谤你们是作恶的, 因看见你们的好行为, 便在鉴察的日子, 归荣耀给神。)

**4. When you do works from faith, based on God's law, and for the glory of Christ, you evidence Christian maturity.**

### **Limitation of Good Works**

**1. Good works can't save you. Many Scripture passages remind you of this because God knows you are prone to forget salvation is from the merit of Jesus alone and that you will try to take credit for that which Christ has done.**

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life.** No one comes to the Father except through Me.

**Consider what this teaching does to the teaching of Karma** (佛教和印度教的业, 因果报应), **which says that** if you do good, good will come to you! It annihilates (彻底击败) the false teaching of Karma. It is God who is good to you!

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 **not of works, lest anyone should boast.**

Romans 3:10-11 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; **There is none who seeks after God.**

Philippians 2:13 **for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**

This means that everything you have, you have received! **Even your ability to do good comes from God.** This must humble you. This is so much against the natural human tendency. Man is overwhelmed with ego (自我). He thinks much of himself. He thinks if he is good according to reasonable human standards God would accept it.

**2. While your good works don't merit your salvation, you must respond to your salvation by doing good works.**

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works,** which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Bluntly (坦率地) put: For this purpose you were born; for this purpose you were saved – to do good works.

**3. Good works are not only in physical activities, but in inward and outward attitudes and spiritual activities as well.**

Titus 2:7 in all things showing yourself to be a **pattern of good works;** in doctrine showing **integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,**

So if you refuse to join others in stealing, though it is not a physical work, yet it is considered a good deed.

**4. Good works don't come naturally, they need to be taught, they need to be learned, and they need to be practiced. Will you let this sink into your hearts?**

Titus 3:14 And let our people also **learn to maintain good works,** to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

What comes naturally is idleness 懒惰 and insurgency 叛乱! What comes naturally is hatred and hooliganism 流氓行为. You need to learn (and this means others need to teach) good works.

You need to teach a child to share. Otherwise, all you will hear from that child is "mine."

### **Motivation for Good Works**

**1. Assurance of ability. You can do good works if you are a Christian. God gave you that ability. God loved you and restored your ability to love. This is a love that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.**

1John 5:3 For this is **the love of God, that we keep His commandments.** And His commandments are not burdensome.

**God gives you a job, and he gives you tools to do it...tools to do it well.** You always have God's Word and God's Spirit.

**2. Christian encouragement. You will be encouraged by fellow Christians to do good works.**

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another in order to **stir up love and good works,**

Don't be angry with a brother or sister who gives you advice to do something better! Don't tell them that it is none of their business. It is their business. You are not an island to yourself. He or she is simply following the command of God to love you. You are your brother's keeper.

**3. Rewards. Good works makes you rich – there is a reward for good works.** While the Christian who does good has only done his duty...yet God is pleased to reward him more.

Luke 17: 10 "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

And there is a promise of full reward for doing your duty...

Matthew 25:21 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, **I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.**'"

This is most wonderful – **You get a reward (salvation) for relying on what Jesus did for you and letting him move you** to do good. **Even if your work is not perfect...** he is pleased...**out of his grace...to reward you...** And if every Christian in all parts of the world does more good works, your reward is never diminished, for God has unlimited resources to share.

**4. God is honored. Consistent good works is a means of leading men to honor and please God.**

Matthew 5:16 - "Let your light so shine before men, **that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**"

You are a city on a hill, whether you like it or not, and people are watching you! You show good works in a natural, civil, or religious setting: in preaching, hearing, praying, fasting, helping the poor, in the family, in the church, in the world, in private, or in public. **Good works must not be done to make people like you, but to make people like God.**

### **Conclusion:**

**Your good works can't save you.** Some people teach that, but they are wrong. But good works are commanded once you are saved. **So what are good works?** Good works are works that proceed from faith, are works that are done according to God's law, and are works done to bring glory to God. These are the tests you have to use before you do anything. If you find that you are doing something because you want people to think highly of you, then it is not a good work. If you do a good work because you want people to love YOU, it is not a good work.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: It doesn't end there at the facts. **God motivates you to do good works.** (Saving you and securing you weren't enough blessings.)

**1. God equips you to do good works, even giving you the right desires to do good.**

**2. God gives you brothers and sisters in Christ to encourage you.** Children, encourage their parents. Wives, encourage their husbands. Christians, encourage your pastor.

**3. He gives you substantial rewards if you keep his 10 laws** in the right way. You can't lose when you serve the Lord. You simply get richer. So keep doing good, regardless of the situation in your life.

**4. God is honored when you do good in front of others.**

Finally, **the one who is not a Christian cannot do good works, period.** (Only God can move you to do good works.) Since good works are commanded, you are in danger of hell if you don't produce good works. **But** don't despair! Christ can fix that problem for you if you ask him to take away your sins, fill you with his Holy Spirit, make you his child, and then enable you to do the good works. Ask him to do so!