

“Of Good Works” part 6 WCF 16.2.3, What Good Works Do (pt 2)

2021.10.24 Sabbath School Lesson

Hopewell ARPC, Culleoka, TN

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WCF 16.2 (TPH p928)

II. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith;^a and by them believers manifest their thankfulness,^b strengthen their assurance,^c edify their brethren,^d adorn the profession of the gospel,^e stop the mouths of the adversaries,^f and glorify God,^g whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto,^h that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.ⁱ

^a James 2:18, 22

^b Psa 116:12-13; 1 Pet 2:9

^c 2 Pet 1:5-10; 1 John 2:3, 5

^d Mat 5:16; 2 Cor 9:2

^e 1 Tim 6:1; Titus 2:5, 9-12

^f 1 Pet 2:15

^g John 15:8; Phil 1:11; 1 Pet 2:12

^h Eph 2:10

ⁱ Rom 6:22

^{2Peter 1:1} Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

^{1John 2:3} Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

⁷ Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. ⁸ Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

⁹ He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. ¹⁰ He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Let's go ahead and get started. Let's pray our father in heaven. How we thank you that you give us in your love in which you sent your son and in your son who you sent for us and in your spirit whom you the spirit of your son, whom you have sent into our hearts that in all of these you have given us, not only forgiveness of sin and guilt in Christ, and his sacrifice and his righteousness, but also an escape from the corruption that is in the world knowing that your spirit is conforming us to Christ.

And that at the last we will perfectly refract and reflect his glory. And so we thank you for what we are learning these many weeks about good works and the part that even our good works in this life play in that we pray that you would give us more understanding from your word.

And that, by this renewing of our minds, we would also be transformed in order, not to be conformed to the world, but rather to your son. So, help us now in this hour and this in the part that you have appointed in your good providence, give us to attend well, and to glorify you, and to benefit.

We ask in Jesus name. Amen. All right. So we began hearing in the second paragraph of chapter, 16 about what good works are that they are works that are done in to an obedience to God's commandments and we have heard a little bit of what good works do well and they are the the evidence of true faith that when the Lord produces good works in us.

And as we do them, we see the genuineness of the faith through it. He has joined us to Christ, who is the one in whom, and from whom all are good works come, which is very encouraging that to us as the Lord, grows us in holiness and holy living to know that came from Christ.

And it did not come from me and the faith that I have in him from God that has produced in these good works before it produced any of those good works that faith had joined me to Christ and made his righteousness. Mind made him to be my righteousness and so what good works are obedience to God's commandments and the fruits and evidences of true and lively or living faith.

And then we began last week hearing about what good works do and good works. Show our thankfulness and several of the things about what good works do, we're going to see produce in various people in this morning. Sermon passage in response to the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus and in love unto him and service of him.

So in God's providence, here we are in confession of faith, 16 paragraph 2 and looking through all of our doctrinal, standards summaries that we have of what the Bible teaches of what reflects, what will be seeing in the passage this morning. This is the paragraph that we're going to say together.

After we have heard these things demonstrating that we have been paying attention to what the scripture said and to the preaching of it and affirming. Our hearty agreement with what we have heard or submission to the truth of God. So, we'll be reciting this Lord willing and not to many minutes from now.

So by good works believers, manifestor, thankfulness and the second part, or second third of what good works do we hope to do this morning? Good works, strengthen believers assurance.

Now that makes sense, doesn't it?

If one of the.

Things that good works are is the fruit or the result.

In your life, they're working out in your life of the faith that God has given you in Jesus Christ.

Then as you do then, they strengthen your assurance that you do actually believe in Jesus Christ, and so children especially.

One of the things we try to steer you away from when you think about coming to the table as we try to steer you away from the idea that you're doing well enough or bearing Mommy and daddy or being kind.

To your brothers and sisters or.

Doing your chores cheerfully or whatever it is that that is kind of the.

Details of your life.

We try to steer you away from the idea that you're doing those things well enough to come to the Lord supper to come to the table.

Because the table is for people who need Jesus.

Because we are not doing well enough, but it is.

It is a table for those who believe in Jesus.

Because if you don't eat by faith and you'll eat and drink judgment to yourself.

And so if you need Jesus, it doesn't make sense to come have a meal of judgment.

