

Series: Philippines
Title: Works Accepted of God
Text: Php 4: 14-18
Date: May 5, 2024
Place: SGBC, NJ

Philippians 4: 14: Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. [ye have well done, 15: Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 16: For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 17: Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. 18: But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

Subject: Works Accepted of God

We looked last time at the subject of contentment.

Proposition: This time we see another reason God's saints are content: all our works of faith and love are acceptable to God, and well-pleasing to God, by Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4: 18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

Paul was in prison, in great affliction, but he was content--he had all and abounded and was full because he had Christ his All. God's saints are content because we have Christ our Savior. Christ is all our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. This is why God's saints are content. In Christ "we have all, and abound, and are full." All is in and by Christ.

Paul's heart rejoiced greatly in the Lord because Christ worked in the hearts of these saints at Philippi to make them cheerfully, sacrificially send him this gift--he called it "*an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.*" God's saints are content and we rejoice in Christ over our brethren because all our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God and well-pleasing to God by Christ Jesus.

NOT OF OURSELVES

We did not make ourselves acceptable to God by our works.

We came into this world dead in sin and all our works were dead works. The works may have been good in themselves but we did all from a selfish motive in our dead heart, from a legal motive, from a fleshly sinful motive. We did all thinking we were righteous, we were holy, by our works. We sought life by the works of our hands. We sought rewards from God by our works. We tried to indebt God to us by our works

Romans 8: 5: For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.

In an attempt to soothe our conscious we condemned and looked down on others. We did not know it but we were the Pharisee.

Luke 18: 9: And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11: The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13: And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

We would not, could not, receive the gospel of Christ and believe on him alone. This is the state of every sinner in Adam and born of Adam. It is so of every elect child of God as we come into this world.

OUR CONSCIOUS PURGED

When our Savior sent the gospel, the Holy Spirit regenerated us and purged our conscious from dead works by the blood of Christ.

Hebrews 9: 14: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The Spirit of God made us know that Christ's blood purged all the sins of his elect and made us the righteousness of God in him. It is only by the Spirit of God purging the conscious with the blood of Christ that we are given a new spirit, a new heart, with a new motive. God gives us faith to believe on Christ and the love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Spirit. Then we stop working to earn God's acceptance only when our conscious is purged.

Hebrews 10: 1: For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2: For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

The Holy Spirit made us to behold Christ. By his one offering, by his one sacrifice for sin forever, Christ accomplished perfecting his people forever. By Christ fulfilling God's will, he sanctified his people by his one offering. By Christ's one offering, he perfected forever them that are sanctified. By the Spirit, a new heart was given us when he made us know we are accepted of God in Christ

Hebrews 10: 15: *Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16: This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17: And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18: Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin.

This is how God grants repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

WORKS ACCEPTABLE BY CHRIST ALONE

God gave us a new heart of faith to know that it is by Christ Jesus alone that we, as well as our works, are a sweet smell to God, a sacrifice well-pleasing to God.

1 Peter 2: 5: Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Christ is the sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. God's saints, as well as our works, are a sweet smell to God and well-pleasing to God in Christ's perfection. Our works are acceptable only in the perfection of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf.

Ephesians 5: 2...Christ...hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

It is not that we are perfect in ourselves or that any work we do is perfect and without sin. Our new man is holy by Christ our Sanctification abiding in us but our flesh is nothing but sin. So it is not that we are accepted of God BY any work we do but it is by Christ Jesus.

When the Spirit of God purged our conscious from dead works to serve the living God, he gave us faith to believe that in Christ we are righteous and without sin, complete in him. The love of Christ for his people in laying down his life for us became the constraint of our hearts. Now, our motive is faith which works by love. God looks on the motive of the heart. Without faith in his Son it is impossible to please God. Without the heart being motivated only by Christ's love for us all is a legal dead work. To the Corinthians, Paul spoke of men who judge after the appearance. Then he spoke of those sanctified in heart by Christ.

2 Corinthians 5: 14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15: And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. 16: Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. 17: Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

By God giving us faith to trust Christ as All our acceptance with God, and by the love of Christ being the constraint of our new heart, now, our works come to God in the perfection of Christ Jesus our Savior. By Christ, our spiritual sacrifices are a sweet smell to God. By Christ, they are a sacrifice acceptable to God. By Christ, our works are well-pleasing to God. In his perfect righteousness and in his perfect holiness God accepts us and our spiritual sacrifices. God is well-pleased with our works by Christ alone!

Hebrews 13: 16: But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

CONTENTMENT AND REJOICING OF GOD'S SAINTS

Ecclesiastes 9: 7: Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.

Go thy way. Now, our Way is Christ.

Eat thy bread with joy. We eat the bread of God's providence. As we do, we feast on Christ the Bread from heaven. We do so with joy. We have Bread to eat this world knows nothing of. Christ is Bread for our souls. We are content and have inward joy in the bread of providence, in whatever God does, because of Christ our Bread from heaven.

And drink thy wine with a merry heart. Bread represents life, that which is absolutely necessary to live. Wine represents pleasurable things. Christ and the new covenant fulfilled and sure in his precious blood is the Wine that brings us great joy. And God commands us to use the good things he has given us in this life freely with joy, knowing by Christ's blood our sins are remembered no more.

For God now accepteth thy works. God accepted his people in Christ before he made the world. When Christ finished accomplishing our redemption, God raised each of his elect in Christ and we sat down at God's right hand in Christ. But while we were under the guilt of sin in our conscious, we worked to soothe our conscious, and everything was a burden in our lives. But, *now*, we have a merry heart because every feeble work of ours is accepted of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. For the sake of Christ, God remembers our sins no more, not even the sins mixed with our feeble works. We have peace within, by Christ's blood purging away the conscious of sins so that we cease from the dead works of trying to make ourselves accepted. Now, we know God accepts *us and our works* by Christ Jesus.

This is why Paul himself was content and rejoiced in Christ. This is why we ourselves are content and rejoice in Christ.

This is why Paul was content and rejoiced greatly in the Lord Jesus for the sake of his brethren when they sent him this gift, as well as in the season when they did not. This is why we are content and rejoice in Christ over our brethren.

God has made each of his saints accepted in the Beloved!

Ecclesiastes 9: 7: Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.

Amen!