You need to come have a meal of Jesus so we're honoring then growing in honoring Mom and Dad and growing and being kind to your siblings.

Growing and doing your chores cheerfully where that comes in is, as the Lord helps you do those things.

Things you are seeing that you're not just repeating.

Jesus died for my sin and I'm I'm not going to go to hell because Jesus died for me.

But you actually have that hope you're.

Hoping in Jesus.

And the more he grows you in the holiness.

That comes from.

Faith, the more you see that the faith that he's given you is real.

So strengthening assurance and we'll see that especially today from second Peter one and from first John two and then Lord willing if we get to the next one.

Edify their brethren.

Another thing that good works do is it helps us build one another up.

We all have a privilege of ministering to one another.

And we often think of ministering to one another as telling one another.

About your mom and dad, or don't talk about your mom and dad like that, which is a way of ministering to one another.

But there's another stuff that you can do even before that.

If you honor your mom and dad.

And you hear you're spending time with your friends and your mom or your dad say something you want you to come here or want you to go do something and you immediately drop everything and cheerfully pop up and go do what mom and Dad say.

You are really helping aren't you your friends to learn to do the same thing and you'd be building a culture?

Of honoring the Lord who has saved us.

And so just the fact of doing good works is a way in which not just children.

Obviously, I hope that the.

So that it works on new adults too.

In fact, I've noticed that sometimes the adults pay better attention when we talk to the children.

The fact of doing good works.

It helps our brothers and sisters already.

So first good works, strengthen assurance and the.

The Westminster Assembly gave us versus 5 through 10 of Second Peter one to put them into context.

We'll just read verses one through 10.

We'll we'll get the 1st 4 verses in there as well.

Simon, Peter, a bond servant or slave.

Simon, Peter, a bond servant and apostle of Jesus Christ to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

OK, that is fantastic to remember when we get to you versus 5 through 10 and we talk about making your calling and election.

Sure, you can.

See you're not increasing the preciousness of your faith as you do good works.

Are you because the apostle addresses the people that he's about to say?

Add to your faith.

All of these things.

And make your calling and election sure he tells them your faith is already as precious as our faith, including himself.

And so if you believe in Jesus even before you add the things that we're going to be hearing about in verses 5.

Pretend your faith is already as valuable as the faith of the apostle Peter was when he was writing this letter, not just you know, Peter.

We see him having.

Ups and downs and and and so.

Forth, but when he was writing this letter, the people that he was writing to already had a.

Like precious faith, his faith was already valuable.

Because the value of your faith is not how well you are believing.

The value of your faith is the one in whom you believe, and so the weakest true faith has the value of Jesus himself.

Because Jesus is what you get in faith and.

That's the rest of verse one.

Have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God.

God and savior, Jesus Christ.

We've seen a bunch of places recently how the righteousness that a believer gets when he believes in Jesus is not just the righteousness of all of Jesus.

Perfect obedience in his human nature, but because Jesus is 1 divine person with two natures.

Which means he's not a divine person and a human person.

He's a divine person who has a fully human nature and also a fully divine nature, and you don't get the righteousness of a nature.

You get us righteousness of the person.

And so you get the righteousness of God when you believe in Jesus Christ.

So by the righteousness of our God and savior Jesus Christ, right?

There's a lot of explanation.

Let's back up and start reading again.

Simon Peter, a bond servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness.

Of our God and savior, Jesus Christ, Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord so.

These things come by the knowledge of God and the.

Knowledge of Jesus.

Our Lord, a Christian is not someone who has gotten his grace and peace from God, and he's done a Christian is someone who has become a Christian by grace and who has a in in Jesus.

He has peace.

With God, and yet these things are continued to be multiplied to him by this faith.

By this knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, Grace and peace be multiplied, as his divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and God.

Silliness, so we're going to get to versus 5 through 10.

And we're.

Going to hear about.

A bunch of things that need to be added to our faith.

Where are those things going to come from?

Do you believe in Jesus?

And then once we believe in?

Jesus there are.

Things that we add to our faith.

That come from somewhere else.

In Jesus we get all the things that pertain to life and godliness.

So as you hear about the things to add to your faith in verses 5 through 10, you're hearing about things that you get from Jesus that you need to go to him to get that you trust in him for, and that when you.

Don't have them.

When you don't have the things that you're supposed to add to faith, you not only have forgiveness in Jesus, which you have the guarantee of all the things that you need in the same Jesus from whom you got the forgiveness or through whom you got the forgiveness.

His divine power has given to us.

All things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by glory and virtue which had been given to us.

By Webb sorry had been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And so God plan for everyone whom he brings to faith.

That we hear about in Romans 8 pre destined to be conformed to the image of his son and we actually played.

According to that idea from Romans 12, just a few minutes ago we were asking God.

That he would.

Help us pay attention in class why?

Because Romans 12 tells us that it's through the renewing of our mind that we are not shaped like the world, but we come instead to be transformed, not conformed to the world, but instead transformed in order to be conformed like we'd heard you know, 3 1/2 chapters earlier in Romans 8 to the image.

Of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Same thing here.

Verse four.

You're being made less like this corrupt.

World when you see the corrupt world and it's a warning to you not only of how bad the world is, but all that that all the remaining sin in you.

All of your remaining sinfulness that you are putting to death and by the spirit of God, putting to death the deeds of the body.

That it belongs.

To that world that you see.

Is so corrupt and so instead you want to be made like Jesus, not like the world but like him who is God the son and became a.

Man and you see what it looks like in Jesus.

You see what it looks like for a man to be exactly patterned after the character of God.

And now Peter comes to us, and he says, through these, through the exceedingly great and precious promises, we may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption.

That is, in the world through lust.

So if that's what we know God has promised for those who believe in Jesus, that they were made to be like Jesus.

What kinds of things do we do between now when I'm not like as much like Jesus as I want to be?

And as I will be, and then when I will be made?

To reflect Jesus perfectly.

For this reason, but also for this very reason, and now we're into the part that they give as a proof text.

I hope you see again that there's an expectation in these proof texts that we understand the passages from which they come and that we're not just, you know, lifting a chunk out of the Bible, but understanding it.

As it's taught in the Bible for this very reason, giving all diligence.

Uhm, how much diligence?

All diligence, so This is why we need to be told.

Things like do not grow weary in well doing because you can get in your life having given a lot of diligence or for some of us it just takes giving a little diligence and you are threatened with growing weary.

But you haven't been fulfilled.

The instruction yet have you is if there's diligence yet to be given were were to give all diligence for this very reason, giving all diligence add to your faith virtue.

That is, whatever God says is good and to virtue knowledge.

Jesus has perfectly correct theology.

When you grow in the correctness of your theology, you're actually being made like Jesus and loving Jesus.

The more we learn, the more we learn, not just about ideas, but about him himself.

The Bible teaches us not just a collection of thoughts, but it is a revelation that is God revealing himself to us.

That's why the apostle in Colossians.

At the end of chapter one.

And or it might be the beginning of Chapter 2.

It's all running together for me now.

I think it's the end of chapter one.

He says, Henry, preach.

He's he's preaching theology, not because he wants to make a bunch of theological PHD's, but the more you grow in knowledge, the more.

It is Jesus himself whom you are growing in knowing and so add to your faith doing good things.

Where does doing good things come from Jesus?

Add to your faith knowing Jesus.

And and knowing theology and therefore knowing Jesus, where it is knowing, felt, it comes from Jesus to knowledge.

Add self control.

Some of us are grateful that that one comes third because we have a hard time growing in self control and you see how God makes his grace to snowball for us as he produces the fruit of our faith.

The faith produces goodness.

The faith produces knowing of Christ, the the faith, and the goodness and the knowing of Christ.

Produce self control to self control.

Perseverance means keeping on in all of these things to persevere.

To godliness living in the fear of God and wanting to walk according to the character of God to godliness.

Brotherly kindness.

Because the most God fearing God reflecting thing is to love your brothers.

So Jesus says that we'll know that others will.

Know that we're his disciples.

By our love for one another.

That's why Jesus says a new commandment.

I give you that you love one another, as I have loved you.

That's why in the book of First John, where you have these evidences of true faith and it exactly.

Corresponds to what we've been reading it having, doesn't it? Some of those evidences are correct theology about who Jesus is and obedience to God's commandments, but also. And you also might, you might say, especially in the book of First John Love for other Christians.

And that if if God has loved us in Jesus, and Jesus has loved us in this way, and if he has loved our brothers in this right, how could we possibly think that we believe in him and love him if we don't love the?

Brothers, that he has loved that way.

So to godliness, brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness.

Love for if these things are yours and abound or and are increasing, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I think it's important to understand the way he's talking in verse 8.

Because he's not saying that there is such a thing as someone who is barren and produces no fruit, he's talking the way James was talking.

In Chapter 2, a couple of weeks ago, isn't he that the knowledge of Jesus actually produces fruit?

We do not have an.

Infertile save

Yeah, that you can know without it making a difference in your life and so if you know him you will bear fruit and you'll bear that fruit because it's coming from knowing him he's pulling forward.

Now what we heard in versus 2 through 4 or really versus one through 4 but.

Especially versus 2 through 4 at this knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord that produces this fruitness, who's saying Now you have a?

Part your commanded.

To add to your faith, virtue, and to your virtue knowledge and to your knowledge, self control and your self control, perseverance and perseverance, goblins and goblins brotherly kindness here.

Brotherly kindness, love.

For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge.

Of our Lord.

Jesus Christ, so we're commanded to do these things, but they come from where and they come, how?

From the Lord Jesus, from knowing him that he personally is producing these things in us very, very similar to what we heard a few months ago.

In Philippians, Chapter 2 isn't workout your own salvation with fear and trembling, it's instruction.

It's a command.

It's not passive, we are to do something.

And in fact here.

Fear and trembling is the parallel or fear and trembling in Philippians 2 is the parallel to giving all diligence.

In second Peter, one verse 5, right sanctification growing in holiness is a very active, very vigorous thing.

Question about the text in the way it's put together here.

The last thing.

That's mentioned and this.

In that list is love.

Why is that?

Because love is in other passages given like a, the primacy of place.

And here it's even.

Is it the last?

Is that because it's?

Like the crowning jewel.

The rest of the.

But yeah, I haven't studied it.

I'll give you, I'll give you some some guesses.

There there are educated guesses in in comparing Scripture with Scripture.

One because love is the one that remains another.

Like you said, it is the main thing.

I think even the order of it, however, reminds us that you don't finish one of these and move on to the next.

Right, because we get to the last one and it's really the first one.

Yeah, there is no virtue except by loving God.

It's from the love of God that the keeping of commandments comes.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

So I think even by putting love last, he reminds us that this is not a list that you're going to be checking the box and moving on to the next one.

Until you get to the last.

One and say.

Almost to heaven I'm on the last one.

But they are mutually reinforcing.

And aspects of all of these things.

You know, the more our theology, the more we know him.

The more we love him.

Because everything about the Lord Jesus is lovely, and the more you see about him, the more 'cause you have for that.

Love, the more you love him, the more.

You'll obey and often we see and, and this is one of my favorite things in pastoring people.

Often it's.

The really kind.

Give up what other people would think we would call simple minded believers who just Jesus is my savior so I trust him.

Jesus says to do this.

So I'm not going to worry about.

The whole, uh.

Yeah, is it?

Legalism thing I I love Jesus.

He said to do this.

I trust him, I do it and often those.

People have what I would call.

Better theological instincts than some highly educated people that I've met, so there's a mutually reinforcing between godliness and loving your brother and loving the Lord.

You know, I've met some people who really wanted.

To talk about how to obey all the commandments.

But they were the least self sacrificing, compassionate, interested in in others and how it is with them people.

That I've met and I don't.

Think that.

That you know.

Yeah, I think that they are enabled by love of the brethren to pursue virtue in a way that the Bible is more approving over commends to us more.

So I would guess that a big part of you know two big reasons for its place at the end.

Of a list.

Are to remind us that we're never going to finish the list and that everything in the list is mutually reinforce.

Right, we're not going to.

You know we're not going to write a counseling book on the order in which these things have to come because you get to the end and it's love and jacira or any other believer with good instincts.

Like I say, I don't.

Really think that's the last one?

You know?

So yeah, thank you for noticing that and pointing that out.

OK.

So the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, the real knowledge of the real Lord Jesus.

It can't be barren or unfruitful.

That would be demeaning too.

It's an impossibility of for the Lord Jesus to not make a difference in someone now.

We know even from this here that these are things that we grow in and increase in, and so if we know that one of the ways that the Lord Jesus is excuse me is glorified in the believers life is that he has made a difference in our character.

And that that difference can increase and should increase then one of the things that we should want in our life is to bring increasing honor and glory to the Lord Jesus in the difference that he has made in.

Yes, now there's a.

There's a sneaky temptation that I've run into in the churches because we have remaining sin, and we've already said that we're not going to get to a point in this life where we're done with this list.

One of the temptations, then, is to say that we're all alike, and that we're not really different than the world.

You know, you hear about some of the things that God especially highlights as heinous and obamae.

Homosexuality I think is the big one, although they're moving on to perversions worse than that and if you don't know what that is, praise God that you don't know.

But I've heard people in the churches talk about talk as if there's no real difference between Christians and people who are stuck in and not even ashamed of, the the most abominable sin.

Now think about what that says when when second Peter one is telling you about the difference that Christ makes in the holiness of life.

And you say, well, there's not really much of a.

Difference at all?

Then what did you just say about Jesus?

And what did you just say about his power?

And what did you just say about the value of knowing him?

And what did you just say?

About how fertile or fruitful the knowledge of Jesus is.

So we gotta be careful about that.

We don't praise ourselves.

We don't get puffed up and we don't just say there, but for the grace of God go I.

We can actually say here only by.

The grace of.

God I am.

Look at what Jesus has done.

There's so much more left to do, but I have a Jesus who bears the fruit of doing it and I'm looking to him to keep doing it in me.

It is important to recognize that there's real difference in holiness of life, not.

Best between the world and hopefully God helped the church between the world and the church.

But even between me now and me, how I was and me how.

I hoped to.

Be sometime and and some more of the Lords graciously working in adding.

All of these things to my faith.

We'll just read first, John.

Uh, three through 10.

I think you can hear and see all of these things in there.

We don't have time enough to open it.

Now by this we know that we know him.

If we keep his commandments, he who says, I know him and does not keep his commandments as a liar, and the truth is not in.

But whoever keeps his word truly the love of God is perfected in him.

Now you have to go back a couple of weeks and remember what we said about the word perfected.

When we were talking about James Chapter 2 and remember the other text that we looked at to see how that word is sometimes used.

Second Corinthians 12 my strength is made perfect in weakness.

By this we know that we are in him.

He who says he abides in him ought himself also to walk, just as he walked.

So these are the goals of believers, and increasingly, we pray by his grace, the fruit that we see in believers life rather than I write no new commandment.

To you but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning, that is, from the beginning of the church, the old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.

Again, a new commandment I write to you.

You which thing is true in him and in you because.

The darkness is.

Passing away and the true light is already shining.

He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness until now.

He who loves his brother abides in the light.

And there is no cause for stumbling in him.

But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

And so even when you recognize that you are not loving your brother like you wish you would not using your mouth not.

In your behavior, loving your brother well, the desire to speak and act in a way that doesn't good is itself love from Jesus that we want to be growing in and you can take the fact that you long to love your brother better.

As something that can only come from Jesus, light doesn't come from darkness that longing that desire even as much as it grieves you that you are not keeping it.

And we've talked about this before with respect to the first great commandment loving the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

That desire is something that comes from Christ, and we repent of that.

Over which we grieve.

And we seek to love our brother better, but even that desire is something that has an assuring.

That influence upon us we say thank you, Lord, that at least I want to love him.

That did not come from me.

Help me now to love him better because that cannot come from me.

Good works have a part of the function.

One of the things that good works do is they strengthen our assurance.

Let's pray.

Our father in heaven how we thank you for this portion.

These portions of your word for this marvelous truth we thank you that you actually do start to produce Christ likeness in us that although we are saved by grace through faith.

And that not of ourselves.

So that we may not boast yet we are your workmanship, and you create us new in Christ Jesus to walk in good works.

We probably that you would help us to find with our feet those good works that you have prepared beforehand, so that as we walk.

And then we would be assured that you.

Are the one.

Who has made us your workmanship in Jesus?

We ask it in his name, Amen.